**What is the Mask Mandate all About?**

Covid-19 has been affecting the world for two years now, and masks have been mandated worldwide. Covid-19 may be a huge part of life now, but it has been around in other forms for centuries. The three more modern forms of the disease in the past two decades have been Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and the more commonly known Novel Corona Virus (Covid-19) as stated by the [National Foundation for Infectious Diseases](https://www.nfid.org/infectious-diseases/coronaviruses/). In 2019, Covid-19 originated from Wuhan, China within the animals sold at wet markets, which sell wild animals such as cobras, or boar. The virus then changed and was able to transfer from animals to humans. With the new virus’ known ability to kill, protective measures have been very important in the past two years. With that, a mask mandate has been issued in several states in America. The mask mandate is a requirement in several states that forces citizens to wear masks to prevent the spread of Covid-19. [The Center for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html) claims that, “when you wear a mask, you protect others as well as yourself. Masks work best when everyone wears one”. This statement has the thought of eliminating Covid-19 completely, though other people disagree. Some people claim that the mandate takes their freedom from them along with birth given rights. People even make protests to go against wearing the masks to defend their first amendment right of religion, expression and the right to protest. According to [BBC](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53477121), people have been kicked out of public establishments and refused service because they didn’t wear a mask inside the building. An example of this is shown when a Michigan pizza place told a customer that she had to wear a mask. She responded by kicking someone in the restaurant and escaped the police. The same kind of responses can be seen from people who refuse to get a Covid-19 vaccine. BBC also claims that the fight against masks can be linked with politics. At the time of the most recent presidential election, Trump supporters refused to wear a mask more often than Biden supports. This makes sense because Trump would often opt out of wearing masks at election events. The difference between opinions in politics has often caused riots to occur in public spaces. The argument on the mask mandate continues to unfold as the virus gets deadlier, but opinions have only gotten stronger in response to rules and regulations regarding masks.

As mask guidelines evolve, some people are quick to judge, but others stand by these rules. An example of this belief is in the article, “Opinion: As mother of young children, I beg Cobb to mandate masks”, by Maureen Downey of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. In the article, she expresses concern about her two children going back to school with a pandemic in the mix. She then explains the delta variant of Covid-19 and the importance of the mask mandate put in place to protect people from it. She concludes the article with a request that schools make masks a requirement when in the building.

When defending her claim, she cites her sources efficiently, while mixing evidence from her personal life into her ideas. Her sources are from news articles and current Covid-19 guidelines, making them fairly credible. News articles can be biased in certain cases, which can take away from the credibility of her support for someone who doesn’t understand where her sources are coming from. Fortunately for Downey, her sources come from reliable news sources that give statistics to defend their arguments. The evidence from Downey’s personal life provides a more emotional take on the topic. She achieves this by using flavorful language in her second paragraph. Downey states, “The excitement of choosing the very best first day of school outfit or eagerly scanning class lists to see familiar names of friends to share a laugh and eat lunch with”. As well as, “In its place, feelings of fear, worry, guilt, confusion, frustration, anger, and even impending doom loomed large and undeniable”. This shifts the mood from more of a lighthearted feel, to feelings of concern that reflect Downey’s opinions on the topic. This provides for a good transition to her sources, as well as a well put together article.

Other people disagree strongly with the mask mandate that was put in place. This is shown in the article “New Mask Guidelines are About Politics and Control” by Tucker Carlson on Fox News. Carlson begins his article by comparing strong regimes to strong people, and weak regimes to weak people to show his claim that the mask mandate is truly about the politics and control that he thinks president Biden possesses. The rest of the article follows this idea and how the mask guidelines have changed in correlation to it. Carlson’s comparison to Biden tries to tie the death of Nicolai Ceausescu to the mask mandate, and it doesn’t work. Carlson states, “As his power evaporated, he tried even harder to exert it … we learned today that in the face of the waning pandemic, the Biden administration will dramatically increase [COVID](https://www.foxnews.com/category/health/infectious-disease/coronavirus) restrictions across the country”. It isn’t as effective as what he thinks it is. He doesn’t show research for that statement, or any statement for that matter to defend it. The only websites that are linked are search results on Fox News. This shows clear bias and the untrustworthiness that follows it. Carlson uses more emotional language than anything else. His article would strongly benefit from research that isn’t from Fox News that supports his claims with statistics. His article would be more credible, and less biased if he did.

The article, “What the science says about lifting mask mandates” by Lynne Peeples is probably the best article to put in between the last two. It does fantastic work on not taking sides and coming up with unbiased arguments. The article begins with other people’s situations in regards to the mask mandate being lifted temporarily in some states. Peeples then uses statistics to prove that masks work. After that, she compares Covid-19 to the AIDS/HIV pandemic that occurred in the 1980’s. She concludes the article with an idea of what the mask mandate holds in the future. Peeple’s sources are reliable, and prove the effects that masks have in stopping the spread of disease. She only uses a few sources from her own website, but even those aren’t biased in any way. This article is purely just an overview of the mask mandate’s history in 2021, and other people’s opinions about it. Peeples states that, “just two weeks after communicating that vaccinated people should continue to mask up indoors. Perkins wasn’t personally comfortable with unmasked people in her shop.” This shows how the mask mandate has affected peoples daily lives. Out of all of the articles stated, this article seems like the best way to get information about what the masks really do for people. No bias or opinion can affect what really happens scientifically, and this article does a great job expressing that.

# While the argument on the mask mandate is a difficult one, there are pros and cons to both, and a middle ground can be discovered through analysis of each view. The article “Opinion: As mother of young children, I beg Cobb to mandate masks”, by Maureen Downey, expresses interest in Masks for the sake of her children’s health. This proves to be a very logical conclusion to the mask mandate and a reasonable motive to promote masks to others, although she uses little to no statistics to defend herself. Her sources comprise of regulations already put into place, and almost entirely emotion-based language to show her concern to her children. Downey exclusively writes about educational policies, which supports her emotional speech, but not the statistical evidence that she needs. This leaves room for other opinions to make a rebuttal against this view.

# Another article called “New mask guidelines are about politics and control”, by Tucker Carlson, believes that the mandate is about exactly what the title states. This seems like a bold and non-logical conclusion. It also doesn’t seem like a huge reason to be worried in my opinion. This article as well as the last use emotion to convey their thoughts. Carlson’s article uses it to state his opinion in our political system, rather than stating statistics to defend his claim. The sources he used are all from Fox News, which is the place that he works at. This leaves room to argue against the claim. If Carlson had used more statistics to prove that power and control is affecting the mask mandate, he would be more believable. The reason why the opposite viewpoints are arguing so much is probably explained by the fact that neither are defending themselves appropriately.

Another take on the mask mandate is a more statistical and neutral one. The article, “What the Science Says About Lifting Mask Mandates”, by Lynne Peeples, focuses more on the scientific aspect of what masks do for the public. They claim that masks are an effective way of preventing Covid-19. And they analyze each viewpoint on the masks rather than picking a side and dismissing the other. Their conclusion is logical, and their motive for their opinion isn’t bizarre or strange. They have good reason to be concerned about the situation and use good sources to back it up. Peeples uses no emotional language to sway opinions and sticks to statistics to try to prove a point. All of the sources used in this article are credible and defend the claim greatly. This viewpoint has a lot of good things going for it, and it aligns with my viewpoint well.

# My view on this issue is that I don’t care if other individuals don’t wear masks. I will certainly wear one, but everyone else can do what they want. I agree with the fact that masks help reduce the spread of Covid-19, and I agree with the science behind it. I just don’t believe in the idea that masks are about power or control. If Carlson’s article had better sources, I would have been more inclined to listen to his opinion more. Dawson needs better sources too, but her view is still credible to me without it. The only solution that I can see working for the argument is that the government makes masks optional. Nothing will ever satisfy everyone in this scenario, but in my opinion, this is the closest anyone will get. To me, masks should be worn for self protection and other people who disagree should peacefully disagree. At this point, any solution beats the constant fighting.

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| **Project Portion** | **Ideal Criteria** | **Overall Feedback** |
| Introduction | * Engaging * Shows importance of question * Indicates major parts and content |  |
| Background | * Uses credible, neutral sources * Effectively and sufficiently explains essential information * Written objectively in own words * Well organized and focused paragraphs with transitions * Minimal error |  |
| Analysis | * Smooth transition from background * Summarizes accurately and in own words two opposing answers and one objective answer to the question * Recognizes bias * Reasonable observations about how all sources make their arguments impactful * Well-organized and focused paragraphs with transitions * Minimal error |  |
| Response | * Smooth transition from analysis * Incorporates strong points from sources * Draws a reasonable and well-supported conclusion, answering the question * Provides satisfying conclusion to the project * Good transitions between focused paragraphs * Minimal error |  |