ASSIGNMENT #1

FOOT BINDING IN ANCIENT CHINA

Throughout history, women have felt the pressure to conform to their society’s definition of beauty. Standards of beauty often reflect cultural values and beliefs. At times, women have had to take extreme measures to live up to these standards at the cost of their own well-being.

One of the most striking examples is the Chinese practice of foot binding. The Chinese foot binding tradition officially dates back to the Tang Dynasty. For centuries, small feet were considered very attractive and ladylike. In order for this to happen, it was common practice for young girls to break and bind their toes with the intention of shrinking their feet—a process that kept them in excruciating pain for months. The Chinese government officially outlawed the practice in 1911.

A factor that led to the popularity of foot binding was women’s decreased involvement in civic life during the Song dynasty. During this period, a woman’s most important task was considered giving birth to sons. Women didn’t participate in politics and were rarely seen on the streets, in comparison with the previous Tang dynasty. Some historians suggest that the reduced status of women during the Song Dynasty made foot binding more socially acceptable.

Binding usually began when a girl was between the ages of four and seven. First the foot was soaked in hot water and the toenails clipped. Then came the painful part: the four small toes were broken, and the foot was bandaged tightly with the toes turned under toward the bottom of the foot. In order for the girl to maintain her balance, the big toe was left unturned. Every few days, the foot was unwrapped and then wrapped again even tighter, until the foot shrunk to about four inches long. The arches were also broken, which caused the foot to contract even more. The entire process could take three years or longer, and it was so debilitating that young girls from wealthy families would often receive a servant to care for her personal needs, carry her when her feet hurt, and look after her on sleepless nights when the pain was unbearable.

Foot binding wasn’t just painful. It could also be dangerous. Complications included ulcerations and infections caused by ingrown toenails or lack of circulation from tight bindings. Sometimes toes even fell off. Bound feet also had a foul odor and left many young women hardly able to walk. Sadly, it’s estimated that up to 10 percent of girls died in the process of foot binding.

Even if mothers could have objected to putting their daughters through such a tremendously painful process, social pressure likely made them willing to go through with foot binding. The ability to withstand foot binding reflected a woman’s character, and her attractiveness was revealed not in her face or body, but in her feet. A girl learned that her family’s reputation was linked to the binding of her feet early in life. In fact, the process was so crucial to a woman’s
status in China that a girl with natural, unbound feet had limited marriage prospects, while girls with tiny, well-bound feet increased their chances of marrying into a good family and moving up in society.

Foot binding greatly limited a woman’s ability to walk, and some women became practically crippled. Bound feet forced women to hobble around and take extremely small steps. Many men found this shuffling sort of walk very attractive. Yet as a result of their compromised feet, women rarely participated in social or political life, often becoming very dependent on their husbands and families.

This practice, promoted to achieve the ultimate symbol of beauty, disfigured women’s feet. The toes often became twisted or fused together. Many men were unaware of the disfigurement caused by foot binding because women’s feet were always carefully covered. During the day, feet were covered in a binder, socks and shoes, sprayed with perfume and scented powder, and then hidden beneath leggings and skirts. At night women wore special slippers, even while sleeping.

Not all Chinese practiced foot binding. It was less common among peasants and in poor communities because women were needed to work in the fields. Mongols, Hakka and Tibetans living in Chinese territory didn’t bind their feet at all. In Manchu province, foot binding was outlawed. Today, few women with bound feet are still alive. The tiny, intricately decorated special shoes made for bound feet will be all that remains of the painful practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. How did the women in China bind their feet?</th>
<th>2. What does the author mostly describe in the passage?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. They broke their toes and wrapped the feet tightly</td>
<td>A. the importance of the Chinese geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. They wrapped their toes together with bandages.</td>
<td>B. the practice of foot binding and its effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. They broke their big toe and wrapped it under the foot.</td>
<td>C. how the bones in feet naturally grow</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. They broke their toes and arches but did not wrap them.</td>
<td>D. why women accept painful beauty procedures</td>
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3. In China, having bound feet was a sign of wealth and status. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

A. “Although the practice was promoted as a way to increase health, foot binding was clearly harmful to a woman’s well-being.”
B. “Foot binding was less common among peasants and in poor communities because women were needed to work in the fields.”
C. “According to the legend, foot binding began when an ancient Chinese emperor’s dancer bound her feet to suggest the shape of a new moon or a flower.”
D. “Girls with tiny, well-bound feet increased their chances of marrying into a good family and moving up in society.”

4. What is a probable reason for women’s feet to always be covered?

A. because women’s feet were considered dirty
B. because only a woman’s husband could see her feet
C. to make the men think the woman’s foot was beautiful
D. because men did not like to look at feet

5. What is this passage mostly about?

A. foot binding in China
B. the Song Dynasty
C. standards of beauty
D. women in ancient China

6. Read the following sentences: “[Foot binding] greatly limited a woman’s ability to walk, and some women became practically crippled. Bound feet forced women to hobble around and take extremely small steps. Many men found this shuffling sort of walk very attractive.”

6. What does “hobble” mean as used in this sentence?

A. to walk quickly and purposefully
B. to walk unsteadily or with difficulty
C. to glide forward smoothly
D. to move in a quick, jumping motion
ASSIGNMENT #2

Creating a Primary Source Document

Remember over the next few weeks, you will be asked to write a diary/journal entry once a week about “Life during the Great Pandemic of 2020.” This week you will read an article about “flattening the curve”. You will find out how many people are trying to “flatten the curve”. 

Directions: Read the following article, then respond to the writing prompt below.

Why everything is closing for coronavirus: It’s Called “flattening the curve”
By Forbes, adapted by Newsela staff on March 17, 2020

South by Southwest (SXSW) is a huge music/film/tech/education festival. It brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to Austin, Texas, every March. When organizers canceled the festival it was only a matter of time before other major events also canceled.

As of March 13, many sports leagues have suspended their seasons. The National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL) and Major League Soccer have suspended play. Major League Baseball (MLB) has pushed back the season start. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) canceled March Madness. March Madness is a college basketball competition every spring. If a team loses a game they are out of the competition. People fill out brackets with who they think will keep advancing to the championships. Several universities have canceled spring football games. The Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour canceled the Players Championship. And the future of the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan is in doubt. And that’s just sports.

School districts from Seattle, Washington, to Baltimore, Maryland, have closed schools. So have entire states, including Maryland, Michigan, and Ohio. More than 100 colleges and universities have canceled all in-person classes and moved online. The huge music festival Coachella has been postponed. So have a long list of concerts and music tours and all Broadway shows through April 12. Movie theaters may be next.

Even all Disney parks have closed their gates. This is only the third time Disneyland has closed the park. The first time was after U.S. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. The second time was after 9/11. Terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, hit the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Economic Impacts
The economic impacts of all these closures will be incredibly high. Canceling SXSW will mean a loss of more than $350 million. This includes thousands of low-income workers' lost tips and wages. However, that won't even be close to how much it will cost sports teams and amusement parks to close down. So the decision to suspend seasons, cancel events and close up shop is not being made lightly.
And yet, there have only been about 1,660 cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in the United States. COVID-19 is short for coronavirus disease in 2019. There have also been fewer than 50 deaths because of it in the United States. The coronavirus is a flu-like illness that began in China and has been spreading across the globe since December 2019. Many people talk about the flu. Every year the flu sickens millions and kills tens of thousands of people. It is expected to sicken nearly 50 million people in the United States this year and kill as many as 52,000 this flu season.

So why is everyone making such a big deal about coronavirus? Why are events being canceled? Why are schools moving to online instruction? Especially when there are so few cases right now.

**Slowing The Spread**

There's a good reason to "cancel everything." All these decisions by public officials and businesses are aimed at one goal: slowing down the spread of the virus to avoid overburdening a health care system that doesn't have the infrastructure to handle a sudden surge of tens of thousands of cases at once. Without mass closings, that surge is exactly what will happen, just as it has in Italy. It's called "flattening the curve." And that's exactly what it is when you see it visually.

Epidemiologists study diseases and how they spread. They can somewhat predict how many cases of a disease are going to occur based on how the disease is behaving. Continuing business-as-usual allows cases to escalate rapidly in just a few weeks, spiking so high at once that they completely overwhelm hospitals. In such a scenario — such as Italy is facing now — more deaths are likely because there simply aren't enough hospital beds, enough face masks, enough IV bags, even enough healthy doctors and nurses to care for everyone at once.

However, if that same number of cases can be stretched out over months, never quite exceeding the health care system's capacity, then people will get the care they need. More health care providers can avoid illness and burnout, and fewer people are likely to die — as South Korea has shown.

But are we really headed for that many cases? Yes.

As former Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Scott Gottlieb explained in a recent interview, the novel coronavirus — just declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization — is beyond containment. If it's not already in your community, it's coming soon. The only reason total U.S. cases aren't already skyrocketing is that coronavirus testing has been such a mess that too few people — just 77 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the whole week of March 8 — are being tested. You can't count cases you haven't identified yet. But every indication is that the United States is on track to see the same exponential increase other countries are seeing, as scientist Mark Handley has been tracking on Twitter.

**People Are Listening**

So what do we do to avert disaster? We have to flatten the curve. Fortunately, people are listening and the idea has caught so well among armchair epidemiologists that the #flatteningthecurve and #FlattenTheCurve hashtags have trended several times on Twitter in recent days. Clearly, public officials and businesses are listening to the warnings of public health officials, as evidenced by all the closings and cancellations. But to be effective, ordinary people need to do their part by avoiding as much as possible any crowds and places where large numbers of people congregate, such as movie theaters, malls, and events that haven't been canceled.

**Read the journal entry prompt below and complete your journal entry on your own sheet of paper.**

**PROMPT:** In the article, you learned about what is happening in order to flatten the curve of COVID-19.

- What does it mean to “flatten the curve?”
- What does “flattening the curve” look like to you?
- How can you help “flatten the curve” in Somerset County?
- Do you believe there is more that could be done to flatten the curve in the United States? Discuss whether or not you agree with these ideas and if they are making a difference.
- Finally, this article was written on March 17, 2020, only a week after we were first dismissed from school. Much has happened since that time. Name some things mentioned in this article that had not happened when it was written, but that have happened since then.
- Were they done to help flatten the curve? If so, how would they have helped?

It should take you at least 3 paragraphs to completely address all parts of this prompt.