The Pandemic is a Portal: Time for a Reset?
NOTE TO EDUCATORS
These activities have been designed for use either distance or classroom learning.
Students can work individually or in groups to discuss their responses.

STEP 1
Ask students to quietly spend some time thinking about the past few months. If they had to pick one word to describe it what would it be? Share your own response. Ask if any other students would be comfortable sharing with others and explaining their choices.

STEP 2
Share this link with students to watch a short extract animation from a poem by Arundhati Roy, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALN3UkxA8g

STEP 3
Allow time for student discussion or provide a series of prompt questions to generate initial discussions (see below). Do students agree with Arundhati Roy’s words? Do they disagree? If so, why?

STEP 4
Bring in the Global Goals to the conversation, how might the Global Goals help to us to imagine our world anew after COVID19?

STEP 5
Ask students to spend some time thinking about how they would reimagine the world anew after COVID19. What does this look like for them? Next, ask them to think about what they want to differently in the future. It could be how they act or behave. Then expand this question out further - What do they want businesses to do differently? What do they want governments to do differently?

Share your student ideas with us @TheWorldsLesson and let’s all imagine another world together!

Discussion questions:
• What do you think Arundhati means when she says, “It offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves?” What do you think the “doomsday machine” might mean?
• Do you agree or disagree with the statement that the “Pandemic is a portal”, do you think it is a chance to reset?

Other ideas:
• Ask students to think about what they would take with them in the suitcase as they walk through the portal. Encourage students to think of emotions and skills e.g. hope, creativity as well as material items.
APPENDIX 1  EXTRACT FROM “THE PANDEMIC IS A PORTAL”

Whatever it is coronavirus has made the mighty kneel
And brought the world to a halt
Like nothing else could
Our minds are still racing back and forth
Longing for a return to normality
Trying to stitch our future to our past
And refusing to acknowledge the rupture
But the rupture exists
And in the midst of this terrible despair
It offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves
Nothing could be worse than a return to normality
Historically pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and
Imagine their world anew
This one is no different
It is a portal
A gateway between one world and the next
We can choose to walk through it
Dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred
Our avarice, our data banks, our dead ideas,
Our dead rivers and smokey skies behind us
Or
We can walk through lightly
With little luggage
Ready to imagine another world
And ready to fight for it.

By Arundhati Roy