



OUT OF TOUCH ...? OR ON SIDE? Left to right: Gal Gadot, Pharrell Williams, Sam Smith, Jay-Z, Rihanna, Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and Ellen DeGeneres.

Life after Lockdown: ARE CELEBRITIES 'OVER'?

"We're all in this together!" announced the stars from their Hollywood homes during quarantine. But has the celebrity bubble burst? Who are our heroes now?

BEFORE YOU READ:

- What is 'celebrity culture'?
- Do you follow any stars on social media? Who? Why?

"This virus has affected the entire world," wrote *Wonder Woman* actor Gal Gadot on Instagram. "It doesn't matter who you are, where you're from – we're all in this together." Gadot, with twenty celebrity friends, then sang a rendition of John Lennon's *Imagine*. The star was well-meaning. Yet she received a roasting. Why?

Because it *does* matter who you are. The virus hasn't been 'the great equaliser' that Madonna proclaimed from her bathtub sprinkled in rose petals. The pandemic is no leveller for the doctors and nurses risking their lives, the delivery drivers

working night and day, the kids cooped up in cramped conditions and the millions losing their livelihoods – and loved ones.

So when talk show host Ellen DeGeneres compared lockdown life to 'being in prison' in her multimillion-dollar mansion and singer Sam Smith shared photos of himself sobbing on the steps of his lavish London home, few felt sympathy. "Another attention-seeking celeb!" read one comment. We couldn't relate. The stars were out of touch.

Text Check: If you are 'out of touch' – what does that mean?

What's happening? Chris Rojek studies sociology at City University in London: "When superstars transmit messages from their mega-compounds in the countryside they are saying: 'We're all in this

together,' but they're actually underlining an enormous gulf that separates them from ordinary people."

Text Check: What's a synonym for 'gulf'?

Of course, celebrities were never like 'us'. For decades, "stars always represented talent, charm and hard work," writes Amanda Hess in an article called *Celebrity Culture is Burning*¹. Now they represent an unachievable gap. "The dream of class mobility dissipates when society locks down, the economy stalls, the death count mounts and everyone's future is frozen inside their own crowded apartment ..."

Text Check: If the economy stalls, what is happening?

Now with record numbers around the world facing long-term

unemployment, followers are calling out celebrities. When Pharrell Williams asked fans to donate to front line workers, they clapped back: "We're being laid off and can't pay our bills, but thanks for asking." Another simply said: "Read the room!"

Text Check: If you have been laid off, what happens?

Not every star was out of step. Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson refused to share his gym routine from his Hollywood home: "I don't post my workouts because I'm sensitive to millions of you around the world who aren't able to train in your local gyms and are stuck at home." Instead the actor used his platform to promote positive messages and advice. Rihanna and Jay-Z

donated PPE to New York healthcare workers and kind-hearted actor John Krasinski started a 'Good News' channel.

Text Check: Healthcare workers wear personal protective equipment or PPE. What is in their kit?

Social attitudes and values are shifting. As Covid-19 confined us to our homes, we've had time to reflect on who and what we value. Is it how we look? What we own? Who we spend time with? And we have new idols. The latest social media superstars are doctors and nurses – like Italian nurse Alessia Bonari. Her posts depicting the realities of the fight on the front line won her 160,000 new Insta followers. *Who needs Wonder Woman when we have real-life heroes?*

All answers are on page 23 ->

WORDWISE

- the bubble bursts (idiom):** the sudden end of a period of success
- rendition (n):** performance of a song or poem
- to be roasted / receive a roasting (phr, sl):** to be humiliated online and receive a witty or harsh comment about a post or your behaviour
- pandemic (n):** an illness that affects the whole world

- to be cooped up (v, phr):** to be confined in a small space, unable to leave
- cramped (adj):** not enough space
- livelihood (n):** job; how you earn your money
- to sob (v):** to cry hard
- lavish (adj):** excessive, extravagant
- class mobility (n):** the movement between a class system – for example, the ability to move from working class to middle class

DISCUSS IT

- Has your attitude towards celebrities changed during Covid-19? Why?
- What lessons has Covid-19 taught you?
- Who do you think are the heroes of Covid-19?

CURRENT GRAMMAR: COMPOUND ADJECTIVES

Find the compound adjectives in the text that mean:

1. With good intentions:
2. For an extended period of time:
3. A person who wants someone to feel sorry for them or react:
4. Nice, generous:

¹ The New York Times, March 2020.

BEFORE YOU READ:
Look at the speech bubbles. Can you
guess what the words / phrases mean?

Do YOU speak Covid-19?

How Covid-19 changed lives – and language.



I CAN'T SLEEP. I REALLY MUST STOP DOOM-SCROLLING BEFORE BED.

WELL, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? I'VE BEEN ZUMPED!

Are you fluent in 'Covid'? Chances are, you are! The pandemic has impacted so many aspects of our lives, from the way we study, shop and socialise, to the words we speak.

"Great social change brings great linguistic change, and that has never been truer than in this current global crisis," says Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Executive Editor Bernadette Paton. The OED team of linguists monitor developments in language and update the dictionary quarterly, but due to Covid-19 they've added new words and definitions sooner.

"It's unusual to have words popularised in such a short space of time," adds OED senior editor Fiona McPherson. "Normally words take longer to bed in or take hold. When something is affecting the whole world, like Covid-19, it's understandable that this might be accelerated."

CURRENT compiled a lockdown lexicon:

Word: Coronacoaster (n)
What does it mean? A word blend (a portmanteau) of *coronavirus* and *rollercoaster*. It describes the common feeling of uncertainty and anxiety during lockdown – much like the ups and downs of being on a rollercoaster.
Example: "I'm not watching any more news. I'm getting off this coronacoaster!"

STOP & SPEAK
Describe the range of emotions you've felt during lockdown. Write five adjectives.

Word: Covidiot (n)
What does it mean? A word blend of *covid* and *idiot*, the term is used to describe a person who flouts the lockdown rules or behaves in an anti-social way, such as buying and hoarding hand sanitiser or not observing social distancing.
Example: "My flatmate is a covidiot – she regularly meets her mates and pops out all the time. People like her mean lockdown will last longer!"

STOP & SPEAK
What would you say to a friend if you knew they had been breaking lockdown rules?

THOSE GUYS ARE NOT TWO METRES APART! WHAT COVIDIOTS!

HOW CRINGE! I WAS ZOOMBOMBED IN THAT MEETING!

I'VE BEEN FURLOUGHED FOR THREE MONTHS. WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO WORK AGAIN?

MY FATHER'S BEEN WFH SINCE MARCH. HIS NEW OFFICE IS THE KITCHEN.

Word: Doom-scrolling (n)
What does it mean? *Scrolling* refers to looking through the latest posts on social media. And *doom* means deep trouble or a disaster: "We're all doomed!" "The news is all gloom and doom." If you've been unable to peel your eyes away from your phone, and find yourself constantly refreshing your feed for news about the pandemic – then you may be doom-scrolling.
Example: "I was up until 2am last night doom-scrolling about a second wave."

STOP & SPEAK
Are you glued to the news about Covid-19 – or do you prefer to bury your head in the sand? Why?

I FEEL LIKE I'M ON A CORONACOASTER RIGHT NOW.

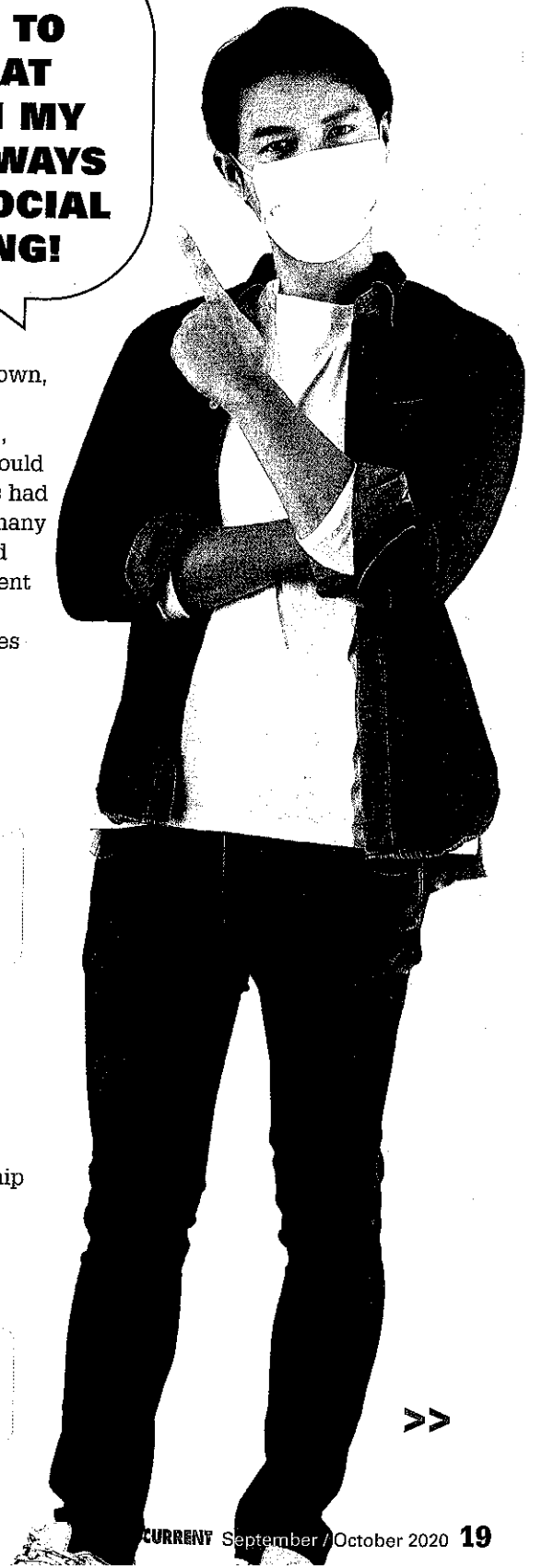
I JUMPED INTO THE ROAD TO AVOID THAT COUPLE ON MY WALK – I ALWAYS PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING!

Word: To furlough (v)
What does it mean? During lockdown, many businesses and workplaces (hairdressers, restaurants, cinemas, gyms for example) closed as they could not safely continue to operate. This had a huge impact on the economy as many staff couldn't do their jobs. To avoid mass unemployment, the Government introduced a scheme where they temporarily offered to pay companies up to 80 per cent of a person's wages. In other words, they furloughed workers.
Example: "I've been furloughed for ten weeks!"

STOP & SPEAK
Which professions couldn't work safely during lockdown? Which professions are keyworkers?

Word: Zump (v, sl)
What does it mean? Zoom became the platform to date on. But it also became the platform to get dumped on too! To *Zump* is a slang word blend of *Zoom* and *dump* – when a relationship is ended over the video messaging platform. Harsh!
Example: "Can you believe I got Zumped?"

STOP & SPEAK
Is there a respectful way to end a relationship? How?



>>