

## Then and Now

It is Spring 2020. Around the world millions of students are not in school or on playgrounds as people stay home during the Covid-19 pandemic. Quarantine protects us all, but without our usual daily routines we are doing and using things differently. This activity invites you to think about how objects in your life have new uses and meanings. For example, people are putting stuffed bears in their windows to greet people passing by. Children are writing messages to friends inside with sidewalk chalk. A game tablet has become a homework zone! What objects are you using differently? How has their meaning changed?

**Supplies** Pencil, paper, Venn Diagram Worksheet

### Directions

1. Think about objects that you use every day. Make a list of five objects that you are now using differently because you are in quarantine.
2. Choose one of these objects and create a Then and Now Venn Diagram Worksheet. In the first space on the left, list how you used it and what it meant to you before. For example, a Teddy bear might have been a bedtime companion you loved because a grandparent gave it to you. In the last space on the right, write how you are using it now. You might feel good about putting your bear in a window to give children a friendly face. In the middle space, list how the object is the same. The bear is a stuffed animal, a grandparent gave it to you, it has a name. Analyze your data and write your conclusions on the lines below the diagram.
3. Use the Venn Diagram Worksheet to analyze the other objects on your list. Save your Then and Now worksheets so that after the quarantine you will remember how life changed. Your activities and experiences during the pandemic will be part of history.

### Bonus Activities

- Interview a friend or family member about how they are using objects differently. Share your Then and Now stories with them.
- Create a webpage or artwork that tells a Then and Now story of how an object has new uses and meanings.

With thanks to Suzy Seriff, author of [\*Like a Jazz Song: Designing for Community Engagement in Museums\*](#) in the *Journal of Folklore and Education*