

COVID-19 vs Bubonic Plague

When reading about past history killing diseases you never feel or think that anything like that could happen in your timeline. Although our world medicine, education, and solutions have progressed very incredibly, it's still necessary to take precautions. COVID-19 is an example on why you should be careful. The recent and still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is comparable in similar reactions of impacts on trade, politics, and economics as the 1300s bubonic plague. These two pandemics also have their differences and extremes. It's unbelievable to see that history always repeats itself, especially since we have been able to live through it.

Both of these outbreaks caused international trade to plummet and prices to rise.¹² “The year 2020 was marked by some of the largest reductions in trade and output volumes since World War II.”³ This was after covid-19 hit and trade services are just finally starting to go back to normal but are growing at an incredibly slow rate. Covid-19 and the bubonic plague both resulted in heavy inflation. During covid lockdowns basic necessity products prices raised incredible amounts due to demand for groceries, and gas prices were up more than about 22% from the previous year.⁴ These outcomes are similar to those of the bubonic plague. During the bubonic plague, “High labor costs caused landowners to look for more efficient and profitable ways to use their land and resources, such as increasing livestock production and payments of

¹<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/international-trade-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-big-shifts-and-uncertainty-d1131663/>

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³<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/international-trade-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-big-shifts-and-uncertainty-d1131663/>

⁴ [Coronavirus pandemic forces sharp price hike on consumer goods - CBS News](#)

rent in money, rather than labor.”⁵ Even though these two reactions of the pandemics are similar there were completely different happenings. Since the labor shortage during the plague workers got to raise their own salaries, being able to spend more money on consumer goods, and increase trade networks that helped the economy.⁶ Nothing like this happened during covid, the only reasons wages increased during the plague was because so many people died that there were no workers left.

Other effects on overall society was the immediate change in government style and conflict in politics that surfaced in these crucial times. The plague did not spare anyone and left Europe in shambles. Europe was in a medieval society at the time but that did not last for long, “The plague and its aftermath disrupted medieval society, hastening changes that were already in the making.”⁷ This was the starting point of early modernity. The century of war between England and France beginning was the main contribution to Europe's society quickly collapsing.⁸ On the other hand, covid-19 was still harsh but was not as brutal as the bubonic plague. The main impacts on politics that covid made was avoiding unnecessary contact at all costs. Everything to do with elections and campaigning was either made virtual, by mail, or shrunken conventions.⁹ “For many voters, COVID-19 has changed what the election is about.”¹⁰ During the pandemic many didn't like the way that Donald Trump handled it, causing many to become democratic. Since our time hasn't really had a pandemic as strong as covid-19 no one really knew how to deal with it and handle it which caused anger and more danger to the populations health. Unlike the

⁵ [Bubonic Plague \(article\) | Khan Academy](#)

⁶ [COVID-19 and The Bubonic Plague \(ukessays.com\)](#)

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⁹ [7 Ways COVID-19 has Changed Politics \(voanews.com\)](#)

¹⁰ [7 Ways COVID-19 has Changed Politics \(voanews.com\)](#)

plague, the covid pandemic brought slight indications that conflict might arise but nothing serious happened. These two pandemics had two very different experiences to change in politics

Lastly, these two pandemics created issues in the economic state. Covid-19 impacts mainly affected our economy worse than anything else. This pandemic has reached almost every country in the world. “2.9 million more Americans have filed for unemployment, bringing the two-month total to more than 36 million.”¹¹ And that's only in the US. Countries are still lagging behind in getting back to normal. International travel and tourism industry is still feeling the effects and billions of dollars have been lost.¹² Consumers are still scared to shop and at the time there was a huge shortage of products in china. Although in the 1300s the population wasn't as big, and international infection was more unlikely there was not one industry unaffected by the plague. “Those cities hit with the plague shrank, leading to a decrease in demand for goods and services and reduced productive capacity.”¹³ The only reason covid-19s impact on our economy looks worse is because we have a way bigger population then back then and travel by air, and getting shipped products constantly from across the world wasn't possible.

Overall, there is no way to know when a pandemic like these will hit and what the impacts on our world will be. These are just two major pandemics that have their similarities and differences. They both had an impact on trade, politics, and the economy but in slightly different ways. Due to the plague being in the 1300s it is obvious that a pandemic can't nearly be the same back then as it is now in our modern world. Covid was also exposed more internationally and the

¹¹ [The economic effects of the coronavirus around the world | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/articles/2020/04/29/the-economic-effects-of-the-coronavirus-around-the-world/)

¹² [Coronavirus: How the pandemic has changed the world economy - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55181111)

¹³ [Bubonic Plague \(article\) | Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.com/a/bubonic-plague-article/a/bubonic-plague-article)

plague was mainly in Europe. If the plague happened now our world would definitely be in great danger. It's fascinating to see how in two very far away timelines our history was still slightly repeated. It's easy to see that pandemics can cause major chaos and put our society to the test.