

Hi Lycée Descartes!

I hope that yourselves and your families are safe and aren't finding this period of isolation too difficult. I hope, also, that you are managing well with your online classes – I am thinking of you all at this time!

I made the decision to leave France last week before the beginning of the lockdown and made my way back to the UK with the help of your lovely teachers. I was sad to leave France but knew that I would feel safer with my family at home.

As you might have heard, our lockdown in the UK began last night (23rd March), with Boris Johnson's announcement coming almost exactly one week after Macron's. A little over 3 weeks ago, Johnson's approach was very different, but I think that people are finally starting to understand the severity after ignoring advice for so long. Starting from today, however, we have the freedom to leave the house only once each day to exercise, visit the supermarket, or to go to work (if you are an 'essential worker').

From a personal perspective, I am finding it also surreal, as I'm sure you all are too. In some ways, it is really nice to spend time with my family who I haven't seen in a while. However, it's difficult being unable to see my extended family, like my grandparents, or my friends. We are relying on Facetime and group chats to stay in contact and keep our spirits up – I even went to wave to my grandparents through the window to let them know I was safe and thinking of them.

To keep myself busy, I've been making meals for my family, who are mostly working from home (apart from my Dad who still had to work), and playing board games or watching films in the evening. My friends in France and I usually go to a pub quiz on a Monday night in Paris, but as that's not possible right now, we decided to create our own to do online! It was good fun and a nice way to keep in touch with the people I can't see. I do, however, already feel like I'm going a little crazy with no routine and am snacking a little too often... it's going to be a long few weeks!

This weekend made it all a bit harder for people in the UK. Sunshine and blue skies are a rare occasion here, but this weekend was bright and warm – usually perfect weather for the beach or a stroll through the busy Lake District for us. On top of that, it was UK Mothers' Day on Sunday, usually time for families to get together and celebrate everything our mams, grans and other mother figures do for us. In one way it was nice to spend the day with my Mam at home since I had planned to still be in France; in another, it was difficult to be just five minutes' drive from my Gran and unable to spend the day with her as usual. Unfortunately, not everyone respected social distancing at this time, though, and we were all shocked to see picture on the news of packed seashores and National Parks, making the day even more frustrating for those who stayed home.

I will provide regular updates to stay in contact and let you know everything that's happening (or not happening, I guess!) here in the UK. I hope you all stay safe in this strange time!

Kate