



Superhumans VS. the CoVillain

Greetings, superheroes! I know the last few months may have been confusing and scary. With school getting moved online, not seeing your friends, always staying at home, not getting to hug your grandparents - none of it makes sense, and you really wish things were back to normal, I bet. I know that I do. I wish I could snap my fingers and erase the last few months but I just don't have that kind of power. However, I do hope I can make the situation a little less scary but giving you some power - through knowledge! **Knowledge and truth help squash out fear**, so I'm going to explain a bit of this "coronavirus" business and how you can use your superpowers to help save the world.

The coronavirus has a bunch of other names, including Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2, but for this story, we'll call it the CoVillain.

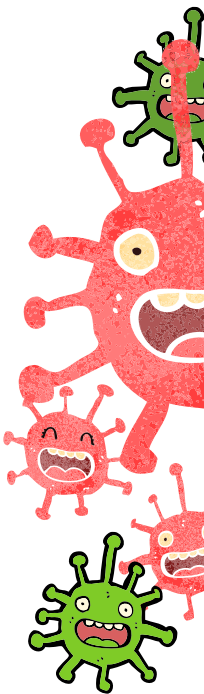
The CoVillain is a virus, which is a cell that is even smaller than the cells in our body. The CoVillain has a version of DNA, like our cells do, which are little particles that tell us how to grow and what makes us unique. Unlike us, this villain cannot survive on its own, so it has to use certain evil tricks to continue living and spreading. Mainly, it uses an enemy, its host, to do that - **and the host is US!** That's right; it enters our human bodies and steals our cells, causing all kinds of damage to survive!

Pretty evil, right?

Because it's so small, it sneaks past us into our noses and mouths without us knowing. From there, it can move down our throat to our lungs, the organ that helps us breathe.

This is where the CoVillain uses its most evil of superpowers - the cough!

The lungs get irritated because an invader is living in them, which causes us to cough. Each cough has lots of tiny water droplets that spray out and can travel pretty far - **almost 6 feet!** The CoVillain hangs out in these water droplets and flies through the air so it can land on its next victim.



Because the CoVillain lives inside, turning our bodies against us, there are lots of other ways that it can beat us down. When infected with the virus, we can have trouble breathing deeply and easily, and sometimes we are left gasping for air. We can be really hot with fevers, have upset stomachs, pains in our muscles. The CoVillian can even make us lose our sense of smell and taste. All of these are the powers, which are called **symptoms**, that it uses to make us really sick and feel pretty lousy. It can cause some people, especially those who are older or have health problems already, to end up in the hospital and needing the help of doctors and nurses to help them fight off this villain.



The CoVillain spreads from person to person really easily, as it's likely that one person infected by this virus may spread it to at least three more people. Those three newly infected people can each pass the virus to three more people. The number of people with it continues to multiply, and as you may remember from math class, multiplying makes numbers quickly get bigger. This virus is scary, which is why some of the adults you know might seem more panicky and worried than normal.



So, how do we beat this thing? Well, that's where **YOU** come in, my friend! You and everyone you know- basically every person on Earth- can be a superhero in this story. You have the power to stop the CoVillain from attacking more people by preventing it from spreading from one person to another. We can be heroes by protecting our neighbors and protecting ourselves from getting attacked by this virus. Every good hero has a good superpower, and we have some cool ones that you can practice every day to help take down this villain:



Wash your hands!!! The CoVillain can hang out on your skin, waiting on you to touch your face so that it can sneak into your nose and mouth. To make sure it doesn't - wash your hands!! Scrub and wash with soap and warm water long enough that you can sing "Happy Birthday" twice. **The virus will wash right off your hands, right down the drain.**



Our superhero costumes are not like the capes, tight suits, and boots that some of your other favorite superheroes wear. Instead, we get to wear awesome, colorful masks and gloves! Remember that the CoVillain can travel in your coughs and sneezes. **Wear a mask covers your mouth, so those droplets can't land on another person and cause them to get sick!** For good measure, though, coughing into your elbow will give a double layer of protection and make sure that the pesky little virus doesn't travel very far.



This last power is a difficult one, especially for those of us who like a good hug, and takes a lot of skill and self-control. **It's keeping our distance, about six feet away from anyone that you don't live with.** By creating a space between you and the next person, a sort of invisible bubble grows up between you. That bubble protects both you and the person next to you - the virus can't travel that far and infect you.

Some of these actions are not natural for us; they take hard work to make them part of our daily lives. They can even make us sad - it's upsetting not to be able to hug our grandmothers or not to be able to high five our friends or to wear masks that make it a bit harder to breathe when we go out in public. However, if we all practice these skills, we can trap the CoVillain and prevent it from attacking others. We can isolate the virus so much that it has nowhere to go, and it will eventually die out. All of us can step up and be heroes.

One last bit of encouragement: You kids have one natural superpower that a lot of adults don't have much of these days. That's fun and laughter. You make the world a brighter place by laughing, playing, telling stories, making jokes, singing, writing notes, drawing pictures, waving and smiling. You are special and kind, and you save the day every time you share joy. Remember that when your parents are anxious, your grandma is lonely, your little brother is crying, or your older sister is angry - you have the power to share happiness and love and excitement with those around you. We'll make it through by protecting and loving one another, so this CoVillain never hurts us again.