

It's NAPLAN time!; Mammoths make a comeback; Sprints and Scrabble in Ghana; and a wild west winter showdown.

That's what's making news, kid's style...

THE LOWDOWN

It's that time of year again kids, when your school's wifi capability is tested because grades three, five, seven and nine are logging in around the country to complete NAPLAN - The national assessment program - literacy and numeracy. And yes, it starts today.

If you're in one of those grades and you're just finding out about it now, no worries at all! NAPLAN isn't a giant, frightening exam that decides your entire future. Think of it more as a test version of a selfie, capturing how you're doing in school right now.

It helps the big decision-makers (like the government and your school) figure out how everyone's doing and where they might need to give a little extra help.

Now, if you've been paying attention, you might have noticed that Naplan's come a bit early this year - how come Christmas never does that!?! NAPLAN is usually held in May, but this year, it's in March. This means your teachers get your results super-fast, so that they can help you learn even better, right from the start of the next term. Your parents will see how awesome you did at the beginning of Term 3, and the whole country gets the scoop in August.

While the number crunchers are the only ones loving NAPLAN, you just need to chill, take a deep breath, and do your best. Oh, and maybe hit the hay a bit earlier than usual for the next week or so.

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day, we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops, and today, we've landed in Ghana, on the sunny West African coast, where the African Games are taking place this week. Imagine this: 5,000 athletes from 52 countries, all gathered to showcase their skills in 30 different sports over two thrilling weeks.

This mega sports event happens every four years, in the lead-up to the Olympics. Although it was supposed to kick off in 2023, some hiccups with construction and money matters nudged it closer to this year's Olympic Games than planned. While some athletes are skipping out to prepare for the Paris Games, others are diving into swimming, sprinting

in athletics, serving in table tennis, and wrestling their way for a last shot at Olympic qualification.

And it's not just the athletes on show, the entire country of Ghana is at its dazzling best, boasting a brand-new Olympic-sized swimming pool, a shiny stadium, and an Athlete's Village that's probably cooler than any sleepover you've been to. And guess what? For all you word wizards out there, scrabble is making its debut as a demonstration sport. So, it's a big deal for athletes and scrabble champs alike! Let the games begin!

ANIMAL KINGDOM

Even though Manny the Mammoth from the "Ice Age" movies couldn't quite believe it, about 4,000 years ago, woolly mammoths, those huge, furry elephant cousins became extinct. Until now ... maybe. You see, an American company, named Colossal Biosciences, is on a mission to bring them back to life.

By using DNA which is like a tiny, unique, chemical instruction manual contained in every living thing, recovered from mammoth fossils, scientists are aiming to create mammoths 2.0, with snug little ears, a cozy thick fat layer, and, of course, that famous furry coat. But, they're scratching their heads over one tiny detail – how to start off a mammoth family. It's a bit like the ol chicken and egg problem!

And why all this mammoth fuss? Well, some scientists think that mammoths used to help keep the Arctic cool by stomping down grass, soil, and snow with their giant feet. They're hoping that bringing them back could help the climate chill out a bit. And if they nail it with the mammoths, the Tasmanian Tiger is next on the list. And then what, dinosaurs? Stay tuned!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

And so it's off to the mountains of Colorado, in North America we go where skiers and cowboys have been coming together this week to participate in the hair-raising sport of skijoring. Get this! In this sport, skiers, are towed by horses, dogs, snowmobiles and sometimes even cars, through a series of obstacles, jumps and hoops, all while trying to snag rings with a ski pole. It's as if they're racing in a real-life video game, zipping along at speeds

over 60 kilometres per hour. There's a link to video in your episode notes.

It's a tradition that's as much about spine-tingling action as it is about bringing together two very different groups of people in a spectacular show of bravery and fun.

From its Scandinavian alpine origins to drawing thousands of competitors and tens of thousands of spectators, could skijoring be the next Winter Olympic sport? I really hope so!

BBC EARTH EXPERIENCE GIVE AWAY - Winners

A huge thank you to all you clever kids who sent in their best nature documentaries as part of our BBC Earth Experience giveaway. BBC Earth Experience is on now in at Melbourne at the Convention and Exhibition Centre - and we have three family passes to give away. The entries were all excellent; it was so hard to choose between them. You can take a look yourselves because we're featuring a selection of them on the Squiz Kids Instagram page.

But, sadly, there can only be three winners, and they are, drumroll please,

- Mavi, who spun the globe, literally, and took us across this extraordinary planet.
- Lilla who got up close and personal with a banjo shark
- And because we couldn't choose between them, siblings Seb and Elaina, who share a prize for showing us their pets in their natural habitats.

We'll get in touch and get your family passes out to you.

Congratulations to all our future David

Attenboroughsdocumentarians!

THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. What is the name of the West African country currently playing host to the African Games?
2. For how many thousands of years have woolly mammoths been extinct?

3. What is the name of the winter sport that utilises the skills of both cowboys and skiers?

SHOUT OUTS

It's March 13 Our solar system's third largest planet was discovered by British astronomer, William Herschel, wayyyy back in 1781. Can you guess which it is? Yep, it's Uranus!

It's also a very special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Orlando from Leura, Deakon from West Albury, Eli from Brisbane, Sebastian from Ferny Hills, Kalotina from Nightcliff, Matilda from Dulwich Hill, Alexander from Horsley Park and Sam listening over in Las Vegas, USA.

Belated shout outs go to... Zoe and Ethan from Nelson Bay, Pasquale from Pacific Pines and Elliot from O'Conner.

Classroom shoutouts today go to... class 2B and Miss Black from Glen Iris Primary School, room 16 and Mr Hoskins at Mount Tarcoola Primary School, class 3M and Mr Cox from Cedars Christian College in Unanderra, the leafy sea dragons and Mrs Ritche at Mount Lockyer Primary School in Albany, class 5/6 and Mrs Cochrane at Holy Trinity Primary School in Wantirna and class GR05 and Mr Sumner at Aldinga Beach Primary School – stay cool down there today guys.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Ghana
2. Four thousand
3. Skijoring