

A freeway snaky stowaway; Scotland’s Nessy explanation; ‘checkmate’ champs battle it out; and ‘brain rot’ takes the crown.

Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what’s happening in the world around you.

I’m [Christie Kijurina](#)

It’s Wednesday, December 4 ...

In Squiz Kids Today ... A freeway snaky stowaway; Scotland’s Nessy explanation; ‘checkmate’ champs battle it out; and ‘Brain Rot’ takes the crown.

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

THE LOWDOWN

What do zombies and social media have in common? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it’s “brain rot”—the 2024 Word of the Year! The term describes the mental mush caused by too much mindless scrolling through low-quality online content. Sound familiar?

This is the first time Gen Z and Gen Alpha slang has made such an impact, with more than 37,000 people voting to help crown “brain rot” the winner. And it’s not just Oxford being influenced—over at Collins Dictionary, the word of the year is “brat,” inspired by Charli XCX’s hit album. You guys! Setting trends everywhere!

So, while you’re enjoying the holidays, try to balance your screen time with some time outside. No one wants brain rot over the break.

While today’s generations are leaving their mark on history with slang like “brain rot,” people have been finding ways to make their voices heard for centuries—sometimes by carving it into stone.

At the Tower of London, a British fortress once used as a royal palace and prison, researchers have used cutting-edge laser technology to decode graffiti left by prisoners from as far back as the 1500s. These carvings include astrological symbols, dates, and mysterious messages etched by prisoners awaiting their fate.

Who knew graffiti could hold so much history? And, just a reminder: while this historic graffiti is amazing, adding your own at a famous monument? Not so much.

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day, we give the world globe a spin and find a story from wherever it stops, and today, we've landed in Scotland, at the mysterious Loch Ness!

For centuries, people have reported sightings of something strange in the dark, deep waters of Loch Ness. Could it be the famous Loch Ness Monster? Or is there another explanation?

Alan McKenna, a researcher from Loch Ness Exploration, thinks a natural phenomenon called a "standing wave" might be the answer. These waves form when two boat wakes meet at exactly the right time, creating large peaks that look like humps rising out of the water. I've stuck a link to video of the waves in the episode notes for you to check out. Alan has captured footage of these waves near the southern shore of the loch but hopes to record one in its deepest waters.

Still, with 36 kilometres of cold, murky loch to explore, he admits the mystery isn't solved yet. Could Nessie still be hiding in the depths, keeping her secrets? I'd say, for now, the legend of the Loch Ness Monster remains alive and well.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

From one sneaky serpent to another... Imagine someone driving on a busy motorway when a tiger snake—a highly venomous and protected species—slithers out from under the car's dashboard and up their leg! That's exactly what happened to a woman on Melbourne's Monash Freeway over the weekend.

The driver, understandably freaked out, managed to weave through traffic, pull over safely, and leap out of her car. Amazing! Police and paramedics were called to the scene, prepared for almost anything—but maybe not a tiger snake!

A snake catcher was brought in to track down the slippery stowaway. Using his expert skills (and nose!), he sniffed out the musky-smelling reptile hiding under a rear seat. The snake was safely removed and released far from people and pets. And yes, there's a link to video in the episode notes.

While the driver wasn't bitten, she was taken to the hospital for a check-up. And as for the snake? Hopefully it thinks twice before hitching another ride!

SPORT TIME

Today's Sport Time isn't about a traditional sport—it's about a game of strategy, skill, and patience that's been played for centuries. Matches can last hours, it's even been played by robots, and it's all happening now. Can you guess? That's right—it's chess!

The World Chess Championship is underway in Singapore, with a jaw-dropping prize pool of \$2.5 million. The final showdown is between China's Ding Liren, the 32-year-old defending champ, and first-ever Chinese world chess champion, and India's Gukesh Dommaraju, an 18-year-old Grandmaster who's making history as the youngest-ever challenger.

This intense final battle of wits spans 14 gruelling games, with one point awarded for a win and half a point for a draw. After six games, the score is locked at 3-3. The first to reach 7.5 points will claim the title—unless it's a tie after 14 games have been played, in which case faster-paced tiebreakers like blitz and rapid chess will decide the winner.

You can watch all the action as it plays out until December 13 on YouTube and maybe sharpen up your skills for some family chess games over the holidays? It's your move chess fans!

INSERT PROMO - Kids Q&A Interview with Santa Claus

(Xmas bells) Can you hear that? They're reindeer bells - and that means Christmas is just around the corner. Have you ever thought how cool it would be to chat to Santa? To actually have that big fella in red answer any and all questions you might want to throw at him?

Well - we've pulled a few favours with a couple of elves we know and we've pulled off something of a Christmas miracle. Yes, ladies and germs: presenting the first ever Squiz Kids Q&A with Santa Claus. He's VERY busy right now - but he's nevertheless agreed to

take the Squiz Kids hot seat and answer any questions you send in for him. If you've got a question you'd like Santa to answer, email it to us at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au ... We'll choose the best dozen and put them to Santa himself.

And thanks to our friends at Warner Bros. - just by sending in a question- you'll go into the draw to win a family pass to Movie World on the Gold Coast ... How cool is that? So don't just sit there! Email us your questions already! You've got until Monday 9 December .. so get busy!

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. Which phrase has been crowned the Oxford Dictionary's Word of the Year?
2. What is the name of the natural phenomena a Loch Ness researcher thinks may be responsible for 'Nessie' sightings?
3. Which species of snake caused a commotion when it slithered out from under a Melbourne diver's dashboard this week?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, December 4th ... Cookie Day! What's your favourite? Double-choc chip? White choc and raspberry? Or the good ol' Anzac biccie? Whatever it is, was there ever a better excuse to grab a cookie? Yummumumumum

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today ... Nirvana and Aquilla from Bundaberg, Ella from West Albury, Indie from Pitt Town, Hunter from Wagga Wagga, Kaden from Langwarrin, Lucas from Wentworth Point, Rafael from Bronte, Chloe from Mount Riverview.

Belated shout outs go to ... Parker from Langwarrin Park and Grady from Echuca

Classroom shoutouts go to... to all of the students and teachers at Langwarrin Park Primary School, class 2F with Mrs Lombardi at Santa Sophia Catholic College in Gables, class 6M with Mr Ayuso at Thomas Acres Public School in Ambervale, class 6I with Mr Kitchell at Mansfield State School in Brisbane and class 3/4 with Miss Porter at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Portland.

And a reminder - if you celebrate a birthday over the Christmas break, send us your birthday shout-out by Friday December 13, and we'll make sure to include you in the weekly Quizzes that will be going out each Friday of the school hols.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Brain Rot
2. A standing wave
3. A tiger snake

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or if you want a classroom shout out - drop us a line at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - We'll be back again tomorrow.

In the meantime, get out there and have a most excellent day. Over and out.