

Scientists make a sun; Panda Cam is back; an Ashes showdown at the ‘G’; and a house in a highway.

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 Thursday, January 30

In Squiz Kids Today ... Scientists make a sun; Panda Cam is back; an Ashes showdown at the ‘G’; and a house in a highway.

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

THE LOWDOWN

If you turned on the telly at all this summer, chances are you saw a whole lot of cricket. The Aussie men took out the Test series against India, the Big Bash finished with a bang on Monday night as the Hobart Hurricanes smashed their way to their first-ever title—and now, the Aussie women are taking on England in the final match of *their* Ashes series.

Now, the Ashes is one of the most famous rivalries in cricket, dating back 142 years. And the first women’s Ashes series was played in 1934, but they didn’t get their own trophy until 1998. And get this—it was made using a hollowed-out cricket ball carved from a 300 year old tree, a and a miniature bat that was turned to ashes in a wok from the kitchen of the revered Lord’s Cricket Club.

The Aussie women have already retained the Ashes after sweeping the one-day and T20 matches, but this Test is England’s last chance to grab some points. And they’ll be doing it in front of a record-breaking crowd. The biggest turnout for a women’s Test is just over 23,000, but Cricket Australia reckons the MCG will *smash* that this week.

It’s also the first women’s Test at the ‘G since 1949, and Aussie captain Alyssa Healy is racing the clock to be fit—training in a moon boot just to have a shot at playing.

Oh, and if that's not enough cricket for you, the Aussie men started their series against Sri Lanka yesterday.

Apologies if cricket's not your thing. The footy will be back soon.

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day, we give the world globe a spin, find a news story wherever it stops, and today we've landed in Washington, D.C.—home of the Smithsonian National Zoo where they have 2 brand new giant pandas and Panda Cam is about to go live!

Long-time Squiz Kids listeners will know we love a good animal cam. From Fat Bear Week to the nesting bald eagle cam—and even the fish doorbell in the Netherlands—there's something magical about getting a live peek into the animal kingdom.

Now, it's the pandas' turn to shine! Three-year-old giant pandas Bao Li and Qing Bao made their big debut last Friday, along with a sparkling new exhibit and an upgraded Panda Cam. With over 40 cameras streaming live from 10 p.m. to 10 a.m. AEST, volunteers ensure we get the best panda playtime angles. Plus, zookeepers use it to monitor behaviour for better care. Panda Cam goes live this Saturday—link in your episode notes so you're ready! And if you're anywhere near Adelaide, remember you can see pandas IRL at the Adelaide Zoo. You lucky things!

WEIRD SCIENCE

Imagine creating a tiny version of the Sun right here on Earth. Well, scientists in China have just taken a big step in that direction! Their experimental fusion reactor has set a new record—running for 1,066 seconds (nearly 18 minutes), the longest-ever sustained fusion reaction.

So, what is that and why is it important?... other than just sounding amazing.

Well, unlike today's nuclear power reactors, which split atoms (a process called fission), fusion smashes hydrogen atoms together, releasing a huge amount of energy—the same process that powers the Sun. In fact, fusion reactions can produce about four times more energy than nuclear fission! And nearly four million times more energy than burning coal per kilogram of fuel.

The best part? Fusion is clean. It produces no greenhouse gases and doesn't leave behind dangerous, long-lasting nuclear waste, making it a potential game-changer in the fight against climate change.

So, while we're still a long way from fusion powering cities, scientists are making steady progress.

A Sun on Earth? Not yet... but we're getting warmer!

NEWSHOUNDS

Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound sticks his snout into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet ... and today his nose is twitching because, well, because he couldn't believe his eyes!

A video is doing the rounds on the social media platform X, showing a two-storey house—smack-bang in the middle of a motorway! Right in the middle of the lanes on either side—surely this has got to be an AI-generated fake, right?

But Squiz-E, having completed Session Five of our Newshounds media literacy program, knew exactly what to do. He put his detective skills to work, searched the internet for trusted sources who might have fact checked the claim, and—surprise, surprise—the story checked out!

A man in China did indeed refuse to sell his house when the government built a motorway through his town. He held out for a better deal... but instead of offering more money, the government built the road around him! Now, his house sits below in a hole in the middle of the highway with only a pipe for an entrance and traffic thundering past his roof.

Want to see it for yourself? Check the link in our episode notes. It's wild!

And teachers, you can find all the Newshounds resources through the Squiz Kids website.

Thanks Squiz-E, you've done it again!

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. Which country do Australia play against when they play for The Ashes?

2. In which Aussie zoo can you visit a pair of Giant Pandas?
3. What is the name of the nuclear reaction that takes place on the sun, is it fusion or fission?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Thursday, January 30... On this day back in 1982, the first computer virus, created by 15-year-old- Richard Skrenta was released into the world. Get ready for this kids... it was stored on floppy discs. As Apple II systems had double floppy disc drives, if you booted this disc up while a disc was in the other drive, it would infect it. And what did this virus do? Every 50th time an infected computer booted up, a poem would be displayed.

Ah... those were simpler times.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Luke from North Maclean and Lincoln from Brunswick Junction.

And belated shout outs - for those of you that celebrated a birthday during the holidays - go to... Lucas from Wantirna, Harvey and Abigail from Point Cook, Huxley and Inogen from Jannali, Neve from Ballina, Mok-sh from Plumpton, Ethan from Dalkeith, Isabelle from St Ives, Ben from South Vermont and Mabel listening over in Shanghai, China and Isabelle listening over in Houston, USA.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. England
2. Adelaide
3. It's fusion when two tiny atoms fuse together.

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, teachers, if you want to start the year with a special classroom shout out for your brand new class - 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 with the Kids Vs Adults Weekly News S'Quiz that you can now watch on the Squiz Kids YouTube channel too.

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