

A megalodon match-up; cloudy with a chance of Martians; the birthday behind bars; and a crash course in Civics.

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, February 19

In Squiz Kids Today ... A megalodon match-up; cloudy with a chance of Martians; the birthday behind bars; and a crash course in Civics.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Be honest—when you hear ‘civics and democracy’, do your eyes start to glaze over? It might not sound as exciting as Minecraft or Matildas matches, but knowing how our government works is super important. And guess what? Primary school kids are actually doing better at it than high schoolers!

A big national test on civics and citizenship found that only 28% of Year 10 students passed—that's less than a third! Even in Year 6, where results were better, more than half still struggled. And when asked how a referendum works? More than 80% of teenagers got it wrong. Yikes.

So why does this matter? Well, democracy isn't just about politicians in Canberra—it's about having a say in the things you care about, like protecting the environment, fairness in sports, or even school rules. But if people don't understand how government works, how can they make change happen? Experts worry that if young Aussies don't trust or understand the system, they might switch off from voting or getting involved when they grow up.

But never fear—Squiz Kids is here! We’ve teamed up with the Museum of Australian Democracy to create two awesome, free podcast series:

The Sensational World of Civics and

Gang Gang’s Guide to Referendums

They’re fun, Australian Curriculum-aligned, and ready to go! And to get you started, Episode 1: Why Canberra? is waiting for you in the Squiz Kids podcast feed right now and links to the classroom resource and all the podcasts are in your episode notes!

We think that this topic is super important so if you haven’t done it before... or even if you have... this podcast would be a great one to share with friends. You can do it right now using the share episode button in your podcasting ap.

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 North and South Carolina on the east coast of the USA, where scientists have made a jaw-dropping discovery—literally.

Imagine a shark as long as a bus, with teeth bigger than your hand—that was the Megalodon, the biggest shark to ever swim the oceans.

And here’s the even crazier part... scientists studying 12-million-year-old Megalodon teeth have found deep scratch marks on them. And these scratches could only have been made by another Megalodon. Yep—evidence that these giant sea predators may have fought each other!

One tooth had a huge scratch across it, in a way that couldn’t have happened from regular eating. So, were these prehistoric beasts fighting over food, territory, or just proving who had the biggest bite? Scientists aren’t sure—but one thing seems certain, even the ocean’s top predator had to watch its back!

SPACED OUT

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The Martian sky is putting on a light show, and NASA’s Curiosity rover is here for it! For the fourth Mars year in a row, the rover has captured shimmering, rainbow-tinted clouds drifting across the Red Planet’s sky.

These clouds—called noctilucent clouds, meaning “night shining”—only appear at twilight, when the setting sun scatters its light through the thin, carbon dioxide rich, Martian atmosphere. Some even turn mother-of-pearl iridescent, like a cosmic oil slick!

Scientists have noticed these clouds pop up at exactly the same time of year, suggesting Mars might have seasons—just like Earth! By studying them, they can learn more about how weather works on our neighbouring planet.

Oh, and if you want to see these Martian marvels for yourself, check out the sped-up video in the episode notes—because even on Mars, clouds don’t rush for anyone!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

What could a 104-year-old woman possibly have done to end up behind bars? Caught speeding on her mobility scooter? Stolen extra pudding from the nursing home cafeteria? Whatever the case, Loretta Chamberlain spent her 104th birthday in jail—on purpose!

Loretta, from New York, had one unusual birthday wish—to tour her local police station and experience life behind bars. And the officers were happy to oblige! She got the full treatment: handcuffs, fingerprinting, a mugshot, and even a stint in a jail cell.

What sparked this sudden interest in law enforcement? Loretta was inspired after she attended a “coffee with a cop” event at her nursing home and thought it would be fascinating to see how things worked on the inside.

And after all that, was she rattled? Nope—she called it “wonderful” —which is probably the first time anyone has ever said that about jail!

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 capital city of Australia?
2. Mars is also known as the _____ which coloured, planet?
3. Which event sparked 104 year old Loretta’s interest in visiting a jail?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, February 19... On this day, wayyy back in 1906 the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company was founded—now known as Kellogg's! What started as an accident... leaving some dough out too long.... turned into one of the world's most famous breakfast brands. Well wadda you know!

It's also a special day for George from Gunning... who is celebrating a birthday today! Wow, George, you have birthday shoutouts all to yourself today. February 19... well congratulations... I'm not sure that's happened before. We have plenty of Classroom Shoutouts though! Today they go to...

Classroom shoutouts go to ... Mrs Cole's class in The 'Creators Village' at Redeemer Lutheran School in Nuriootpa, class 5B and Mr Bird at Berserker Street State School in North Rockhampton, class 5G and Ms Gunson at St Ives North Public School and class 5/6T with Miss Turpin at Fernvale State School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Canberra
2. The red planet
3. "Coffee with a cop"

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after 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.