

It's NAPLAN time again; Vienna's vibing veggies; row row row your pumpkin; and an annual British riot.

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, March 12

In Squiz Kids Today ... It's NAPLAN time again; Vienna's vibing veggies; row row row your pumpkin; and an annual British riot.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Computer charged? Check. Packed your headphones? Check. NAPLAN browser downloaded? Check. Eaten a good breakfast? And, Check.

If you've ticked all those boxes, chances are you're in Year 3, 5, 7, or 9—becauseDrumroll... NAPLAN starts today! [YAY!]

Ok, that might be a bit too much excitement for some tests. But, they are pretty useful.

NAPLAN stands for the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, and this year, nearly 1.3 million students across 9,400 schools will be taking part. It's a way for teachers, parents, and schools to track how kids are progressing in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and numeracy over time.

This is the second time for this cohort of kids, that the tests are happening in March instead of May—which means schools and education departments will get results earlier in Term 2. That helps teachers plan lessons and even lets governments figure out which schools need extra support.

And, if you're feeling a little nervous, that's totally normal! NAPLAN isn't about passing or failing—it's just about seeing where you're at so you can get help if you need it or extra challenges if you're breezing through.

Oh, and if you're in a school affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred in Queensland and northern NSW, you get a bit more time—your tests start next Monday.

A while back, we did a Q+A with former NAPLAN boss Peter Titmaniss and he says that *"Tests are just another part of school life. All anyone expects is for you to do your best."*

And if you want to hear more from him about all things NAPLAN, just stay listening after today's podcast!

And remember... you got this!

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 Vienna, Austria, where a group of musicians has taken the saying "playing with your food" to a whole new level!

The Vienna Vegetable Orchestra just set a world record for performing 344 concerts—not with violins or trumpets, but with carrot recorders, cucumberphones, and even a leek violin! Yep, for 27 years, these 11 musical masters have been hollowing out carrots, peeling onion skins, and drumming on eggplants to create their one-of-a-kind sound.

Why? That's a great question! Because they want to show that music can come from anywhere—even the supermarket! And since their instruments are fresh, the audience can actually hear the sound change as the veggies dry out under the stage lights!

I've popped a link in the episode notes so you can watch these veggie maestros in action. And seriously, someone forward this to your school's music teacher please! — imagine that lesson!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Speaking of weird uses for vegetables... one pumpkin-loving scientist in the NSW town of Tumut just rowed his giant, prize-winning pumpkin down a river—again!

For the second year in a row, Mark Peacock wowed a crowd of thousands by paddling his home-grown, 426kg pumpkin down the Tumut River. That's bigger than last year's 407kg giant, which won top prize at the Sydney Royal Easter Show!

Mark is obsessed with growing mega-pumpkins. And it's not as simple as just tossing some seeds in the dirt. Mark studies weather patterns, places sand under the pumpkin so it can slide and grow, and even pitches a tent over them to stop the skin from hardening too soon. Who knew growing pumpkins was this complicated?

And, I suppose one thing's for sure... he won't be running out of pumpkin soup any time soon.

SPORT TIME

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This podcast is turning into a bit of a weirdfest today—but hey, normal is overrated! And speaking of weird... let's head to Derbyshire, England, where a centuries-old ball game just played out in the streets—and it makes regular soccer look like a polite game of chess.

It's called Royal Shrovetide, a two-day football match that's been happening since at least the 1600s. And rule number one? No murder. Which really makes you wonder what was happening before they made that official...

Each year on Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, hundreds of players—split into the Up'ards and Down'ards—battle to move a giant, watermelon-sized, hand-painted leather ball through a five-kilometre playing field. And when I say playing field, I mean streets, rivers, hedgerows—basically anywhere except churchyards.

The game rages for eight hours each day, and this year, the Down'ards took the win, scoring the only goal of the match.

A sport that looks like a riot, lasts two days, and has a "no murder" rule? England, you've outdone yourself.

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. Which vegetable did the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra make a violin out of?

2. How much did the giant pumpkin that Mark Peacock rowed down the river this year weigh?
3. What is the number one rule of Royal Shrovetide?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, March 12 ... After Melbourne United snatched victory from the Illawarra Hawks on Saturday night, both side will line up tonight for Game II of the National Basketball League best of five finals series. Go the Hawks!

Today is also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Logan from Prosperpine, Harvey from Bellevue Hill, Aurora from Googong, Isabel from Everton Park and Jamie listening over in Hong Kong.

Belated shoutouts go to... Clara from the Blue Mountains and Kaylee from Bundaberg.

Classroom shoutouts go to ... class 3M at Lake Clarendon State School, year 502 with Ms Achal at International School Suva in Fiji, class 6S with Mrs Carter and Mrs Sikorski at Cherrybrook Public School, class 3 Red with Ms Loyd-Jones at Downlands College in Toowoomba and class 6 Green at St Josephs Catholic School in Corinda.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. A leek
2. 426 kg
3. No murder

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.