

Astronaut rescue mission underway; Iguanas raft to Fiji; the world's longest church build; and dachshunds break a record.

Here at Squiz Kids - you probably know that we're on something of a media literacy crusade.

Our Newshounds classroom resource teaches kids how to think critically about the flood of information they're exposed to each day online. It teaches them how to spot misinformation - and separate online fact from fiction.

Since launch, more than 4,000 primary school teachers around the country have signed up to do Newshounds with their classes. Because it's free, because it's fun, because it's curriculum-aligned. And because it works.

But unless we get government funding to continue Newshounds, we may have to shut it down.

With a Federal Election looming, we need your help. If you think digital and media literacy is an important life skill our kids should be learning at school - sign our petition at change.org - the link is in the episode notes or you can find it on our website: squizkids.com.au

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

I'm Bryce Corbett -

It's Wednesday, March 19

In Squiz Kids Today ... Astronaut rescue mission underway; Iguanas raft to Fiji; the world's longest church build; and dachshunds break a record.

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

THE LOWDOWN

As the podcast goes to air this morning, in the sky above our head, a most remarkable rescue mission is underway.

I'm talking about the return to earth of astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore, who went up into space last June and had intended to only spend eight days aboard the International Space Station - but eight days turned into nine months.

Yep - for eight months and twenty days longer than they planned, the pair have been spinning around in orbit above the Earth in the International Space Station - which is like a great big science lab in the sky - 400 kilometres above our heads.

The pair got stuck there after their spacecraft had some technical issues.

So kind of like a car breaking down - but 400 kilometres in the sky - where there's no oxygen and only the vastness of space. So you know - it's a bit of a thing.

But they're in a brand new spacecraft now - and as we go to air, the pair will be preparing to turn that spacecraft in the direction of home and break through Earth's atmosphere in a fiery ball - whereupon a couple of parachutes will deploy at about 18,000 feet above ground level and they will hopefully float gently down to land in the ocean just off the coast of Florida.

Imagine stepping out onto solid ground, with gravity holding you in place, for the first time in nine months - after floating all that time in zero gravity. Astronauts who have done it say their legs are like jelly for days ...

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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 Spain - in the city of Barcelona, to be specific - where builders are busy working on the construction of a church called the Sagrada Familia.

A church that was started being built 143 years ago.

And the reason we've dropped in here today is because today marks the anniversary of when the first stone was laid in the construction of the church.

Now - you might be thinking: whoa! 143 years to build a church! Why is it taking them so long? There's a bunch of reasons - including running out of money, the small matter of a civil war, and the fact that the design by Spanish artist, Antonio Gaudi, is really, really complex.

But all going well - it could finally be finished next year.

So add it to your must-see list for your next trip to Spain ..

ANIMAL KINGDOM

And so to Fiji we go ... the swaying palms, the golden beaches, the glorious reefs - and the iguanas.

Wait. What? Iguanas? I thought iguanas only lived in South America ... how did they get to Fiji?

It's been one of the great mysteries among zoologists for decades. The distance across the Pacific ocean from South America to Fiji is so vast ... they could never work out how iguanas managed it.

But now there's evidence the clever little reptiles undertook what is believed to be the longest journey ever undertaken by an animal – aboard makeshift rafts of uprooted trees and vegetation - which they also used for food during the 8000 km journey.

So clever ... but that's a long trip - eating the same leaves ... surely they could have just taken a plane like the rest of us?

BIGGEST, FURTHEST, LONGEST

Ah yes - this is the segment where we mark the breaking of records .. and today we're in Germany, where a new Guinness World Record has been set for the number of dachshunds parading through a town together.

Because, yes, there's apparently a record for everything ..

The German town of Regensburg played host to this sausage dog extravaganza on the weekend - during which some 897 dachshunds took part in the Dackelparade.

Organiser reckon the number was closer to 1200 dachshunds, but the Guinness people only counted 897 .. they're pretty small dogs, I suppose, easy enough to miss a couple.

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. In which country is the famous Sagrada Familia church, which has taken 143 years to build?
2. In which country did a big parade of dashchunds just take place?
3. Name the reptile that scientists believe rode a makeshift raft across the Pacific Ocean to settle in Fiji?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, March 19 ... today is International Read To Me Day ... a day for kids to remind their parents and guardians how important it is to have books read to them on a regular basis. Because books are the best ..

Today is also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today...

Pippa from Clovelly Park, Anthea from The Rock, Arthur from Chinchilla, Ida from Middletown Grange, Zoe from Hobart, Eloise from Westbury, Imeth from Bundaberg, and Zaeli from Coolum Beach.

Belated shoutout go to... James from Tasmania, Eli from Maudsland, Annisa from Mansfield, Maeve from Croydon, George from Munno Parra and Justin from Sunnybank.

Classroom shoutouts go to ... classes Buru 2, 3 and 4 with Ms Ingold, Mr Bulmer and Miss Schmitzer at Googong Public School, class 1 Gadi with Ms Williams at St Andrew's Cathedral school in Sydney, class 24 with Mr Knight at Parkview Parua School in New Zealand, class 5/6D with Miss Challinor at Springwood Road State School and class 4T with Mrs Thompson at Singleton Heights Public School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Spain
2. Germany
3. Iguana

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.