

**Plastics battle for World Environment Day; pilgrims head to Mecca for the Haj;
Squiz-E sniffs a polly pooky; and sloths the size of elephants.**

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 Thursday June 5 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... Plastics battle for World Environment Day; pilgrims head to Mecca for the Haj; Squiz-E sniffs a polly pooky; and sloths the size of elephants.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Take a look out the window today - and take a moment to think about how amazing our planet is.

The blue sky, the trees, the ocean, the amazing landscapes and all the plants and animals that thrive on them.

And that's because today is World Environment Day - organised by the United Nations to get every country in the world thinking about how we can work together to take special care of this precious planet we live on.

And the focus this year is on plastics. Now plastic is an amazing thing - and so much of our modern lives - from medicine to household items to industry - relies on it. But it can also be really bad for the environment - whether because of how long it takes to break down in landfill, how plastic pollution in oceans can hurt sea birds and turtles, or even how microplastics can get into our food chain.

So there's an international treaty which will be discussed between all the world's countries later this year, which will hopefully start to control the production of plastics

and especially, create better processes for recycling it. Because according to the UN - at the moment, only 9 percent of the world's plastics are being recycled at the moment.

And according to the United Nations - while we need plastics in our modern lives - we just need to get better at working out way to recycle it in what is called a sustainable way.

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 a city called Mecca, in the country of Saudi Arabia. And that's because this week more than 1.2 million Muslims will visit this city and perform an important religious ritual called The Haj.

In the Islamic religion, visiting Mecca at least once in your life and visiting important religious sites there and praying to Allah is something that every Muslim should try to do.

Visiting Mecca and performing the Haj is a re-enactment of a journey that was undertaken back in 632 AD by the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

It means over 5 days, a million or so pilgrims, as they are called, will walk about 60 kilometres in the desert city of Mecca. It's easily one of the most epic religious ceremonies on the planet. And if you're keen to learn more: I've stuck a link in today's episode notes to a video explainer for kids.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Sloths might now be renowned for being sluggish, sleepy, cute-as-a-button tree dwelling gentle creatures - but 35 million years ago - they were the size of elephants, had long, muscular tongues that would rip foliage from the tops of trees, and even had armadillo-type armoured skin to protect them from predators.

According to scientists, the ancient sloth looked like a grizzly bear - but about five times bigger. Can you even imagine?

And because they were so big - they didn't hang from trees like today's sloths do - they roamed about on all fours - no doubt terrifying everything that came across them.

There were even ancient sloth species that lived in the ocean - and spent their days diving for sea grass.

How do we know all this? Because clever scientists called paleontologists have studied sloth fossilised remains - and even ancient sloth poo - to draw a picture of the giant herbivore. Ah-mazing...

NEWSHOUNDS

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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 he's come across a most concerning piece of misinformation. And this time, it's not a deepfake video or a piece of audio that's been manipulated - but a real politician saying something in an interview that's just plain wrong. Because that can happen too - and it's another way of misinformation spreading. In this case, it's an Aussie politician on a TV news program stating that solar panels can't be recycled. Now the clever fact checkers at AAP FactCheck took a look at that claim - and went to check it with experts - and it turns out not to be true. In fact, 90 percent of solar panels can be recycled here in Australia. And as luck would have it: that's something I know too because I've started interviewing university professors for an upcoming Squiz Kids series on renewable energy- and just yesterday, Dr Catherine Chan from the University of New South Wales told me exactly the same thing.

What's the lesson here? As always: it's to STOP, THINK and CHECK whenever we come across any piece of content, but especially online. Oh - and the other lesson: make sure your class is among the 4,500 that has started to do Newshounds - our free media literacy program for primary school kids. Help Squiz-E the Newshound in his quest to become the world's first Internet Detective Dog. Check it out at squizkids.com.au

Q+A CALL OUT

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Hear ye! Hear ye! His Majesty King Charles III hereby proclaims a very special guest has agreed to take the Squiz Kids hotseat and answer questions that you send in ...

Yes folks - to mark her one year anniversary in the job - we're excited to share that none other than Australia's Governor General, Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn has agreed to take part in a Squiz Kids Q+A. (CHEER)

And that's because she's keen to answer any questions **you** might have about her job, about how Australia's system of government works - and how and why kids should get involved in it.

Because you might think what goes on in our parliament is none of your business: but it's your country, you'll one day be in charge of it - and how can you grow up to look after something if you don't understand it or value it?

Here's some ideas for questions you might ask our Governor General? What's a democracy? And why is it important? Why is the King our Head of State? And have you met him? How did you get your job? What's it like inside Government House? Why should kids care about elections if they can't vote until they're 18? And what does media literacy and Squiz-E the Newshound have to do with any of this?

Parents: this is a great chance to get your kids thinking about where they sit in this democracy of ours - and teachers: get the whole class involved! Send in questions from your students and use this Q+A as a chance to dive into the civics part of the curriculum.

Questions need to be submitted by Friday June 13 - and emailed through to squizkids@thequiz.com.au.

So what are you waiting for? Don't just sit there, get busy already!

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What sort of modern day creature did ancient sloths resemble - except that they were five times bigger?
2. Pollution caused by what man made material - found in all sorts of common daily products - will be the focus of today's World Environment Day?
3. What's the name of the Islamic religious pilgrimage currently underway in Mecca?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Thursday June 5 ... the Socceroos play Japan tonight in a World Cup qualifier .. c,mon Socceroos! You've got this.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Stella from Toowoomba, Scarlett from Marburg, Aalyrah and Phoenix from Ashmont, Willow from Bullarah, Shekinah from Walkervale, Jadyn from Warrimoo, Aniya from Plumpton, Avinia from East Lindfield and Henri from Erskineville.

Classroom shoutouts go to ... class 6B and Mrs Moreton at Hume Anglican Grammar-Freir Campus in Mt Ridley, class 6A with Miss Kelly at Ripley Valley State School, class 1R with Mrs Ross at Newington College in Stanmore, class 4F with Mr Alizzi at Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School in Petrie and year 3 with Miss Mooney-Doe and Miss Knight at Pimpala Primary School.

And as promised - it's time to reveal the winners of the Classroom Shout Out Challenge from the month of May. Every class that sent in a Classroom Shout Out request in the month of May went into the draw to receive a virtual visit from me ... and well - because there were so many of you - and I like to spread the love around - we've decided to offer up the prize to not one, but three lucky classrooms ...

And the winners are ... drumroll please ...

- Class 6C with Mrs Smith at Echuca Primary School
- Emmaus Class with Mrs Spruce at All Saints College in Maitland
- Class 5/6 with Mrs Hutt at Exeter Public School

Congratulations! I'll soon be beaming into your classrooms from Squiz Kids HQ to say hello! Emma will be in touch with your teachers to work out the logistics

To all the other classes that entered ... don't lose hope. We'll do it again in a couple of months - promise.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Grizzly bears
2. Plastic
3. The Hajj

Otherwise ... 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 with the Kids vs Adults Weekly Quiz.

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