

The solar system gets a visitor; a 10-year-old makes chess history; skibidi goes mainstream; and solar cars race the outback.

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 August 20 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... The solar system gets a visitor; a 10-year-old makes chess history; skibidi goes mainstream; and solar cars race the outback.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Have you ever been on a road trip and passed through a town without stopping? That's exactly what a cosmic visitor called 3I/ATLAS is doing—zooming through our solar system without hanging around.

The “I” means interstellar—which tells us it was formed around another star, not ours, then kicked out of its home and left drifting through the space between stars for millions, maybe even billions, of years. And the “3”? That's because only two other interstellar objects have ever been spotted before.

This one's moving incredibly fast—over 200,000 kilometres an hour—and astronomers are pretty sure it's a comet, thanks to its fuzzy glow and possible tail. Later this year it'll pass between the orbits of Mars and Earth, swing behind the Sun, and then shoot straight back into deep space. The closest it'll get to Earth is about 270 million kilometres—so totally safe.

A Harvard professor suggested—just as a “what if?”—that it could be alien technology—maybe even a spaceship that slams on the brakes behind the Sun and stays here. Scientists say there's no real evidence for that, but it's got the internet buzzing.

Even if it's not aliens, it's still thrilling. By studying its gases and colours, astronomers might discover whether interstellar comets are made of the same stuff as ours—or something brand new. And if you want the full scoop, catch our Squiz Kids Science Short this Friday on YouTube, or in your podcast feed Saturday.

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 Liverpool, in the United Kingdom, where last Sunday, a 10-year-old girl made chess history.

Her name is Bodhana Sivanandan, and at just ten years, five months, and three days old, she became the youngest female player ever to defeat a grandmaster, which is the very highest title in chess, given only to the best players in the world. The win came at the British Chess Championships, where she outplayed Peter Wells, a highly respected 60-year-old grandmaster.

Bodhana's love of chess started when she was given a set at age five. At first she wanted to take the knight and queen away and play with them, but her dad told her that would ruin the game for the next player. So, she started watching YouTube to learn how to play instead, before competing in actual tournaments.

She now takes on opponents far older and more experienced, with no fear, always seeing every game as a chance to learn. And last week, that fearless attitude paid off with a historic checkmate.

POP CULTURE CORNER

Okay, brace yourself, because I'm about to embarrass myself trying to use your slang, kids. Ready? This week, the Cambridge Dictionary added some new words like skibidi and delulu... and honestly, I feel about a hundred years old just saying them.

So, skibidi. It started with those wild YouTube and TikTok videos of singing toilets with human heads (yep, that's a thing). But now kids use skibidi as a nonsense word for anything silly, random or just plain chaotic. Like if your little brother knocks over his spaghetti at dinner, you can shake your head and go, "So skibidi."

And then there's delulu, which is short for delusional. It's when you believe something that's never going to happen, like me thinking I sound cool using these words. Even the Prime Minister gave it a go in Parliament, calling some ideas "delulu with no solulu." Oof

Parents, don't panic—it's not rude, just some goofy fun.

So, keep calm and don't question the skibidi... just roll with it!

WEIRD SCIENCE

What runs on sunshine, can drive thousands of kilometres, and is built by students? A solar car! And this weekend, 37 teams from 18 countries will line up in Darwin for the World Solar Car Challenge.

It's a race like no other. Over seven days, teams drive more than 3,000 kilometres across the outback to Adelaide, powered only by the Sun. The cars look more like spaceships than sedans: flat, shiny, covered in solar panels, and built to be super light and super fast.

Most teams are university students... young engineers putting their skills to the ultimate test. The rules are strict: cars can only use solar energy stored in their batteries, must stop at checkpoints, and be safe enough for Aussie roads.

So, could solar cars ever hit the streets for all of us? Not yet... but challenges like this push the technology closer every year.

And if this story has sparked your interest, stay tuned, next term we're launching a brand-new podcast series, Planet Warriors, all about sustainable energy... including a whole episode on solar power.

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What does the letter 'I' in 3I/ATLAS stand for?

Is it a) icy

b) interesting

c) interstellar

2. What is the very highest title a chess player can earn... the one that Bodhanan Sivanandan beat at just 10 years old?

3. Which word, made popular by wild YouTube and TikTok videos, has just been added to the dictionary?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, August 20 ... World Mosquito Day, marking Sir Ronald Ross's 1897 discovery that mosquitoes spread malaria... the disease that makes them the deadliest animals on Earth. But they're not just villains: many mosquitoes also pollinate plants, and provide food for birds, bats, and fish. Not all bad... as long as they stay away from my ankles...

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

Sophie from Wagga Wagga, Poppy from Yass and William from Mernda.

Belated shoutouts go to... Dimna from Randwick, Sebastian from Googong, Alianna from Chester Hill and Oscar from Bayswater.

Classroom shout outs go to... Class 5TC with Miss Lesich at John Henry Primary School in Pakenham and class 1 Blue with Mrs Anderson at St Thomas' Primary School at Camp Hill.

And a huge shoutout to Mr Lyon, all the wonderful Year 5 teachers and to all my new friends at Pacific Pines Primary School on the Gold Coast who are making their own podcasts. It was great to meet you all on Monday.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. c) interstellar
2. Grandmaster
3. skibidi

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, the Year Five students at Pacific Pines Primary are helping me with the sign off today... get out there and have a most excellent day. Over and out.