

Big ticks for bush schooling; a backyard Viking Treasure find; gamers get a glimpse of the future; and a phone survives a fall from space!

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, September 2.

In Squiz Kids today ... Big ticks for bush schooling; a backyard Viking Treasure find; gamers get a glimpse of the future; and a phone survives a fall from space!

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

THE LOWDOWN

Put down your pencil, grab your gumboots and follow your teacher into the bush... At least, that's what 25 kids from one Sydney school did as part of a small study investigating whether learning and playing outdoors could help them do better at school.

For two hours each week, the Year 1 students swapped their classroom for Sydney's Centennial Parklands: climbing trees, building cubbies from sticks, spotting wildlife, painting with ochre and even writing poems about trees.

After ten weeks, researchers found the children had become more confident, independent and connected to nature. Teachers also said they seemed more engaged when they returned to regular lessons. And despite missing 20 hours of regular class time, their reading didn't suffer. In fact, the Bush School group recorded a bigger improvement in maths than another group of 25 classmates who stayed with their usual school program.

Now, this was a very small study at just one school, so scientists can't yet say that muddy knees are the secret to becoming a maths whiz, but outdoor schooling is already popular in places including Denmark, Norway and Britain, and a large review of international research found it can support kids' wellbeing, cooperation and enthusiasm for learning.

The world really can be one big classroom... mud, bugs and all.

Meanwhile, one of the world's greatest footballers has decided it's time to leave the international stage... football legend Lionel Messi has announced he's played his final game for Argentina.

The 39-year-old revealed on Monday that he's retiring from international football after 21 years, 207 games and a record 125 goals for his country.

Messi captained Argentina to World Cup glory in 2022 and helped take them to another final this year. But he's not hanging up his boots just yet. He's going to keep playing footy for his club, Inter Miami, in the United States for now.

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 Denmark, where a spot of gardening has uncovered a Viking fortune.

A homeowner was clearing the backyard of his house in Rebild to make way for a new terrace when... clunk! His shovel struck something buried underground. It was silver. Lots and lots of Viking silver.

Archaeologists were called in and have now collected around 700 objects and fragments, weighing a whopping 18.5 kilograms. That makes it the largest Viking-age silver hoard ever discovered in Denmark, and almost three times heavier than the previous record-holder.

The haul includes bracelets, 47 coins and coin pieces, a tiny Thor's hammer and silver bars called ingots, one of which is scratched with mysterious Viking runes.

Among the treasure were coins from the area we now call England and from the Islamic world. They reveal how widely the Vikings travelled and traded. Back then, silver was often weighed rather than counted, so jewellery and coins could be chopped into smaller pieces to pay for things.

Experts believe the treasure was buried sometime after the year 925 CE. But who hid it, and why they never came back for it, are secrets that will probably stay buried in history.

POP CULTURE CORNER

Hand up if you're a gamer? Woah!... that is a lot of you! Well, you might be interested to know that Gamescon, an enormous, yearly celebration of all things gaming, has just wrapped up in Cologne, Germany, for 2026.

Gamescon is part festival, part sneak peek into the future of gaming, with 368,000 fans this year getting the chance to test unreleased games, watch live tournaments, meet game-makers and wander through giant interactive displays.

One of this year's biggest reveals for younger gamers was LEGO Skylines. It's a city-building game where players start with one small block of land and turn it into a bustling LEGO metropolis, complete with roads, farms, hospitals, electricity and even rubbish collection. There are no instructions and almost everything can be customised. It's rated E for Everyone and will be released on computers and a number of different consoles, although nobody knows exactly when.

Visitors were also among the first to play Minecraft Dungeons II, where players swap their pickaxes for swords and battle their way through Minecraft-style dungeons. It's rated E10+ for fantasy fighting and comes out on September 29.

Other colourful crowd-pleasers included Rayman Legends Retold and Acornia: Mirror Worlds, starring a dessert-baking, spirit-battling squirrel.

I've stuck links to trailers for LEGO Skylines and Minecraft Dungeons II in today's episode notes so you can take a peek for yourself... you're welcome!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Have you ever dropped Mum or Dad's phone? Did it survive... or did the screen end up looking a bit like a spiderweb? Well, this story is for you... A phone-case company has taken drop testing to ridiculous new heights by sending a mobile phone more than 30 kilometres above Earth, and then letting it fall.

The phone was carried into the stratosphere by a balloon launched from northern Sweden. Then, at a height more than three times greater than Mount Everest, it was released and sent hurtling towards Earth.

And there was no soft landing. Guinness World Records was monitoring the whole thing and banned the use of a parachute, requiring the case to make direct contact with the rocky wilderness below.

After the drop, trackers narrowed its location to an area about two kilometres wide, but it still took the search team more than five hours to find it. And when they did, they discovered the phone was completely undamaged.

The incredible stunt set a new record for the highest drop of a mobile phone in a case. I've stuck a link to the video in today's episode notes. And, kids... maybe don't try this one at home.

BOOKWEEK ANNOUNCEMENT

What a brilliant Book Week we had last week! We've absolutely loved seeing all your clever, hilarious and downright amazing costumes. We found picking the winners almost impossible.

But we did it... eventually.

[DRUMROLL]

Five-year-old **Gracie from Bonbeach in Victoria**, wowed us as Wizz from Andy Lee's *Do Not Open This Book*.

Nine-year-old **Fergus from Tasmania** as Roald Dahl's BFG fully equipped with dream jars and trumpet!

Mason and Jack, aged seven and eleven, made a cracking combo as Macca the Alpaca and Dharma the Llama from Matt Cosgrove's books.

Then there's **Ruby and Audrey from Seven Hills**, aged seven and ten. Audrey was a truly terrifying Ms Trunchbull from Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, and Audrey shimmered and pouted as Marcus Pfister's Rainbow Fish. What a pair!

And finally, **Michael and his teaching partner**, who absolutely nailed Mr and Mrs Twit from Roald Dahl's *The Twits*. They didn't tell us where they're from... which feels like that might have been on purpose!

Congratulations, you lot! We'll be in touch about your prizes.

And a huge thanks to everyone who entered. You really did make choosing ridiculously difficult... we wish we had a prize for every one of you! If you want to take a look, you could ask an adult to check out this year's winners on Instagram

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 did a gardener find Viking treasure in their yard?
2. What is the name of the new LEGO city-building game?
3. From how many kilometres above Earth was a phone dropped and survived the fall?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, September 2 – Indigenous Literacy Day. This year's theme is Country Is Our Teacher, celebrating the way First Nations stories, cultures, languages and knowledge are deeply connected to the land. And it ties in beautifully with today's Lowdown. Long before outdoor learning became the subject of scientific studies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were learning on, from and through Country.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today...Harvey from Mitcham, Jaxon from West Albury, Mason from Albany Creek, Adaline from Mt Peter in Cairns and a belated shoutout to Adeline's brother Cillian, and Matilda from Naremburn who is turning 13 today!

Belated birthday shoutouts go to... Jhonny from Orange, Isaac from Melbourne, Billie from Ashmont, Dwity from Forest Lake, Pearl from Shoalhaven Heads, Eric from Belmont, Finn from Rocklea, Anaya from Kellyville, Alex from Bungan Head, and Mrs McIver from Kallagur State School

Classroom shoutouts go to ... Class 6M and their, teacher Mr Bishington, from Catherine McAuley Catholic Primary School in Orange, because they missed their last one...Class 5Y and their teacher, Mrs LeRay, at Lakes Grammar School in Warnervale... hope you're listening!! and Class 5/6 Opal and their teacher, Mr H, from Goonellabah Public School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Denmark
2. LEGO Skylines
3. 30 kms

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you'd like a shoutout, or if you want a classroom shoutout, or parents, if you'd like to shout out a class or a wonderful teacher... 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.