

It's NAPLAN report card time; Astronauts stuck in space; the island prison that wasn't; and cooking cane toads for crocs.

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, August 15 ...

In Squiz Kids Today ... It's NAPLAN report card time; Astronauts stuck in space; the island prison that wasn't; and cooking cane toads for crocs.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Were you one of the 1.3 million Aussie school kids who sat the NAPLAN tests earlier this year?

Then you're also probably one of the 1.3 million who received their results this week at school - and have had a chance to see where your black dot hovers on the the scales that measure how good we are as a nation of young readers, writers, and mathematicians.

Did you do ok? Good for you! Do you think maybe you could have done better? Well - that's the nature of exams, my friends.

And according to reports: you're in good company - with experts yesterday saying that one in three students failed basic tests of reading and writing.

Finding commas and recognising verbs was reportedly a big problem for many students with education experts now poring over the results to work out how to lift the results in the future.

And it turns out that where you live makes a difference to how well you performed - with kids in the cities generally doing better than kids in the country. And Indigenous kids doing three times worse than non-Indigenous Aussie students.

And girls: according to NAPLAN, you're better at writing than boys - though boys appear to have outperformed girls when it comes to maths.

And remember: as we always say here at Squiz Kids ... it's just a test. It doesn't measure how creative you are, or how good a sports player or dancer or painter you are .. or, for that matter, how kind you are. Because that's the real test we should all be trying to pass every day ..

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 on the International Space Station .. which is not technically on the world globe, I suppose, but hovering in orbit around it.

And the reason we've landed there is two fold. Because a couple of astronauts who thought they'd be spending a week up there are now looking at staying up there until February ... gosh - I hope they packed enough underwear ...

And that's because there have been a few technical issues with their spacecraft, the Starliner.

Happily though, the two astronauts have slotted into life on the Space Station with its other seven permanent residents - helping out with science experiments and doing their best not to get in the way. And most likely asking to borrow their deodorant ...

Meanwhile, one of the astronauts aboard the Space Station this week posted a video of the aurora borealis seen from space - the spectacular light show that plays in the north pole region of our planet. I've stuck a link to it in today's episode notes - because it's stunning.

WEIRD SCIENCE

Did you know that this week is National Science Week? Celebrating the important role that science and scientists play in our everyday lives? And to celebrate, we're shining a

spotlight on some truly weird but wonderful science being practiced up in the very northern-most bit of Western Australia.

Scientists there have been cooking up cane toads - euugh - to teach crocodiles not to eat them.

You see: cane toads have become such a problem across the Top End, that crocs have been eating them and in many cases, dying because of the cane toad poison.

So clever scientists have been teaching crocs not to eat cane toads - by cooking them up, removing their poison sac, injecting a bit of a chemical that makes the crocs feel a bit sick after eating the cane toad carcass - enough so that the next time they come across a live one, they don't eat it.

It's all about maintaining the delicate balance in the local ecosystem. So clever! Cane toad casserole anyone? No thanks!

NEWSHOUNDS

Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound pops his head into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet - and this week, there are just so many examples of misinformation and disinformation doing the rounds of social media, he doesn't know where to start.

But one example really caught his eye. An example of disinformation -which is when someone creates fake news with a sinister motive -which is to say, to create chaos and confusion. In this case, someone created a fake news story claiming the UK government had set up a prison on a far-away island to send people who had been rioting in the streets. The faker had used Photoshop to make the story look like it had been reported by an actual newspaper in London - and it looked so authentic that Tesla founder and the owner of the X message platform Elon Musk retweeted it to his millions of followers, before realising he had been tricked.

Another reason to always do as Squiz-E tells us: and that's to - say it with me - Stop, Think and Check before believing everything we see on the internet.

And a special shout out to Squiz-E for all the hard work he's been doing lately overhauling 'Newshounds' - Squiz Kids free media literacy program for primary school kids ... we're so excited to share with you the new website, new sessions and new game board - it's looking REALLY good ...

BOOK WEEK PROMO

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Don't forget our book week competition is underway and will be in full swing next week...

For your chance to win an Allen + Unwin book pack - all you have to do is upload to an adult's Instagram account a photo of your book week costume - tagging us @squizkids or using the hashtag Squiz Kids.

We'll share them on our socials to get into the Book Week spirit of things ..

And remember: we're looking for effort as much as we're looking for excellence. Even if your mastery of the glue gun is not so good, we want to see how you've had a go .. in the great Aussie tradition.

'Cos you got to be in it to win it ...

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What's the name of the spacecraft that's been having technical problems and can't bring a couple of astronauts back down to Earth?
2. Which animal - an invasive species - have been making crocs sick in WA?
3. What's the name of the spectacular light show that plays in the sky above the north pole?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Thursday, Aug 15... birthday of Hunger Games star, Jennifer Lawrence.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Evelyn from Yass, Elijah from Somerville, Bella from Rutherford, Kelsie from Pymble, Ella from Carnegie, Zachary from Canberra, Jaxon from Perth and Caitlin from Lane Cove.

Belated shoutout go to...

Today's classroom shoutouts go to... class 5B with Miss Breanan and Mr Washington at Bannockburn Primary School, class 3/4M with Mrs Fowke at Inverell Public School, Learning Support Group with Mr Ayres and Sacred Heart College in Newtown, class 5N with Mrs Scheiwe at Gumdale State School, class 5/6CM with Mrs Morrow at Mirani State School, class 5/6A with Mrs Graham at Bradbury Public School and class 3/4I with Mrs Mosley at Sutherland North Primary School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Starliner
2. Cane toads
3. Aurora Borealis

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or if you want 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 v adult weekly news s'quiz

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