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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

WORLD BOOK DAY
March 2025

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WORLD BOOK DAY TOKEN INSIDE!



KIDS




CHEETAH CHASE!

Meet the planet's fastest land animal...



LEOPARD SEAL ENCOUNTER!

SECRETS OF THE FAKE LAKE!

THE LIFE OF JANE GOODALL!

Go behind the scenes of animal rescue!

Young Vets Club is the ultimate club for animal-loving kids who want to discover how animals are really cared for - and how they can one day help protect them.

Created by WVS, the global charity working on the frontline of animal rescue, treatment and protection worldwide, Young Vets Club gives members behind-the-scenes access to real vet work, wildlife rescue and conservation.

With four inspiring magazines each year and a brand-new welcome pack, members take their first real step into the world of animal welfare - learning from the vets and teams who save animals every day, and becoming part of a global community of young animal champions.



Discover the new
Young Vets club

youngvetsclub.com

£36 / year

That's just £3 a month!

Best for ages 7-14

Happy springtime, Kids!

The world's fastest animal graces our cover this month – a sweet and speedy cheetah! Learn about its extraordinary anatomy on page 10, and then turn to page 18 to meet some more awesome animal athletes – ones we reckon would win a wild version of the recent Winter Olympics!

Plus, on page 12, we dive beneath the ice with a brave Nat Geo Explorer, who gets up close to a 'scary' leopard seal. Their interactions might surprise you!

And ever wondered why beaches have sand? Or whether pets know their names? Find out in our Brainy Questions feature on page 34.

Enjoy the mag and see you next time!

Editor Tim and the Nat Geo Kids team



FREE this issue...



4 POSTERS!

COOL QR CODES

We've put some QR codes in this month's mag. If you point a smart device at them, you'll be taken to more awesome stuff online. Try it here!



Write to Nat Geo Kids

Email kids@ngkids.co.uk
 Post 76 Marylebone High Street, London, W1U 5JU
 Website natgeokids.com
 Facebook facebook.com/natgeokids
 Instagram instagram.com/natgeokidsuk
 Pinterest pinterest.co.uk/natgeokidsuk



For competition terms and conditions visit natgeokids.com/uk/ts-and-cs/

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A close look at our cover star, the super-fast cheetah!



12 SEAL WHO LOVED ME!

Nat Geo Explorer Paul Nicklen shares his intense seal encounter



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Discover the remarkable life of ape expert Dr. Jane Goodall



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Who would win in a wildlife version of the Winter Games?



30 FAKE LAKE!

An incredible illusion on the salt flats of Bolivia, South America

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Cover: Pokémon © The Pokémon Company; International Buzzle © James Yamaski; Cheetah © Getty Images; UK Seal © Paul Nicklen / National Geographic Image Collection; Lake © Shimji / Getty Images; Jane Goodall © Marek Jagucki; This page: Cheetah © Andy Rouse / Nature Picture Library; Seal © Paul Nicklen / National Geographic Image Collection; Jane Goodall © Marek Jagucki; Penguin © Alamy; Skeleton © Thomas Eisenhuth / Springer / Getty Images; Lake © Shimji / Getty Images; Lemurs © Getty Images UK

COOL NEWS

Inspiring stories from around the globe...



Volunteers clear up the mess



Millions of chips and loads of onions covered the beach

Chip wreck found!



Beachgoers in East Sussex got a big surprise last month when thousands of bags of frozen chips washed up on a seashore near Eastbourne.

Joel Bonnici, who stumbled across the fries while walking on Falling Sands, said that in some areas the chips were nearly a metre deep! The sliced spuds had come from shipping containers that had fallen off a cargo ship during a storm in December.

Wildlife experts say that the decomposing potatoes and plastic bags are a threat to wildlife, including a nearby colony of seals, which might eat the plastic. Thankfully, Joel and volunteers from a group called Plastic Free Eastbourne have been helping clear up the beach and most of the plastic has now been removed. Well done, team!

Weird new plants!



Last year, 125 plant species and 65 fungi were named as 'new to science' by scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew – and some of them were really odd! Our faves include a gruesome 'zombie' fungus (near right), which infects trapdoor spiders inside their burrows. It smothers them with white rootlike threads called mycelium and then bursts out of their corpse. Yikes! Researchers also named a new 'living-stone' species discovered in Namibia, southern Africa – they did a great job spotting the pebble-like plant on the woodland floor! And a flame-red flower, found in Peru, South America, was named after a fire demon in the Studio Ghibli animation *Howl's Moving Castle*.

A whopping 2,500 new plants and even more new fungi are described globally by scientists every year. Wow!



A very frightening fungi...



... a pebble-like plant...



... and a 'demon' flower were among the discoveries!

3 FAST FACTS!

E-WASTE

Discover more about this strangely named rubbish, and find out why it's a hidden treasure!

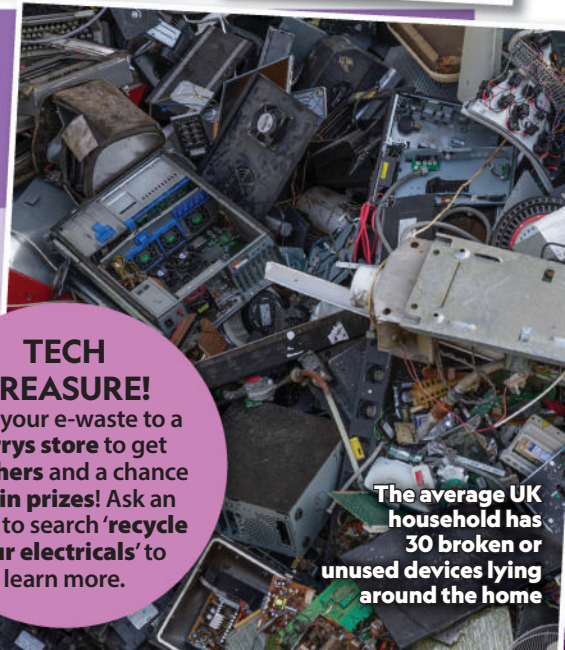
1 E-waste is short for 'electronic waste' – items containing batteries, plugs, cables and electronic parts that are unused or thrown away. Old mobile phones, TVs, computers, microwaves and even some kids' toys are all common types of e-waste.

2 In the UK, over 100,000 tonnes of e-waste gets binned every year and roughly 800 million old and unwanted electricals are left in cupboards! These items contain valuable materials like gold, copper, cobalt and lithium, which can be saved and reused if we recycle them.

3 You can give your e-waste a second life by taking part in *The Hidden Treasure Hunt* – a campaign to get kids and schools to track down their old electrical devices, recycle them and help the environment.

TECH TREASURE!

Take your e-waste to a Currys store to get vouchers and a chance to win prizes! Ask an adult to search 'recycle your electricals' to learn more.



The average UK household has 30 broken or unused devices lying around the home

Cow uses tool!



Veronika uses a broom to scratch her back!



Meet **Veronika**, the **tool-using cow**! This clever pet from **Austria** has learned to **pick up a broom** and carefully **scratch herself**. After videos of the cow's behaviour came to the attention of **biologists in Vienna**, they rushed to visit her! Tests confirmed that not only can she **pick up the broom**, but also change the way she uses it. **Veronika rubs the bristles on tough skin** but uses the **smooth handle on her belly**. This is **multipurpose tool-use**, only described before in humans and chimpanzees! "This forces us to rethink the **intelligence of cattle**," says **Dr. Antonio J. Osuna-Mascaró**, who co-authored the study.

Super-sized rhino sanctuary!



Brilliant news from **East Africa** – the **world's largest rhino sanctuary** has opened! Covering **3,200km²** (that's about the size of **Cornwall** in the UK), the **Tsavo West Rhino Sanctuary** in **Kenya** is home to **200 black rhinos**, the **largest population** of black rhinos in the country.

The Tsavo landscape was once home to more than **8,000 black rhinos**, but by **1989** their population had plummeted to just **20 individuals** because of **poaching**. Thanks to **conservation efforts**, the rhinos' numbers have increased, and now, with a **larger, more secure sanctuary to roam**, experts hope their population will grow to **2,000** by **2037**. Good luck, rhinos!



Good news for black rhinos!



GET INVOLVED!

MAR 9 -15

THE BIG PLASTIC COUNT

Become an **eco-detective** and take part in the UK's biggest **people-powered investigation** into household **plastic waste**. All you have to do is **count your home's plastic waste for one week** and **submit your results online**. The vital evidence you gather will show the true scale of the **plastic waste crisis** – and help urge the **government** to do more about it.

Currently, almost all food and household items sold in **supermarkets** are wrapped in **plastic**. And the last **Big Plastic Count** revealed that even when we **carefully sort our rubbish**, most plastic isn't recycled. Instead it's **burned (polluting the air)**, sent to **landfill** or **shipped to other countries**. Grrr!

● **The Big Plastic Count** takes place **9–15 March**. Find **toolkits and more info online**. Ask your **school** to take part, too!

A simple way for your family to **cut down on plastic waste** is to shop at **zero-waste refill stores**. Use the **Refill app** to find one near you!

MAKE IT A DATE

Key events for your diary!



MAR 5

World Book Day

Nab a brand-new book with the voucher on page 8!



MAR 6 -15

British Science Week

Download fun activity packs at the British Science Week website!



MAR 8

International Women's Day

Scan this code to learn about some cool women...



MAR 15

Mother's Day

Turn to page 48 to make a fun card for your ma!



MAR 22

World Water Day

Awareness for the **2.2 billion people** who don't have access to clean water

WACKY WORLD!

The planet's strangest pictures...



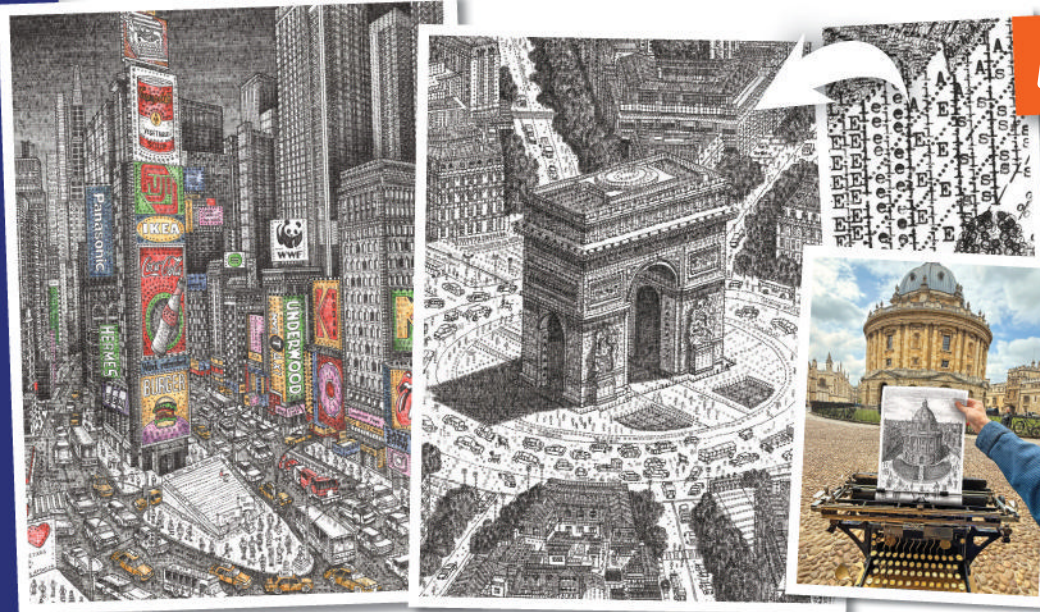
Surprising slices

Fancy grabbing a fork and tucking into these **yummy cakes**? Well, **don't!** Because these tasty-looking treats **cannot be eaten!** Artist **Heather Rios** 'bakes' the delish delights out of **craft foam** made from **recycled plastic**, then finishes them off with **embroidery** and **paint**. Yum!



Bonkers bath

Want to try 'ice floating'? Participants climb into special **'lobster suits'** – **thick, watertight dry suits** that help them float – and then lie back and relax on the surface of **icy water**. These brave bobbers were snapped at **Yudu Mountain**, near **Beijing, China**, in **February**. Looks like an **ice day** out!



Ink-credible

art



Forget **pencils** or **paints**. British artist **James Cook** uses **old typewriters** to create his **artworks!** James spends hours **pressing the typewriters' keys** so **numbers, letters** and **symbols** are printed onto paper, **forming images** like these astonishing **city scenes**. Painstakingly perfect!



BEAR BOTHER

Bear a thought for this **hairy character**, snapped during the traditional winter festival in **Ituren and Zubieta, Spain**. The **bear** – called '**Hartza**' – was **followed** through the streets by **40–50 cowbell-ringing Joaldunak**, said to **ward off evil spirits**.

STUNT COPS

These **police officers** marked **India's Republic Day** at the end of January by **balancing** on an **old motorbike**. The **daring display** was part of an event held in **Gurugram, India**.



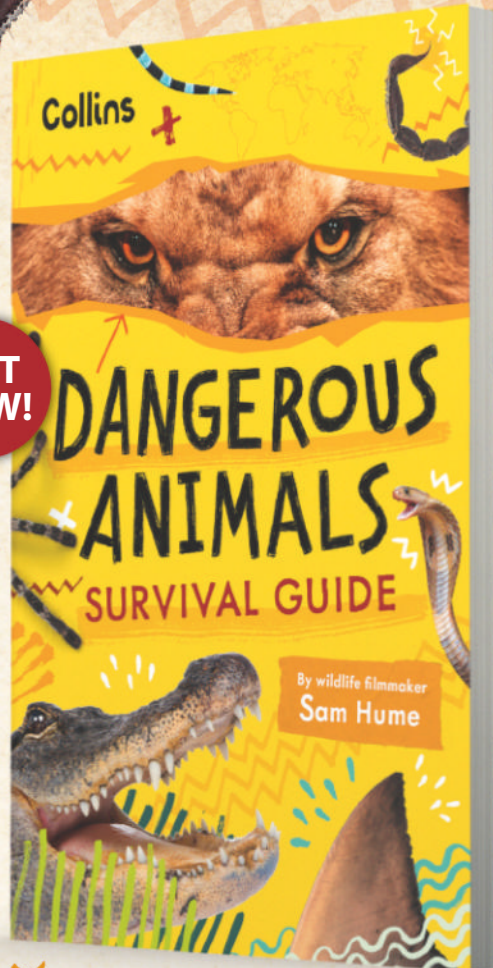
SILLY SHOES

Fed up of **treading on pieces of LEGO**? Well, now you can **wear** the plazzy bricks on your feet! Unfortunately, at **£145-a-pair**, they could still be a **painful purchase!**

Collins

DANGEROUS ANIMALS SURVIVAL GUIDE

OUT NOW!



COULD YOU SURVIVE THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST ANIMALS?

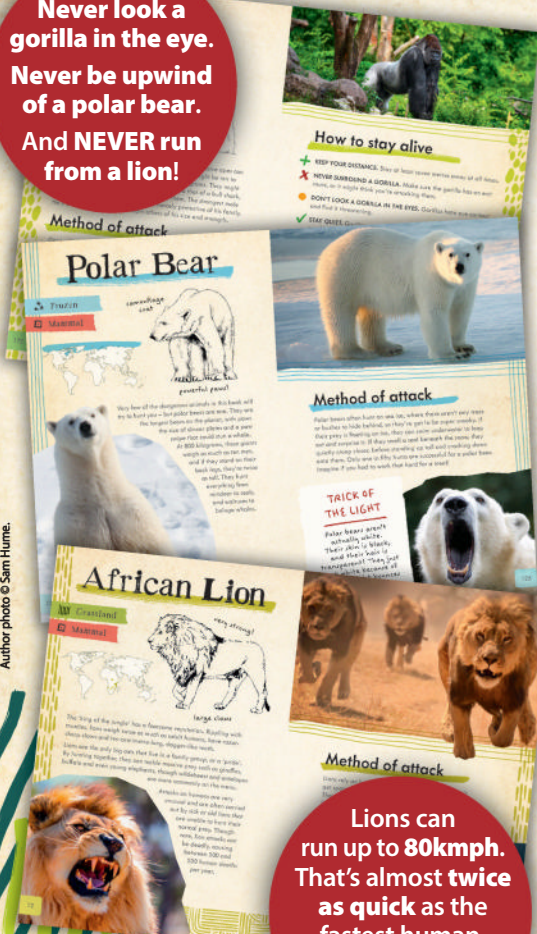
Meet **50** of the planet's **most dangerous creatures** and find out **how to stay alive** if you're (un)lucky enough to meet one!

Come face to face with deadly animals of all shapes and sizes – from **hippos** and **crocodiles** to **mosquitoes** and **scorpions**, and then learn the **tell-tale signs** that they might be about to **strike!**

You'll discover **where they live** and **how they hunt**, check out how they **defend themselves from predators** – including **humans** – and read about the **conservation challenges** they face.

This **awesome fact-packed book** will inspire **wonder** and **respect** for some of the most feared creatures on Earth!

Never look a gorilla in the eye.
Never be upwind of a polar bear.
And NEVER run from a lion!



Lions can run up to **80kmph**. That's almost **twice as quick** as the fastest human, **Usain Bolt!**

AUTHOR Q&A

We asked **wildlife filmmaker** and author **Sam Hume** about his wild new book...

Hi Sam! What inspired you to become a wildlife filmmaker?

I always loved **nature documentaries**, and after **studying Zoology** at university I thought seriously about **wildlife filmmaking**. I got a **cheap camera** and started filming **wildlife in my garden**, writing to every production company I could for experience. Eventually it paid off!

What's your favourite deadly animal?

It's hard to beat a **lion**. They're such impressive animals. I remember filming a **lioness in Zambia** who was an **excellent hunter**. Whenever she came past our vehicle she'd give the most **intense stare** that reminded me of **my place in the food chain!**

What's your favourite fact about a dangerous animal?

Hmm... while writing this book I learned that **Komodo dragons' sharp teeth** are coated in **iron**. Imagine that – **metal knives for teeth!** **Yikes!** **What's your top tip for staying safe in the wild?**

Give animals enough space so they can act **naturally** and not be **frightened**. Plus, **give yourself enough space** so you can get to safety if needed. **If you could be any dangerous animal, what would it be and why?**

I'd probably be an **orca**. They're so **big**, so **intelligent** and work together so well that they **don't have any natural predators!** I'd love to see the **ocean through their eyes**, and explore its many, many secrets.



WIN!

A COPY OF DANGEROUS ANIMALS SURVIVAL GUIDE

Ten lucky readers will win a copy of the *Dangerous Animals Survival Guide!*

For your chance to win, simply **scan this QR code** or visit **natgeokids.com** by **25 March** and answer the question below. Good luck!

Q How fast can a lion run?
a) 8kmph b) 18kmph c) 80kmph

HINT:
You'll find the answer on this page!



WHAT'S NEW?

A wild documentary series, fun films, events and brill books!



Big Cats 24/7

Prepare for a **big-cat binge**... series two of the gripping wildlife doc is here! Rejoin the lions, leopards and cheetahs of Botswana's Okavango Delta, and meet the elite wildlife cinematographers who film them day and night from their camp in the heart of big-cat territory. Using the latest camera tech, the team capture the twists and turns in the creatures' dramatic lives, as they cope with floods, extreme drought and the brutality of everyday existence. A brilliant insight into not just these incredible cats, but one of the best and most demanding jobs in the world – being a wildlife filmmaker.

● On BBC Two and iPlayer from 27 February

Top filming techniques capture big cats all day and night!



MEET THE CHEETAHS



Pobe's got two new cubs to keep safe!

POBE

Smart, streetwise Pobe has a new family to look after. But her territory is now home to the largest lion pride in the world. Yikes!



Just 5% of cheetahs make it into adulthood – and Neelo's one of them

NEELO

Pobe's grown-up daughter Neelo is now three years old and is becoming an experienced hunter – all thanks to her impressive mum!



Hoppers

When the glade near her home is threatened, animal-mad Mabel jumps at the chance to help. Her professor has invented cool new tech that can 'hop' human consciousness into lifelike animal robots. Soon enough, Mabel has infiltrated the animal world disguised in the body of a furry robot beaver! Finding she can understand animals, Mabel befriends the beavers' enthusiastic leader, King George, and starts thwarting the destructive plans of pompous human mayor Jerry Generazzo. Go, Mabel!

● In cinemas 6 March

Mabel and King George make mischief



Getting ready to 'hop'!



Big Cats 24/7 main image © BBC Studios; Pobe © BBC Studios / Tom Parry; Neelo © BBC Studios / Russell Barnett.



World Book Day

It's World Book Day on 5 March! Join the celebration of reading for fun across the UK and Ireland by swapping this £1 / €1.50 token (below) for a World Book Day book for free!

● Head to the World Book Day website to find out more about the books and their authors and illustrators.



WORLD BOOK DAY
5 March 2026

£1 / €1.50
Book Token

View the full line-up at worldbookday.com/books



Valid from
12 February -
15 March
2026

Un TI ac Un I FI is exclusive to Wales only. The Doomsday Club: Shape-Shifters, Rita agus an tEachtrán and Milly McCarthy and the St Patrick's Day Pandemonium are exclusive to Ireland only. Against All Odds is not suitable for younger readers.

Choose your **£1 / €1.50 book for free!**

Children, families & educators: This token is for single-use only and entitles children (under 18) to ONE FREE World Book Day 2026 book or £1 off a book or audiobook costing £2.99 or more in participating booksellers only, subject to stock availability.

Find your nearest participating bookseller at worldbookday.com/books-and-tokens/participating-retailers/ Full terms and conditions: worldbookday.com/terms-conditions

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Cut out your World Book Day token here



£1



€1.50



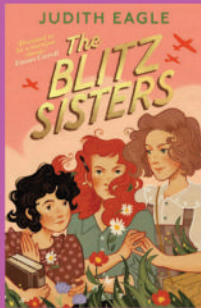
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 **The Blitz Sisters**
Judith Eagle

Inspired by true tales from the **Second World War**, this **epic story** follows the lives of **three sisters**, from the **declaration of war in 1939** to its aftermath in 1946. Told from each **sibling's perspective**, the book takes in an **evacuation** to the **English countryside**, dreams of art school in **South London**, and a **trip to Paris**. Oh, and a **cute kitten rescue!**

This story of **loves lost and found**, **sibling rivalry** and **drastic action** has a lot of **heart** and **unforgettable characters**.



Ghost Boys: The Graphic Novel
Jewell Parker Rhodes
Illustrated by Setor Fiadzigbey

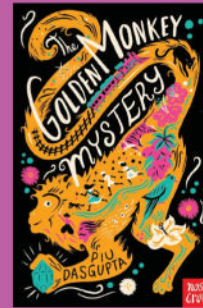
This best-selling **2018 story** has been transformed into a gripping **graphic novel**, bringing **Jerome's tragic tale** to a new audience. **Shot dead** by a **police officer** while playing with a **toy gun**, **12-year-old Jerome** becomes a **ghost**, watching on helplessly as his **family grieve**. Before long, the **ghosts of other murdered boys** become visible – and he comes to realise what they all have in common... the **colour of their skin**. A powerful look at the ongoing impact of **racism in the USA**.



The Golden Monkey Mystery
Piu DasGupta

Adventure, history, tropical rainforests and a **rare monkey**? This book sounds right up **NGK readers' street!**

When **Roma** finds a **golden monkey** near her **boarding school** in **India**, she vows to **return it** to its home in the **Himalayas**. But there are **bandits** on her tail, a **sinister curse** from a **jewel** called the **Snakestone** and, worst of all, **two annoyingly pampered English children** tagging along! Can she **unlock the secret of a mysterious map** before it all goes wrong?



 **The Magic Faraway Tree**

The classic **Enid Blyton children's stories** from the **1940s** have been given the **cinema treatment!** Featuring an **all-star cast**, *The Magic Faraway Tree* follows **three kids** who move to a **ramshackle barn** in the **countryside** with their **folks**. Forced to **unplug from their devices**, the trio **explore the local woodland** and discover an **extraordinary tree** that's home to some **wacky residents**, including magical **Moonface**, fairy **Silky** and the clumsy **Saucepan Man**. Soon, they're being whisked off to **fantastical faraway lands**, and **daring adventures** ensue!

● **In cinemas 27 March**

Look what could happen if you put down your smartphone!



 **Red Nose Day**

The world's **funniest fundraising event** is **back**, so get involved by **doing something funny for money!** **Schools** can take part in the silliness, too, by holding a **Tour de Farce sports day** or asking everyone to **wear red in return for a donation**. Alternatively, get your **teacher** to take on an **embarrassing challenge** in 'Crowdfund My Cringe'! Plus, there's loads of great **Red Nose Day telly**,

including a **Blue Peter Red Nose Day special** with **daft presenter challenges**.

All the money raised will help people in **poverty** access **basic essentials** – **food, shelter and safety** – both in the **UK** and **abroad**. Brilliant!

● **Red Nose Day is on Friday 20 March**. Find fundraising materials and resources at the **Comic Relief website**. Are you **red-y?**

GET INVOLVED!



Designing Red Noses!



Who nose best?

This year, the famous **Red Nose** is in *your* hands, with the first of its kind '**Design-Yer Nose!** What will you create?!



TikTok star **Kit Brown** and TV presenter **Maddie Moate** are **Red Nose Day's** first ever '**School Champions!**'

Creature Feature

CHEETAH



Female cheetahs give birth to **litters of 1–6 fluffy little cubs**, which are born **blind, helpless and weighing less than a tin of baked beans!** The cubs live with their mum for up to **two years, learning how to hunt and survive in the wild.** This one (left) is about **3–6 months old.**

TAIL TALE

A **long, muscular tail** helps these wild cats maintain their **balance** when they make **tight turns.**

STRETCH IT OUT

Cheetahs use their **super-flexible spine** to **extend their front and back legs** while running. Stretched out like this, the cats have a lot of **forward momentum**, allowing them to cover up to **9m in one stride!**

PUFF POWER

These wild cats have **powerful lungs** that move **oxygen** around their bodies efficiently, helping them **run faster.**



Up until about **10,000 years ago**, cheetahs lived all around the world, including in **North America and Europe!** But today, they're only found in parts of **Africa and Iran, western Asia.** Fewer than **7,000** remain in the wild.

Meet the super-speedy sprinter that *runs* the savannah!

Cheetahs are the world's **fastest land animals**. With a top speed of **104kmph**, they can go from **zero to 72kmph** in just **2.5 seconds**. Whoa!



EYESEE YA

Black 'tear marks' under cheetahs' eyes help **reduce glare** from the sun. This makes it quicker and easier for them to **spot prey** like **antelopes** and **impalas** during a **daytime hunt**.

BIG BREATH

A cheetah's **small, short face** has **enlarged nostrils** and **wide internal airways**. This allows the animal to take in lots of air so it **doesn't lose its breath** mid-chase.

COOL COAT

A **spotted coat** helps **camouflage** the predators in long grass as they **stalk prey**. Each cheetah's **spot pattern** is completely **unique!**

Cheetahs **can't roar**. Instead, they **growl, chirp, moan** and even **bark** to communicate. Like **pet cats**, they also **purr**.



GOOD GRIP

Strong, blunt claws help cheetahs get a **good grip** on the ground when they're running, a bit like **studs** on a **football boot**.



Explorer Paul Nicklen shares his sensational seal encounter!



PENGUIN!

THE SEAL WHO

LOVED ME

National Geographic Explorer Paul Nicklen tells us about an incredible underwater adventure in Antarctica...

W Leopard seals have a reputation for being **vicious beasts**. That's how they're portrayed in movies such as *Happy Feet* and *March of the Penguins*. But as a **wildlife photographer**, I wanted to prove that these predators have been **misunderstood!**

With this as our mission, my friend **Göran Ehlme** and I headed to **Antarctica**, where leopard seals live and hunt **penguins**. When we spotted an enormous female leopard seal, I quickly launched our **Zodiac** (an **inflatable boat**) and set out to get a closer look.

Almost immediately, the seal swam over to our **4m-long boat** and ducked underneath. She was as long as the Zodiac and nearly a **metre wide** – massive for her species. While I tried to come to

terms with her size, she swam off, grabbed a **chinstrap penguin** that was swimming out to sea, and came back with the penguin in her jaws! She started **ramming the bird against the underside of the boat** with such force that she lifted the bow out of the water. Göran and I sat on the **pontoons** (the inflatable sides of the boat) to brace ourselves.

As an **experienced diver**, Göran was used to this kind of behaviour. But this was my **first face-to-face encounter**, and I was thankful to be safely in the boat and not in the water! After the seal had killed the penguin, she swam to within a metre of us. It was **difficult to watch her kill the penguin**, but the **biologist** and **naturalist** in me understood that she was a **predator** and the penguin was her **prey**.

DIVING IN

Suddenly, Göran turned to me and told me to **get in the water**. Even though my goal was to show that **leopard seals aren't vicious**, the thought of getting in the water with this seal was **really scary!** My **adrenaline surged**, my **mouth went dry** and my **legs went numb**.

I was **so nervous** I could barely part my trembling lips to force the snorkel into my mouth. Then I picked up my **underwater camera** and slipped over the side of our little rubber boat into the icy **-1°C Antarctic water**.

Objects appear **30% larger underwater**, so as big as the female leopard seal had looked from above, she seemed **huge** down here. Her **head** was larger than a **grizzly bear's!** I remained **motionless** on the surface, planning to slowly introduce myself to her. I felt very **vulnerable...**



A leopard seal rests on sea ice between hunts

Turn over to find out more about this amazing encounter!

An underwater photograph showing a diver in the center, wearing a black wetsuit and blue fins, holding a camera. To the right, a large seal is swimming towards the diver with its mouth open. In the upper left, another seal is swimming near the surface. The water is clear and blue. A white arrow points from the text to the diver's camera.

Paul's pal
Göran, who's
1.8m tall,
takes a photo
of the seal!

**“My relationship with
this MAGNIFICENT SEAL
is something that will
stay with me FOREVER.”**



The seal offers Paul a penguin!



SHOWING OFF!

The seal immediately **swam in my direction** and, **without slowing down**, came **right up to me**. She **opened her mouth and lunged at me** so that my **camera lens was almost at the back of her throat**, and **my head was nearly inside her mouth**, just **centimetres from her teeth!**

She stayed in this pose for a few seconds, then **pulled back** and **observed my reaction**. She repeated this threat display several times, **striking out like a cobra** but **always stopping** before touching my camera.

Taking pictures helped **calm me** as the seal repeatedly **bluff-charged**, trying to establish her **dominance**. I saw this meeting as being all about **communication**, and I **didn't believe she would bite me**. In a strange way, it was as if she was just saying, "**Look how big I am.**"

PENGUINS ON A PLATTER

Suddenly she stopped all of her threat displays, and I just continued photographing her. She swam off, and I **thought the encounter was over**. But then the **truly unexpected** happened: she quickly returned with a **live, freshly caught penguin** in her mouth. Swimming about **3m away** from me, she **held the penguin by the feet** and then **released it**. The live penguin swam towards me, **veering off at the last second**. She **chased it, brought it back** and **let it go again**, right in front of me. She did this **several times**, each time **looking at me as she swam by** to chase down the fleeing penguin.

I felt like she flashed me a **look of disgust** as she sped past me to snatch the escaping penguin. I think that she was **trying to feed me penguins** because she realised that **I was an absolutely useless predator in her ocean**. I believe that she thought **I was going to starve to death** if I didn't get her help.

She **captured another live penguin** and slowly brought it over. When she was just centimetres away, she let it go, and it immediately took off. She quickly **caught it and ate it** right in front of me. She then captured another penguin, **played with it, wore it down**, and then **offered it to me** in its exhausted state. Of course, I

didn't accept these offerings but **kept photographing**, tears welling up in my eyes from the intensity of the encounter.

Finally, perhaps realising the full extent of my incompetence as a hunter, she brought me a **dead penguin** and **left it floating in front of my mask**. She backed up a metre and watched me. When I didn't touch her offering, she **looked frustrated** and **blew bubbles in my face**, grabbed the penguin and devoured it. I kept following her around, trying to photograph her. In the end, she **forcibly placed dead penguins on my head** and **on my underwater camera**. Throughout this experience, I often **flooded my mask** because I was **laughing so hard that water trickled in the sides!**

BEST BODYGUARD

Over the course of **four more days** the **seal tried to feed me penguin after penguin**, and I kept taking pictures the whole time. At one point, I became concerned that I'd **overstayed my welcome**; she seemed to have **tired of my presence**. Suddenly, during one of our 'normal' feeding sessions, she **visibly tensed** and made a **deep, loud hammering sound** – a **threat display** that I **felt reverberate through my entire body**. I thought she was about to **attack**, but the moment passed. What had actually happened was that another leopard seal had **snuck up behind me**. The threat display was intended to **protect me** – and clearly it worked. As if to prove her point, as soon as the other seal turned away, she gave chase, **stole that seal's penguin** and **brought it to me**.

SO LONG, SEAL!

I felt **sad** as I joined her in the water for the final time. My **relationship** with this magnificent seal, so **approachable**, so **tender** and yet so **fierce**, was something that **will stay with me forever**. I don't know if she ever quite figured out who or what I was, or whether some part of her memory will retain the experience of my visit. But what I do know is that **I will never forget her**.

Sometimes as I'm falling asleep at night I remember this amazing gift from the sea. They were the **five greatest days of my photography career!**

HISTORY'S GREATEST HITS

THE LIFE OF

JANE GOODALL

We have learnt so much about our ape relatives from this fearless woman!
(1934–2025)



I want to travel the world someday!

1934–1956

Jane Goodall was born on 3 April 1934 and grew up in Bournemouth, on the south coast of England. From a young age she was fascinated by watching animals, from worms and robins to her pet dog Rusty. She dreamed of having adventures in the African jungles that she'd read about in story books – even though people told her that was something *only boys could do*. When she left school, she worked as a waitress to save money for a real-life adventure...

1957

In 1957, aged just 23, Jane sailed to Kenya in East Africa, where she found a job working for a palaeoanthropologist* named Louis Leakey. To learn more about humans' extinct ancestors, Leakey thought it might be useful to study our closest living ancestors: chimpanzees. Although Jane had no scientific training, Leakey saw that she was smart, observant and tough, and so he offered her the chance to go on a research trip to Tanzania. It was a risky mission, but Jane leapt at the chance.

* A palaeoanthropologist is a scientist who studies where human beings came from.

1960

Arriving at the Gombe Stream Reserve in Tanzania, Jane spent hours every day tracking chimps, watching them from a distance and making notes about their behaviour. She didn't know that scientists gave animals they study numbers, so she gave them names like David Greybeard and Fifi instead. One day she was amazed to see David Greybeard stripping grass stalks and using them to 'fish' biting termites out of their mounds to eat. Scientists had previously thought that *only humans made and used tools* – but now, for the first time, Jane had evidence that animals did so, too!



Wow! They're using tools!

A Jane Goodall Barbie doll that came out in 2022 was the first Barbie to be made mostly from recycled plastic!

Jane Goodall founded the **Roots & Shoots** youth programme in 1991 after meeting 12 local high school students in Tanzania. They were concerned about the **environment, animal cruelty and community issues**. This sparked a **global, youth-led movement** for people, animals and the environment.

1961-1966

At first, **scientists were doubtful** of Jane's findings. But her discovery won her a place at the **University of Cambridge**, and **funding to carry on her research** in Tanzania. By this time the chimps **had lost their fear** of Jane, and so she was able to observe them up close. **National Geographic magazine**

wrote a **cover story** about her, and made a **film** about her incredible life with the chimps. Thanks to Jane, people saw that chimps had **personalities, emotions** and even **family dramas** just like us. Her work **challenged the belief** that **humans were unique** among animals.



You're safe now, little chimp!

1970s-1990s

In the **1970s**, Jane **published books** and in **1977** founded a **research institute** in her name. She also witnessed **two tribes of chimps** in Gombe **fighting a vicious four-year war for control of territory** – something else that **only humans were thought to do**. Sadly the chimps were also **threatened by humans**, as people **hunted them for food and destroyed their habitats for farming**. Jane decided that it wasn't enough just to study chimps. She started **campaigning to protect them**, and in **1992** opened a **rehabilitation centre for orphaned and rescued chimps** in the **Republic of the Congo, West-Central Africa**.

2002-2025

Because of her life dedicated to **protecting nature**, in **2002** Jane was **honoured by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan**, who named her a **UN Messenger of Peace**. The following year, at **Buckingham Palace**, **Queen Elizabeth II** made Jane a **Dame** – the female equivalent of a **knighthood**. Jane's life was now packed with **meeting people** and speaking at **public events** – very different from her time in the jungle! She **travelled the world**, spreading her **conservation message**, right up until her **death in 2025** at the age of **91**. **Jane Goodall** had **transformed** the way we see our **closest animal relatives**, and her **institute** continues her work **protecting the natural world** today.



No, I'm afraid your cuddly toy* can't have one, too!

*Jane's cuddly toy was called Mr H!

ANIMAL OLYMPICS

Discover which cold-weather creatures could go for gold in an animal version of the Winter Games!



Did you enjoy watching **February's Winter Olympics**? More than **2,900** amazing athletes from over **90 countries** took part in **116 cold-weather sporting events** in the north of **Italy**. And a further **665 athletes** with **disabilities** will be competing in the **Winter Paralympic Games** in **March**!

Inspired by these sports stars, Nat Geo Kids picked **six animals** that we think could go toe to, uh, paw with the best human athletes in some of these **wintery events**. Keep reading to find out which **creatures** might win gold if there were a **Winter Olympic Games** especially for **animals**...

OLYMPIC EVENT

Figure skating

ANIMAL ATHLETE

Red fox

Figure-skating events once included '**school figures**', where skaters **traced patterns** on the ice **without wobbling**. **Red foxes** would nail that event – they're called '**perfect walkers**' when their **back paws land exactly where their front paws stepped**, leaving a **single, clean trail** in the snow. But they're not just careful steppers. Red foxes have other wow-worthy moves too, leaping up to **1.8m**, about **four times their height**. With perfect **paw precision** and **cool jumps**, these furry competitors would totally earn **10s*** from us!

* Judges grade skaters on a scale of 0.25 to 10 points for events.





OLYMPIC EVENT Ski mountaineering
ANIMAL ATHLETE Mountain goat

The 2026 Winter Olympics debuted a brand-new event: **ski mountaineering**, aka **skimo**. Athletes had to **trek up a mountain on skis** with 'skins' attached for grip, before they removed the skis to do some **climbing** at the top. Finally, they **reattached the skis** (this time, without skins) for their **descent**.

Mountain goats would beat skimo

athletes in the wild. Their **hooves** – basically **nature's climbing shoes** – have **soft pads** that **mould to rocky surfaces** for a **better grip** going uphill, just like a skier's skins. And they **wouldn't need skis** for the downhill part. These animals can **slide** all the way down on their **feet, bellies** or **sides**. So watch out, skiers, goat's get the gold!

MEET THE MASCOTS



The 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games mascots are **Tina** and **Milo**, a sister-brother pair of **stoats** – small **mammals** that look like a mix between a **weasel** and an **otter**. Olympic mascot **Tina** has **white fur** like a stoat in **winter**. **Milo** has a **brown summer coat** and has **three legs** to represent athletes with **disabilities** competing in the **Paralympic Games**. He uses his **tail** to help him walk!

Although only about as long as a **kitchen roll**, real-life stoats are **excellent climbers, runners** and **swimmers**, making these animal athletes perfect Olympic mascots!



Stoats are called ermine when they have their white winter coats



OLYMPIC EVENT
Skeleton

ANIMAL ATHLETE
ADÉLIE PENGUIN

Adélie penguins would ace any **sledding event**, but they'd be especially good at **skeleton**, where athletes whizz along a track **face-down** on a sled – sort of like how these birds **belly slide** in their Antarctic habitat. They **glide face-first** over rough, snowy ground to get around way **faster than waddling**. No sleds or helmets required!



Slide over the page for more cool creatures!

OLYMPIC EVENT

Speed skating

ANIMAL ATHLETE

Arctic hare

Did you watch the **speed skating** at the **Winter Olympics**? The **skaters** zoomed around an icy track, reaching speeds of about **60kmph**! But if you think that's impressive, check out **Arctic hares** – these small but mighty mammals have been clocked running at **65kmph** on frosty surfaces! And there's a need for their phenomenal speed – the animals have to make a quick escape from hungry **snowy owls, wolves** and **polar bears**! The hardy hares can also move in a **zigzag pattern** to avoid danger, so they'd have no trouble handling the **tight turns** on a speed-skating circuit.



The Winter Paralympics take place 6–15 March!



OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC EVENT Cross-country skiing

ANIMAL ATHLETE Reindeer

Cross-country skiers race across snowy terrain, sometimes up to **50km** in a single event. But for **reindeer** (also known as **caribou**), that's just a warm-up! These hardy animals **migrate** every year, travelling around **1,200km** to find **food** in **winter** and **safe**

places to raise their calves in spring. That's like **walking from London to Edinburgh** – and **back**! Turns out reindeer are the ultimate cross-country champs.





OLYMPIC EVENT

Ski jumping

ANIMAL ATHLETE

Snow leopard

Ski jumpers slide down a ramp built into a mountainside and launch off a ledge at the bottom, **soaring through the air** to land as close as possible to what's called a **'K point'** on the ground in the distance.

Snow leopards can soar towards a target, too. With **super-strong back legs**, they can leap up to **15m** – that's about **six snow leopards lined up nose to tail**.

But these big cats aren't seeking a K point – they're **pouncing on prey like wild goats**. Who needs a medal when a **meal** is the reward?



WEIRD BUT TRUE!

NORTHERN ITALY



The **2026 Winter Olympics and Paralympics** are the most **geographically spread-out** Games ever, with events happening across **northern Italy**. The main hubs are **Milan**, a modern city, and **Cortina d'Ampezzo**, a mountain town known for **epic skiing**. Check out some fun facts about this cool region...

- One bank in the area has accepted **cheese** as **collateral** for **loans** since **1953**. (Collateral is **something of value** pledged in exchange for a **loan of money**.)

- It's illegal to **feed pigeons** in the city of **Venice**.
- The **bell tower** of a **14th-century church** rises out of **Lake Resia** in **Curon**. When the lake freezes in winter, visitors can **walk right up to the tower**.
- You can visit a **gelato museum** near the city of **Bologna**.
- In **Ivrea**, people **throw oranges** at each other during a festival to represent a **historic battle**.



weird but true!

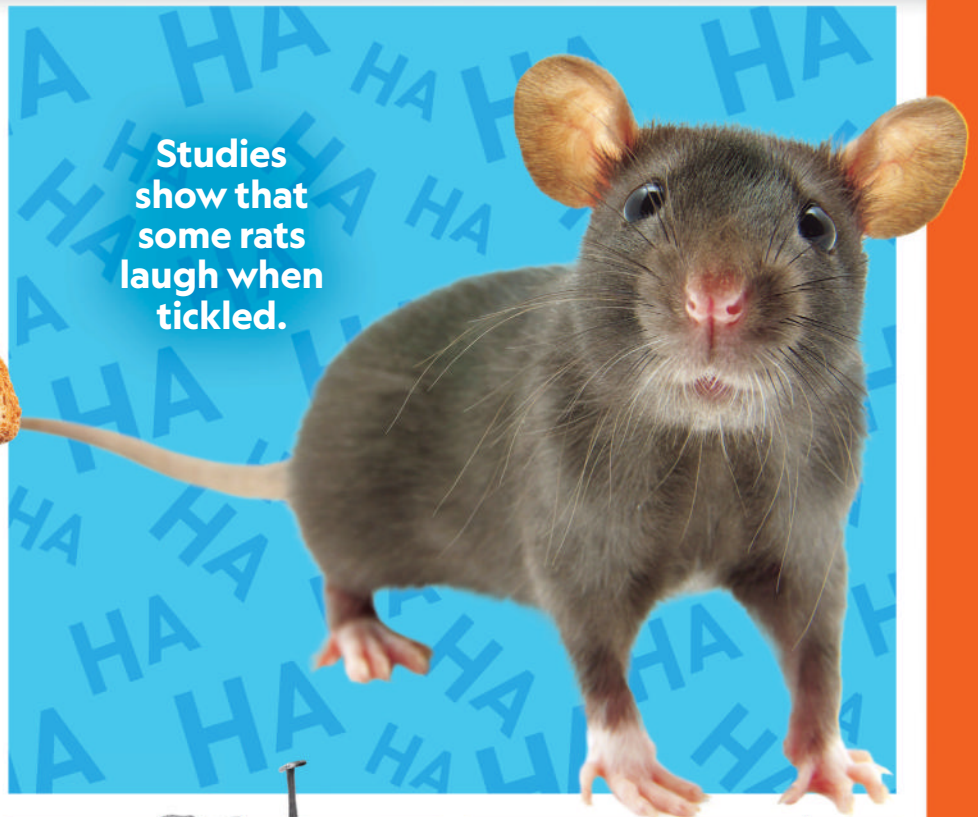
Check out these outrageous facts...



READ
THE BOOK!



One lightning bolt contains enough energy to toast about 100,000 slices of bread.



Studies show that some rats laugh when tickled.



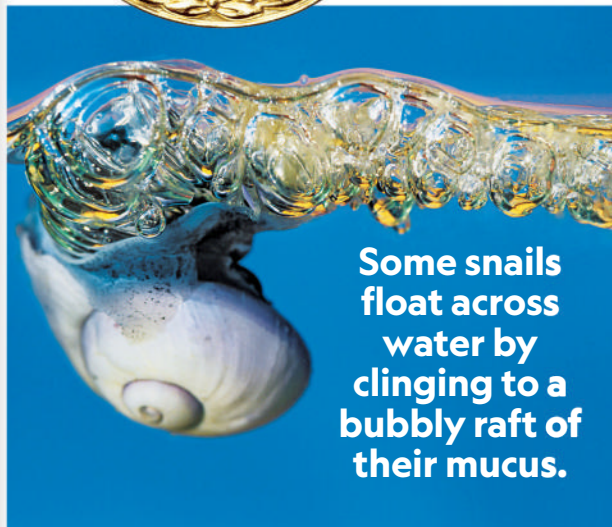
Tug-of-war used to be an Olympic sport.



The first bicycles didn't have pedals.



Porcupine quills were once used as toothpicks.



Some snails float across water by clinging to a bubbly raft of their mucus.



Jupiter is an enormous ball of gas.



You can buy socks and pants made from bamboo.



The Girl Who Raced the World

Pack your bags for the adventure of a lifetime!

OUT NOW!

It's 1872 and when 11-year-old Maggie Appleton's mother dies, she's left with **nothing** but a **letter** addressed to a **mysterious stranger** called **Passepartout**. With nowhere else to turn, Maggie seeks out this peculiarly named person and is drawn into an **adventure** beyond her **wildest dreams**.

Together with Passepartout's **employer**, the puzzling **Mr Phileas Fogg**, Maggie journeys to **Italy, India, Hong Kong, Japan** and **America** in a **daring race against time** to win a bet that Mr Fogg has accepted!

But with a **bank robber** on the loose, an **angry Inspector** on their tail and **unread secrets** in her mother's letter, Maggie soon discovers that there is much **more at stake** than just staying on **schedule** to win **Fogg's wager**. Who can she **really trust** – and will she ever find out **where she truly belongs**?



Illustrations © Tom Clehony Cole 2026; Pictures © Adobe Stock.

ADVENTURE TRACKER

Can you name all the **countries** that are highlighted on this map? The **flags** might help you!

Answers on page 49

A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

E _____

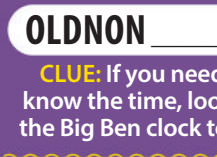
SUPER CITY CLUES

Can you use these **old photos**, **anagrams** and **clues** to identify **some of the cities** Maggie visits on her adventure?



IRPAS _____

CLUE: Check out Napoleon Bonaparte's famous arch!



OLDNON _____

CLUE: If you need to know the time, look for the Big Ben clock tower.



WEN YRKO _____

CLUE: A bustling city located at the mouth of the Hudson River!



OGNH ONGK _____

CLUE: The best way to travel around is by 'junk' boat or on foot.



BOBMYA _____

CLUE: This Indian city, which was once seven islands, is now called Mumbai!

WIN! THE GIRL WHO RACED THE WORLD



One lucky reader will race off with their own copy of *The Girl Who Raced the World*!

For your chance to win, simply scan this QR code or visit natgeokids.com by 25 March and answer the question below. Good luck!

Q What's the name of the mysterious stranger that Maggie's mother contacted?
a) Passpart **b)** Passport **c)** Passepartout



SERIAL CHILLERS

THE MONSTER IN THE MINES

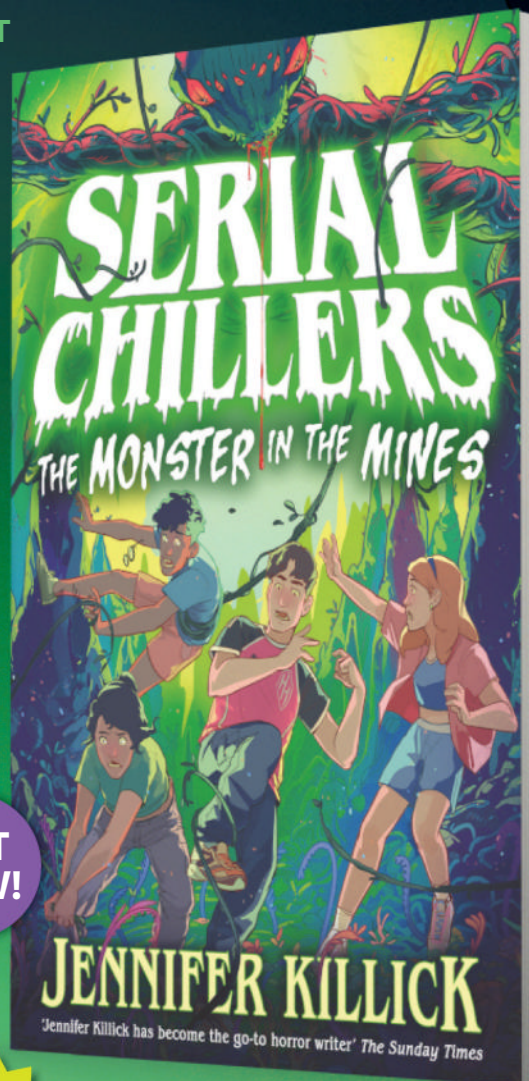
Welcome to Hazard, a town where strangeness is a way of life, nothing is what it seems and things really DO go bump in the night!

Best friends Travis, Zayd, Danielle and Selene are on a mission to uncover the strange goings-on in their hometown. Their investigations lead them to the mysterious mines that run underneath Hazard. But a creature is lurking down there in the darkness. And it's hungry for flesh...



Discover even more creepy encounters and chilling secrets in *Serial Chillers: The Witch in the Woods* – the first book in the *Serial Chillers* series!

OUT NOW!



Cover illustration © Ricardo Bessa

MONSTER QUESTIONS!

We chatted to Jennifer Killick, author of the *Serial Chillers* series...

Hi Jennifer! Where did the idea for your *Serial Chillers* books come from?

The books were inspired by the kind of creepy stories that are passed down through generations and whispered at sleepovers or around campfires. The first book in the series was inspired by the well-known legend of Bloody Mary.

What do you like most about writing spooky comedy stories?

It's just so much fun! I get to imagine the most terrifying, gross and hilarious moments, and then bring them to life on the page.

Cool! If you could visit a mysterious fictional place, where would you go?

I would travel with the Straw Hat crew from the anime and TV series *One Piece*. They visit so many amazing islands and have the best adventures.

If you could be one of the monsters in your books, who would you be?

I would definitely be Blood-Eyed Mary in the first *Serial Chillers* book. It's a dream of mine to live in the woods, wearing crazy clothes and frightening anyone who comes too close!

Haha! Do you have any tips for young horror writers?

Creepy stories are powerful when your readers can get fully lost in each scene and character. It makes the jump scares jumpier, the gross stuff more disgusting and the emotions more exciting! Imagine your scene playing out like a movie in your mind before writing it, and take time to describe the setting and how it makes your characters feel.

Great advice, thanks Jennifer!



WIN!

SCOOP THIS SPOOKY PRIZE!

One lucky reader will win a copy of *Serial Chillers: The Witch in the Woods* and *Serial Chillers: The Monster in the Mines*!

To be in with a chance of winning, we want you to draw your own mysterious monster, and tell us its name, fave food and a funny fact about it. The most imaginative entry will win!

Scan this QR code or visit natgeokids.com by 25 March to enter. Good luck!



Monster's name:

Eats:

Fun fact:

MULTICOLOURED
TANAGER









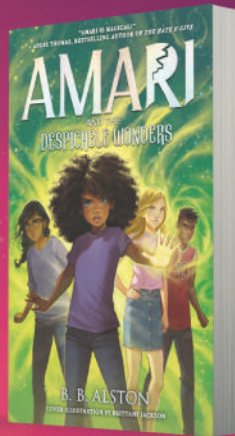
 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
KIDS

REINWARDT'S
TREE FROGS

AMARI

DISCOVER THE MAGIC

Perfect for readers aged 8+ and fans of Skandar, Percy Jackson and Nevermoor!



NEW!

Meet Amari Peters, whose world transforms when she joins the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs, a secret agency full of magic, mystery and surprises!

With a super-cool (but totally illegal!) magical talent, Amari takes on wild challenges, sneaky villains and magical battles, all while trying to prove she belongs. Packed with jaw-dropping twists, epic friendships and non-stop action, this series is perfect for curious and adventurous readers.

MAGIC GADGET!

What cool device would you invent for Amari to use at the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs? Draw your creation in the space below.



WIN!

THE COMPLETE AMARI SERIES

One lucky reader will win all four books in the series!

For your chance to win, scan this QR code or visit natgeokids.com by 25 March and answer the question below. Good luck!

- Q What is the name of the institute Amari works at?
- a) Bureau of Supernatural Affairs
 - b) Bureau of Magical Affairs
 - c) Bureau of Mysterious Affairs



AVAILABLE NOW ONLINE AND IN STORE!



FAKE LAKE

The world's largest salt flat creates a breathtaking illusion...

A flamingo searches for food in the Salar de Uyuni



Seeing someone walking on a cloud might sound like a dream. But this surreal scene exists – or at least appears to! The amazing walking-on-air effect (above) can be seen in the **Salar de Uyuni** (say “sah-lar day uh-yoo-nee”), a place in **Bolivia, South America**.

It's caused by something totally ordinary – a **reflection** in a **rain puddle**. What's special about the **salar** (Spanish for ‘salt flat’) is that this **thin pool** stretches for **hundreds of kilometres**, creating a seemingly endless **natural mirror**. But the astounding **optical illusion** is just one of **many things** that makes the Salar de Uyuni so bizarre.

HIGH AND DRY

The salt flat is more than **3km above sea level** in the **Andes Mountains** in a region called the **Altiplano** (Spanish for ‘high plain’). Some **40,000 years ago**, towering mountain ranges **trapped rainfall** and prevented water runoff from the Altiplano, creating a **huge lake** loaded with the plateau's natural salt deposits. But **climate change** reduced the amount of rainfall in the area and the body of water **dried up** about **10,000 years ago**, leaving behind a **deep layer of salt**. Today the salt flat sprawls for **10,500km²** – more than **half the size of Wales!**

WHITE OUT

Because of the region's **dry climate**, the salt flat is a hard-crusted wasteland for most of the year. “It's just white all the way to the horizon,” says Earth scientist **Adrian Borsa**. “The colour makes it look as if you're walking on ice!” The illusion appears after **seasonal rains**, which occasionally submerge the salt flat under a **super-wide puddle**. But the water is **too shallow (5cm at most)** to make any waves, which explains its flat, endless-looking, ‘**mirror**’ surface.

SIGNS OF LIFE

Although the region can seem empty, a few places **thrive with life**. The ‘sea’ of salt is

Bolivia has **TWO** capital cities – **La Paz** and **Sucre**.

The country has **37 official languages**, but **Spanish** is the most widely spoken.

The **national animal** of **Bolivia** is the **llama**.



Viscachas are famous for their 'grumpy' faces!

A close-up look at the salt flat during its dry season



An Andean fox, also called a culpeo, explores its territory

dotted with stony outcrops known as **islands**. These rocky refuges – technically the **tops of buried volcanoes** – are home to the few animals that manage to live on the salar, such as **culpeos**, a type of **Andean fox**, and **viscachas** (rabbit-like rodents). Migrating **flamingos** also fly in to **breed** and eat **algae** that grows in the water.

BURIED TREASURE

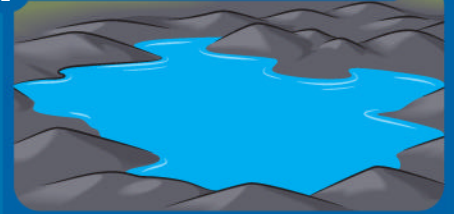
With about **10 billion tonnes of salt** lying around, it's no surprise that **salt production** is big business in the salar. After workers **shovel the salt into piles** to dry it out, the product is processed and sold worldwide. The really big money, however, lies *beneath*

the surface. An element called **lithium**, which is used to make **batteries in mobile phones** and **electric cars**, is found underneath the salt. But environmentalists are worried that the salt flat's **fragile ecosystem** could be damaged by extracting it.

For many visitors, this strange place's most valuable feature will always be the **mind-blowing scenery**. "The salar is a weird, otherworldly experience," Adrian says. "It doesn't feel like you're on Earth."

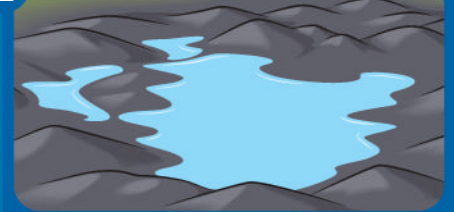
HOW THE SALT FLAT TOOK SHAPE

1 ABOUT 40,000 YEARS AGO...



Some **40,000 years ago**, a giant prehistoric lake called **Lago Minchin** covered **10,500km²** of what is now southwest **Bolivia** in **South America**. The lake was completely surrounded by **mountains** on all sides.

2 ABOUT 25,000 YEARS AGO...



Over time, the massive lake shrunk into smaller, **separate lakes**. As the lakes continued to shrink, they **leached** (drew out) **salt deposits** from the surrounding mountains.

3 ABOUT 10,000 YEARS AGO...



The lakes **dried out** approximately **10,000 years ago**, leaving behind the salt deposits. Today **Salar de Uyuni** is the **world's largest salt flat**.



Penguins in the city



Many people think that penguins only live in or around **Antarctica**, but a remarkable number live far away from that icy environment – including this cute pair! A colony of about **1,500 little penguins** – the **world's smallest penguin species** – lives in **Melbourne**, one of the largest cities in **Australia**.

"I wanted to **surprise people** by showing penguins **thriving close to an urban area**," explains Australian photographer **Doug Gimesy**, who took this pic. "So I grabbed my camera and **sat on some rocks overlooking Melbourne's skyline**. I spent about **100 hours** waiting for the perfect shot."

Eventually, these two birds, which are only about **30cm tall**, waddled up onto the rocks. They'd spent the day **feeding on small fish and crustaceans** in the bay and were returning to land to rest. And as the birds took in the view of the city, Doug got his photo.

"To me, this picture shows how **humans and animals are coexisting**," he says. "It's a reminder to **treat the environment with care**, no matter where you are – because you never know which **incredible animals** might **live near you!**"



10 Brainy Questions

Hey, smarty-pants!
Got big, weird questions?
We've got answers!



1

Why do beaches have sand?

Well, most **sand** is made from **mountains** plus **time**! **Wind** and **rain** have been breaking off little pieces of Earth's crust for **millions of years**. These bits travel down **ivers** and **streams** towards the sea, getting **smaller** and smaller as they **bump** against other **obstacles**. Eventually the bits reach the **ocean**, where **waves smash them** into even smaller pieces and push them onto the **shore** as sand.

But, amazingly, some other sand, like on the **beaches of Hawaii**, is mostly made from **parrotfish poo**! When parrotfish nibble **algae** that's **growing on coral**, they sometimes accidentally digest the coral, too, pooping it out as **sand**. In fact, one parrotfish's tummy can grind up enough coral to create up to **360kg of soft, white sand a year** – that's heavier than **four grown adult people**!



2

Where does tap water come from?

The **water** you use to **brush your teeth** usually comes from a local source like a **reservoir** or **lake** before passing through a **treatment facility**. It then heads to a special **storage tank** before going into your house. But amazingly, that water has been around since the **beginning of Earth**. Wha?!

Some scientists think our water arrived about **4.5 billion years ago** as **ice** on **meteorites** that slammed into our still-forming planet. Ever since, those water molecules have been **evaporating** from **oceans** and **lakes**, **condensing** into **clouds**, and **precipitating** (raining or snowing) over and over again. And that means that a **T. rex** might have sipped the **same water** you used when you last had a drink. Wow!



3

Why do avocados exist if animals can't eat their seeds?

To make **guacamole**. Just joking! In the **wild**, many new **fruit plants** grow after **animals eat** their **fruit** and then **poo** out the **seeds**. But avocados are too big for most animals to swallow whole – so how does the fruit still exist? You can thank **extinct animals** like **giant ground sloths!** Until about **10,000**

years ago, these **4.5m-long mammals** roamed the **Americas**, snacking on **avocados** and their **stones**. After they went extinct, scientists think that **humans** started **planting avocado seeds** to grow new plants. If they hadn't, **avocado trees** probably would have gone extinct, too.

4

Why are ancient statues and buildings always white?

Because the **paint has come off!** **Ancient Greeks** and **Romans** painted their **statues** and **temples** in many **different colours**, but over the last few thousand years, the paint has **worn away**. Ancient artists mixed **colourful minerals** – such as crushed-up **malachite** for **green** or **azurite** for **blue** – with **beeswax** or **egg yolk**

to create paint. Today, **archaeologists** use **ultraviolet** and **infrared lamps** along with **chemical analysis** to discover the **traces** of colours and **patterns** left behind.

So the next time you see an ancient statue, try to 'paint' it in your mind and **imagine what it might have looked like** thousands of years ago.



5

How do monarch butterflies know where to fly?



Because of **sunshine** and **magnetic fields**, that's how! Every **winter**, **monarch butterflies** fly around **5,000km** from **Canada** and **north-east USA** to **central Mexico** – even though they've **never been there before**. The **shorter days** and **cooler weather** send a signal that it's time for the monarchs to **migrate**. As they travel **south**, they use their **large, complex eyes** to look at the position of

the **Sun**, and their **internal clock** tells them what time it is. They then use that information to figure out which way is south, since the Sun changes position throughout the day. But what if it's **cloudy**? Monarchs can detect **Earth's magnetic field lines** – which run from the **north** of the planet to the **south** – to guide themselves on **overcast days**. The next big mystery scientists are trying to solve? How do the monarchs know when to **stop**?

6

What's the most anyone has counted to out loud?

One million! And you probably *won't* want to try breaking the record. In **2007**, **Jeremy Harper** live-streamed himself counting out loud **16 hours a day** for **89 days** to reach his ginormous goal. Don't think a million seems all that big?

If you lived for a **million** days you'd be **2,737 years old**, and you'd need about **286** pieces of paper to type out a **million zeros**. A million **jelly beans** stacked on top of each other would reach **twice the height** that an **aeroplane flies!**



7

Do pets know their names?

Yes – kind of. Pets **don't speak human**, but they do **recognise sounds**. One study has shown that pets know the difference between the **names** we've given them and **similar-sounding words**, even when said by a **stranger**. Scientists think that **dogs** and **cats** learn to listen for the sounds that make up their name because responding often means **cuddles** and **treats**. So why does your cat not always come when it's called? It probably knows its name – but it's just **ignoring you!**





8 What's the furthest we've sent something into space?

About **25.7 billion km**! In 1977, **NASA** scientists launched two spacecraft, **Voyager 1** and **Voyager 2**, to study the **outer planets** of our solar system and **beyond**. Today **Voyager 1** is the furthest thing we've sent into the universe, while **Voyager 2** is an impressive **21.3 billion km** away. Each far-flung vessel carries a **gold-plated disc** with

messages for extraterrestrials.

So what would a travelling alien receive from us Earthlings? **Music, whale calls, greetings in 55 different languages, plus photos of astronauts, aeroplanes and kids in classrooms.** Each disc also has playing **instructions** in case aliens ever find this **hi-tech message in a bottle.** Cool!

9 What's inside the Great Pyramid of Giza?

Not much, any more! The **Great Pyramid** was built about **4,600 years ago** as the final resting place of the **Egyptian pharaoh Khufu**. It also stored all the stuff he'd need in the afterlife, such as **bread, fruit, furniture, clothes** and **jewellery**. The **146m-tall** stone structure was Khufu's way of telling people that

he was **super important**. But it may also have screamed, "Hey, there's lots of stuff to **steal** inside!" Today you can walk through a **passageway** deep into the centre of the pyramid until you reach the **King's Chamber**, which has a **granite sarcophagus** in it – but, thanks to **looters, nothing else**.



10 What do beavers smell like?

Freshly baked cookies, bizarrely! If you could get your nose close to a beaver's **tail**, you'd sniff a goo called **castoreum** that beavers use to mark their territories. Despite coming out of their **bums**, this slimy stuff smells a bit like **vanilla**, due to beavers' diet of **leaves** and **bark**. In the **early 20th century**, people put this natural ingredient in **foods**, and it is still used in some **expensive perfumes** today – but it turns out it's pretty hard to 'milk' a beaver. Plus, it's kind of gross!

JUNIOR EXPLORERS' CLUB

ART ZONE!

Hi Nat Geo Kids, My favourite bird is the **peregrine falcon**, so I drew one from an **animal fact card!** I recently got to hold one at a **birds of prey centre**. Did you know they are the **fastest animals in the world?** They can reach over **240mph [386kmph]** when they **dive!**

Evelyn, 12

● Great drawing, Evelyn. Peregrines are incredible. We love them, too!



Name: Peggy
Coat pattern: Smoky tortoiseshell
Likes: Sitting in the bath
Pet peeves: She doesn't like loud noises
Fun fact: When she was a kitten she was grey, but now she is brown!
Owner: Theia, 10

Hi NGK! I was inspired by the feature on **snowy owls in issue 251**. I drew a picture of an **adult female snowy owl** and made some **owl cookies** (right), too! I hope you like them!

Violet, 11

● Aww, your snowy owl cookies are so cute, Violet!



ECO HEROES

Hi NGK, We recently went **litter picking** in our local park. We collected around **6kg of litter** and had a lot of fun!
Henrik, 8, and Carla, 6
 ● Brilliant work, kids!



Henrik and Carla with their huge haul of rubbish

Hi NG Kids, Your recent issue gave me the idea to paint this **yellow-cheeked gibbon** from **Cambodia**. I really loved the **challenge** of painting her just 'chilling' in the trees and tried to capture that **relaxed, peaceful** feeling of the **rainforest**. I hope you like it!

Juniper, 12

● Amazing painting, Juniper. Well done!



WRITE IN AND WIN!

Send us pics of your **amazing art projects**, **cute pets** and **wonderful wildlife sightings**, and tell us about the **inspiring things** you've been up to. Have you visited a **cool museum**? Done something to **help your community**? Been on a **wild adventure**? **We want to know!** Our **fave reports** will appear on these pages and **win a prize**. Email us at kids@ngkids.co.uk

All readers featured on the page this month will scoop a copy of **The Golden Monkey Mystery** by Piu DasGupta, an exciting adventure set in India. Find out more on page 9!



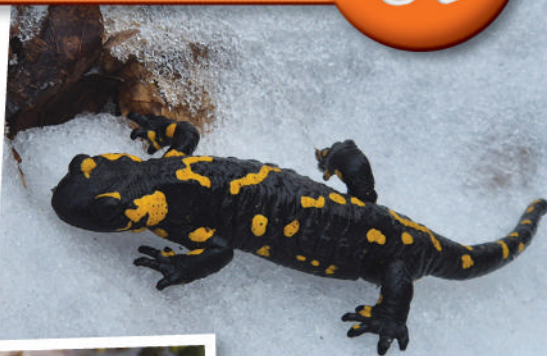
WILDLIFE WATCH



Dear NG KIDS,
I found this **salamander** in the **snow** when I was on holiday in **Vienna**. It was moving very slowly.

Lucas, 9

● Wow, you found a fire salamander, Lucas. Great spot!



Check out this striking salamander

Eva snapped this beautiful bird in her gran's garden



Dear Nat Geo Kids,
I took this amazing photo of a bird at my **granny's house**. Her garden was full of **goldfinches** and **blue tits** so I got some super-cool pics!

Eva, 11

● Fab photo, Eva. We think it's a male chaffinch.

Hi there,
We found this cool creature in our **bathroom sink** in our house in **Midlothian, Scotland**. He was very **calm** and seemed happy to let us take his photo. I loved that I had **never seen one before**. I loved his **red googly eyes** and the **cool patterns** on his wings. After we took photos we carefully let him outside. We think he's called a **green lacewing**.

Michael, 8

● You're right, Michael. Green lacewings are really beautiful insects. Their larvae eat aphids so gardeners love them!



There are 14 species of green lacewing in the UK

LIQUID EXPERIMENT

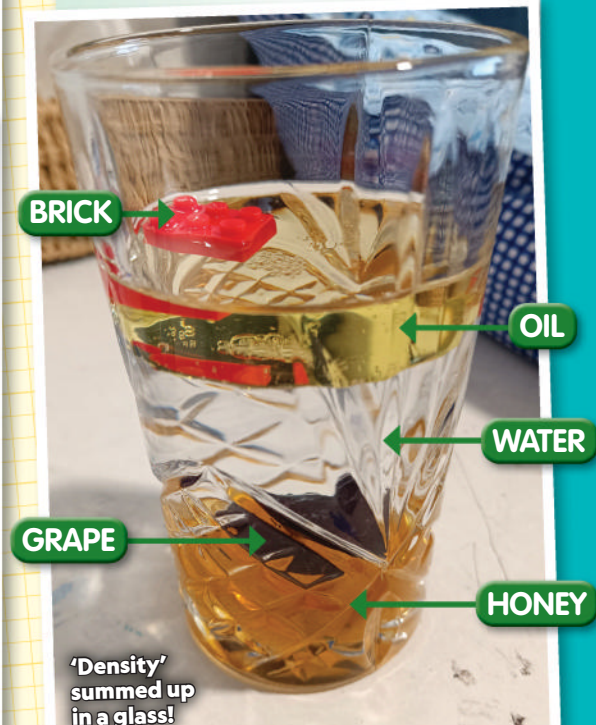
Hi NG KIDS,
I recently learned about **density** in **school**. I did this really **cool experiment** where I put **oil**, **water** and **honey** into a **glass**. The **honey** sank to the **bottom**, the **water** was in the **middle** and the **oil** was on the **top**. It showed that **oil** was **less dense than water** and the **water** was **less dense than honey** but **more dense than oil**.

After that, I put a **grape** in. It **sank through the oil and water** but **floated on top of the honey**, which means it was **more dense than oil and water** but **less dense than honey**.

Finally, I put a **LEGO brick** in the glass and it **floated on top of the oil**, meaning it was the **least dense of all**.

Aqeel, 12

● Great experiment, Aqeel!



OUT NOW!

POKÉMON

TRADING CARD GAME

MEGA EVOLUTION
ASCENDED HEROES

RISE TO A NEW CHALLENGE!

Marvel at the awesome potential as **Mega Dragonite ex** takes flight, leading a gathering of **all-star Pokémon** to battle!

Trainers' **Pokémon** and **Stellar Tera Pokémon ex** join returning and newly discovered **Mega Evolution Pokémon ex**, including some with **special artwork** showing off their **biggest and boldest attacks**.

Celebrate the stars of **Scarlet & Violet** and the dawn of **Mega Evolution** with the **Pokémon TCG: Mega Evolution – Ascended Heroes** expansion!



WHAT ARE MEGA EVOLUTION POKÉMON?

Mega Evolution Pokémon are **extremely powerful Pokémon ex**, often with **higher HP (Hit Points)** and **stronger attacks** than regular **Pokémon ex**, making your team **better than ever!**

HOW TO PLAY

- To **Mega Evolve**, place your **Mega Evolution card** on top of the **Pokémon** it evolves from.
- Mega Evolutions often have **huge HP** and **strong attacks**, but if one is **knocked out**, your **opponent** takes **three prize cards** instead of two.
- If you plan carefully, Mega Evolutions can **turn the tide of a match** and make you the **star of the battle!**



BASIC



STAGE 1



STAGE 2
MEGA EVOLUTION!

MEGA EVOLUTION – ASCENDED HEROES ELITE TRAINER BOX WILL INCLUDE...

- **Nine Pokémon TCG: Mega Evolution – Ascended Heroes booster packs**
- **One full-art foil promo card** featuring **N's Zekrom**
- **65 themed card sleeves**
- **40 Pokémon TCG basic Energy cards**
- **A player's guide and much more...**



Find out more at pokemoncenter.com

EPIC EVOLUTIONS

Can you find all six of these Pokémon in the wordsearch? Ready, set, GO!

- CHARMANDER
- CHARMELEON
- CHARIZARD
- DRATINI
- DRAGONAIR
- DRAGONITE



Y D R C R G Z N A E
N O E L E M R A H C
E B D R A T I N I H
N X N S V H K J X A
R I A N O G A R D R
P Q M J Y D T V L I
N W R B F B E Q Q Z
D R A G O N I T E A
P K H S W T R T J R
T Q C K V Z T F Q D

Answers on page 49

FUN STUFF

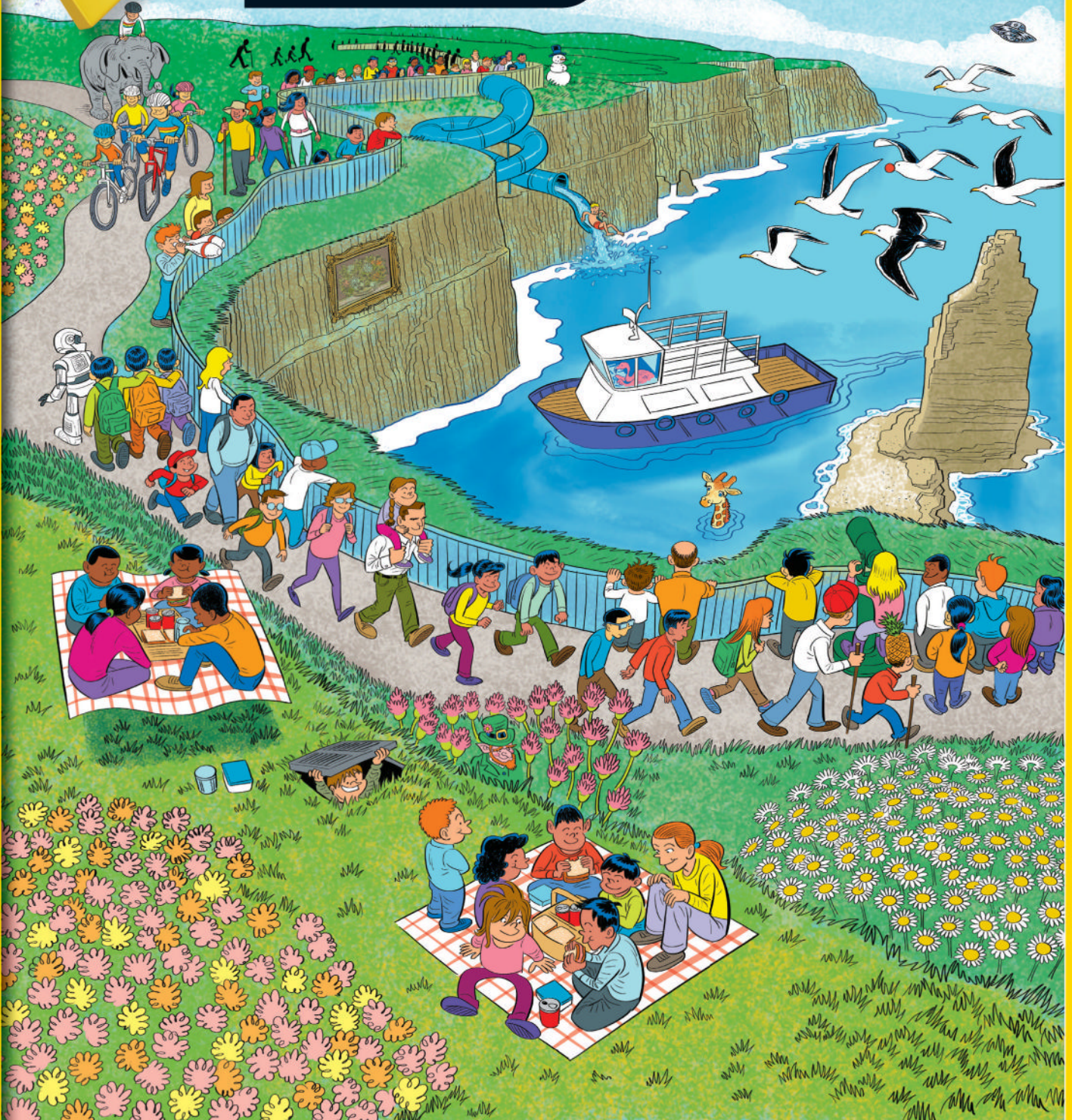
GAMES,
LAUGHS
AND LOTS
TO DO!

PLAY!

HIDDEN HIKE

These hikers are spending **St. Patrick's Day** (17 March) exploring the **Cliffs of Moher** in **Ireland**. But their adventure includes some seriously **strange sights**. Can you **find and circle** at least **15 things** that are **wrong** in this scene?

Answers
on page
49



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you find 20 differences between these two reef scenes?

Answers on page 49



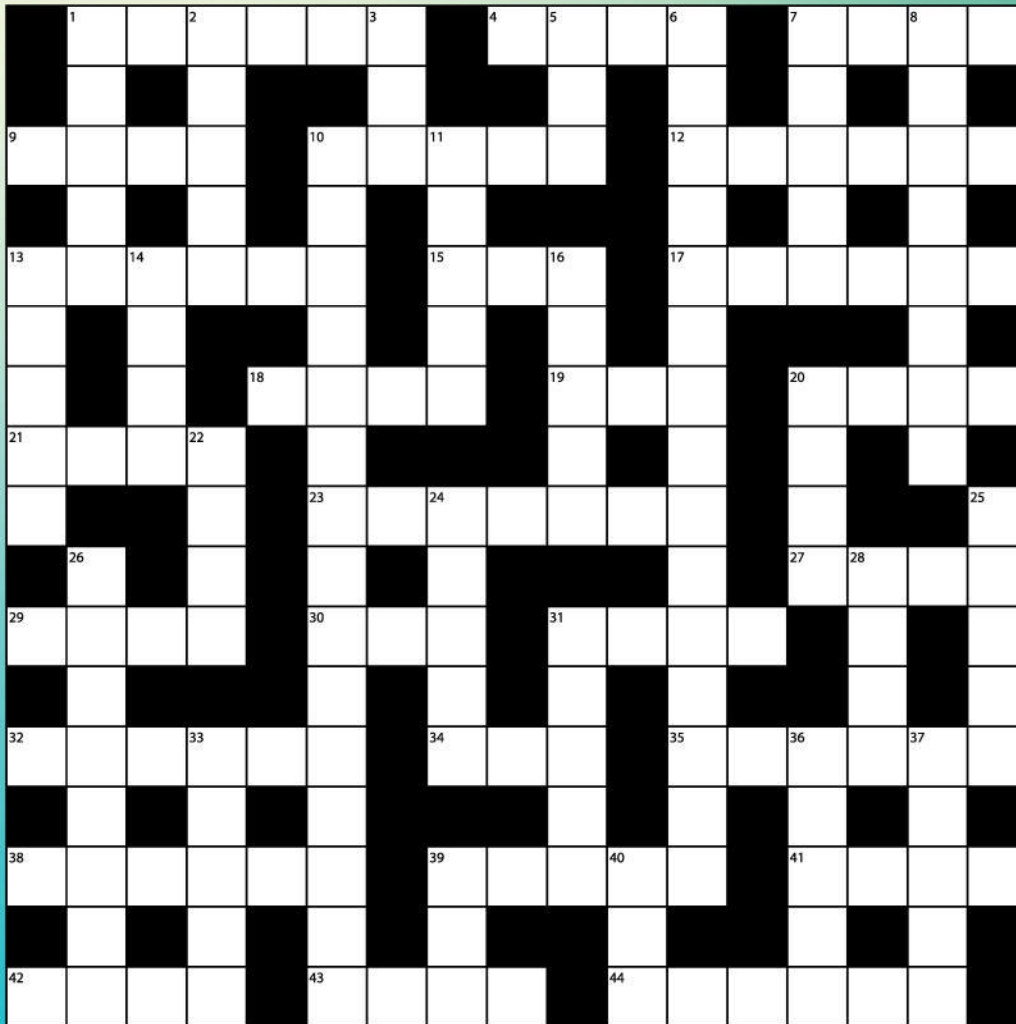
CROSSWORD

TOP TIP!

If you **get stuck** on one of the clues, **move on** to some others. You can go back to it when you've got **extra letters!**

EXTRA HARD!

You might need to work with a grown-up on this one.



Answers on page 49

ACROSS

- 1 Buddy (6)
- 4 Selfish or badly behaved child. Charli XCX's 2024 album (4)
- 7 It goes on your foot inside a shoe (4)
- 9 Brown, flightless bird from New Zealand (4)
- 10 Japanese tech company known for calculators, digital watches and keyboards (5)
- 12 Spoiled, or like an old building that has fallen down (6)
- 13 Mythical winged creature that breathes fire (6)
- 15 Informal word for stomach muscles (3)
- 17 Half of a quarter (6)
- 18 Stumble or holiday! (4)
- 19 Not me but ___ (3)
- 20 White bird that represents peace (4)
- 21 The wife of a lord (4)

- 23 Dwayne Johnson. Wrestler-turned-actor who voices the god Maui in *Moana* (3, 4)
- 27 Informal word for potato (4)
- 29 Multiple books or films, forming an epic adventure (4)
- 30 ___ stick. Make-up item (3)
- 31 A dog that's a mix of several breeds (4)
- 32 Pirate's pet? (6)
- 34 Word that means 'already' in questions - 'Are we there ___?' (3)
- 35 Reason why something isn't your fault! (6)
- 38 Fast-growing plant with hollow, woody stems - pandas love it (6)
- 39 Black birds, or another word for castles on a chess board (5)
- 41 Source of light - or flowers! (4)
- 42 Small version of something (4)
- 43 Location. This word could come after 'web' or 'building' (4)

- 44 Walt ____. Creator of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck (6)

DOWN

- 1 ____ Tuck. One of Robin Hood's 'Merry Men' (5)
- 2 Cake covering (5)
- 3 Molecule in your cells that carries information about who you are (1, 1, 1)
- 5 ____ de Janeiro. Brazilian city (3)
- 6 Trio of French swordsmen from a story - all for one and one for all! (5, 10)
- 7 Scorpions and bees have this in their tail (5)
- 8 Full of arty ideas (8)
- 10 What you say to someone on their birthday, or to celebrate good news (15)
- 11 Your letter needs this attached to be delivered (5)
- 13 Word describing something that happens every day (5)
- 14 Substance that gives vinegar or lemon juice a sour flavour (4)
- 16 "Well why didn't you ___?" A way of saying "You should have told me!" (3, 2)
- 20 Stops living (4)
- 22 900-year-old green Jedi master from *Star Wars* (4)
- 24 The opposite of full (5)
- 25 Really love something or someone (5)
- 26 Desert in southwest Africa that's home to meerkats (8)
- 28 South American country, once centre of the Inca Empire (4)
- 31 A short personal slogan (5)
- 33 Jewish religious leader (5)
- 36 Caribbean islander - they could be from Havana? (5)
- 37 What seawater tastes like? (5)
- 39 Go bad or decay (3)
- 40 Young person (or goat) (3)

BRAIN TRAINING

1

MATHS MADNESS

Match each joke to its funny punchline!



11

1 What did the triangle say to the circle?

3 Why did the maths teacher miss school?

5 Why was six afraid of seven?

2 What is a swimmer's favourite kind of maths?

4 What did the zero say to the eight?

6 What are ten things you can always count on?

A They sprained their angle!

C Dive-ision!

E "Nice belt!"

B Your fingers!

D "You're pointless!"

F Because seven ate nine!

10

12

SUDOKU

Fill all the empty squares so every row, column and 2x2 box contains the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4...

A

B

3		1	
	1		3
	3		2
2			

2			
	1	4	
		3	
4	3		1

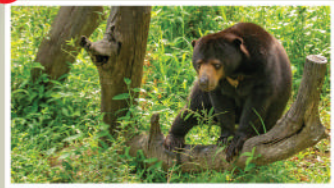
SPORTY FUN

Unscramble the names of these different sports...

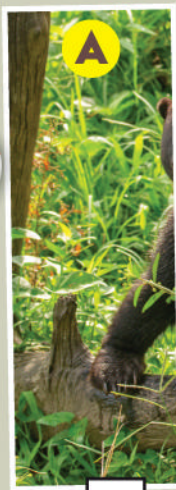
- 1 ABETBLSKLA
- 2 CKECRIT
- 3 SNTENI
- 4 GBRYU
- 5 SMIWIMGN
- 6 LFOBALOT
- 7 NCYGCLI
- 8 GYSTMNAISC

PHOTO FIX

Can you put the pieces of this sun bear picture in the correct order?



Sun bears are the world's smallest bears. But they have the longest tongues!



8

NG!

Boost your brain cells with our mind-boggling tests and challenges!

2



Answers on page 49

SOCK SORTING

Which two socks only appear once on these pages?

3



PICTURE CLUES

Use the first letter of each object to reveal something red and tasty.



CALCULATION QUEST

Which six sums have the same answer?

A $12 + 12$

B $45 - 19$

C $144 \div 6$

D 6×4

E $64 \div 4$

F $92 - 38$

G $14 + 10$

H 7×8

I $25 + 47$

J $48 \div 2$

K $72 \div 6$

L $100 \div 5$

M $30 - 6$

N $56 - 24$

4



CITY SEARCH

Draw a line from each country to its capital city.

1 Italy

2 France

3 Spain

4 Germany

5 Greece

6 Switzerland

7 Ireland

8 The Netherlands

9 Austria

10 Belgium

Athens **A**

Amsterdam **B**

Dublin **C**

Rome **D**

Madrid **E**

Paris **F**

Bern **G**

Vienna **H**

Brussels **I**

Berlin **J**



5

SECRET LETTERS

Fill in the circles so a four-letter word is formed either side. Do it right and you'll reveal a farm animal!

D	I	S	●	A	K	E
B	A	T	●	E	L	P
T	A	X	●	R	O	N
E	P	I	●	H	I	N
B	O	O	●	I	N	G
G	A	M	●	A	S	Y
O	P	E	●	E	C	K

6



WHAT IN THE WORLD?

DIGGING FOR DIAMONDS

These photographs show views of **diamond shapes**. Unscramble the letters to identify what's in each picture. **BONUS:** Use the **yellow letters** to help you answer the joke below... Answers on page 49



ISKET



LSETUHIGOH



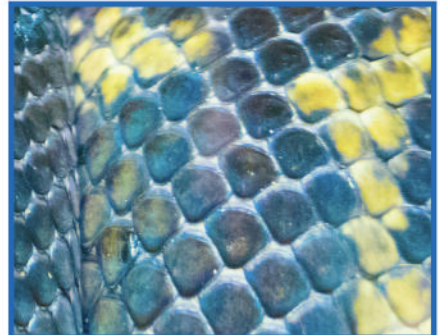
REFWA BSUCITIS



PYRTA BWLORE



ERAINSRG



SEKNA KSN I



SADINTE GLSA



UPJMRE



FCENE

QUESTION: Why were the diamonds feeling sad?

ANSWER: T _ _ _ 'D L _ _ T T E R S _ _ K E !

Top row (left to right): © Cristina Pedrazzini / Botantica / Jupiterimages; © Cultura RM Exclusive / Russ Rohde / Getty Images; © Val Lawless / Shutterstock.
 Middle row (left to right): © Mike Filippo / Shutterstock; © Preobrajenskiy / Shutterstock; © Getty Images UK.
 Bottom row (left to right): © Elena Rostunova / Shutterstock; © Richard Kolker / Getty Images; © Getty Images UK.

FUNNY Fill-IN

BIRDS TO THE RESCUE!

Ask a friend to give you words to fill in the blanks in this letter without showing it to them. Then read it out loud for a laugh!



My family went on safari in _____ country _____ to go rafting down the _____ river or stream _____ and check out _____ freshwater animal, plural _____. I boarded first. Suddenly the raft began to _____ verb _____. I was _____ verb ending in -ing _____ down the _____ liquid _____ all by myself! _____ large number _____ km later a bunch of _____ flying birds, plural _____ surrounded me. They flapped their _____ animal body part, plural _____, then without warning they grabbed my _____ article of clothing _____ and lifted me high into the air. " _____ exclamation _____!" I yelled. When I finally got the nerve to look down, I saw some _____ furry animal _____ cubs and a(n) _____ colour _____ spotted animal _____ that could run faster than _____ famous athlete _____. Then I spotted my parents. "Thanks!" I called to the flyers as they _____ past-tense verb _____ me on the ground. No one at home will believe this _____ adjective _____ tale.



GRAMMAR TERMS

Noun – a person, place or thing

Verb – an action word that describes what a person or thing does

Adjective – a word that describes a noun

Adverb – a word that describes a verb

FUN STUFF MAKE IT

FLOWER CARD

This card doesn't just look pretty – it's super-helpful, too! On the back of each stalk, write down something useful that you'll do for the person you give it to!

Makes a great Mother's Day card!

What you'll need



- A4 white card, folded in half
- Coloured card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pen

Start here!



1 Cut out a large flowerpot shape to go on the bottom of the card. Put some glue around the bottom and sides, then stick it in place. This will form a pocket for your flowers, so *don't* put any glue along the top or in the middle.



2 Snip six stalks from green card. They should be about 1cm wide and 10–15cm in length.



3 Next, cut out some flower heads. Trim smaller shapes for the centres of your flowers and stick them in place. Then glue the flowers onto the stalks.



4 On the back of each stalk, write a pledge – something nice you can do to help, such as "I will tidy my room!"



5 Arrange your flowers in the flowerpot and write your message inside the card.

MOTHER'S DAY
is on
15 March!



FUN STUFF ANSWERS

THE GIRL WHO RACED THE WORLD (page 23)

ADVENTURE TRACKER

A-UNITED KINGDOM; B-FRANCE; C-INDIA; D-UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; E-CHINA.

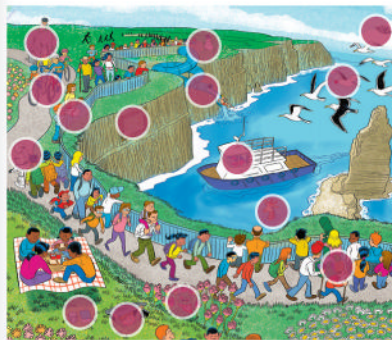
SUPER CITY CLUES

A-PARIS; B-LONDON; C-NEW YORK; D-HONG KONG; E-BOMBAY.

EPIC EVOLUTIONS (page 40)

Y D R C R G Z N A E
 N O E L E M R A H
 E B D R A T I N T H
 N X N S V H K J X A
 R I A N O G A R D R
 P Q M J Y D T V L
 N W R B F B E Q Q Z
 D R A G O N I T E A
 P K H S W T R T J R
 T Q C K V Z T F Q D

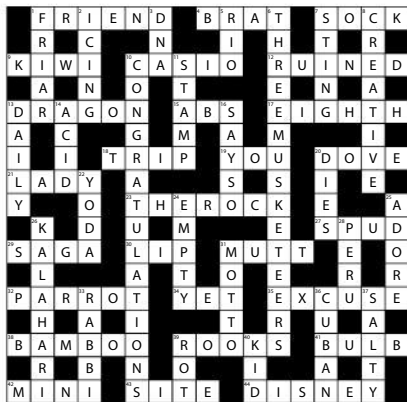
HIDDEN HIKE (page 41)



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE (page 42)



CROSSWORD (page 43)



BRAIN TRAINING (page 44-45)

SOCK SORTING

5 and 12 are only shown once.



MATHS MADNESS

1-D; 2-C; 3-A; 4-E; 5-F; 6-B.

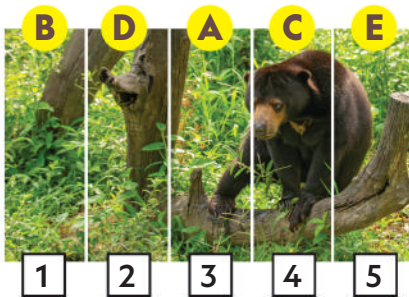
SPORTY FUN

1-BASKETBALL; 2-CRICKET; 3-TENNIS; 4-RUGBY; 5-SWIMMING; 6-FOOTBALL; 7-CYCLING; 8-GYMNASTICS.

SUDOKU

3	2	1	4	2	4	1	3
4	1	2	3	3	1	4	2
1	3	4	2	1	2	3	4
2	4	3	1	4	3	2	1

PHOTO FIX



PICTURE CLUES KETCHUP.

CALCULATION QUEST

A-24; B-26; C-24; D-24; E-16; F-54; G-24; H-56; I-72; J-24; K-12; L-20; M-24; N-32.

A, C, D, G, J and M all have the same answer: 24.

SECRET LETTERS CHICKEN.

CITY SEARCH

1-D; 2-F; 3-E; 4-J; 5-A; 6-G; 7-C; 8-B; 9-H; 10-I.

WHAT IN THE WORLD? (page 46)

Top row: KITES, LIGHTHOUSE, WAFER BISCUITS.
Middle row: PARTY BLOWER, EARRINGS, SNAKE SKIN.
Bottom row: STAINED GLASS, JUMPER, FENCE.
Bonus: THEY'D LOST THEIR SPARKLE!



OUT MARCH 2026!

All aboard with Cruise Ship Kid!

Silver lives on a cruise ship, so she's used to surprises at sea, but her latest adventure tops them all! When a world-famous influencer is kidnapped on board, Silver and her friends are thrown into their most dangerous investigation yet. With suspects everywhere and secrets below deck, can Silver crack the case before the ship docks?



Dip into the first book in the series, too!

This funny whodunnit is packed with clues, doodles and twists – perfect for young detectives who love adventure!



Author Emma grew up on a cruise ship herself!

Some cruise ships have 20 decks – they're like floating tower blocks!

WIN! SIGNED COPY OF THE BOOK!

For a chance to get your hands on a signed copy of *Cruise Ship Kid: Kidnap at Sea!* plus lots of amazing goodies, scan this QR code or visit natgeokids.com by 25 March and answer this easy question...

Q How many decks can cruise ships have?

a) 1 b) 20 c) 200

One winner will be drawn at random. Good luck!



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