

SCIENCE NEWS

TOUCHDOWN!

NASA's Perseverance rover has made a spectacular landing on Mars.

There were happy scenes at mission control, in Los Angeles, USA, after the successful touchdown.

Perseverance – or Percy, as some are calling it – is on a mission to find signs of ancient life.

The rover left Earth on 30 July 2020 and has been travelling through space for nearly seven months.

After entering the Martian atmosphere, Perseverance cut itself loose from its parachute and used rocket thrusters to slow down.

Experts at NASA waited nervously during “seven minutes of terror” as it landed. Then, the flight controller announced: “Touchdown confirmed! Perseverance safely on the surface of Mars, ready to begin seeking signs of past life.” NASA scientists erupted with cheers and applause!

The Red Planet robot is the most advanced yet. The rover is packed full of the latest technology including cameras, a large drill and a mini helicopter.

The mission will collect and store a set of rock and soil samples that will hopefully be returned to Earth in the future.

For the first time ever, microphones on board have sent back the sound of wind on Mars!

NASA hopes the mission will provide valuable data for a future trip by astronauts.



Mission control



NASA/JPL-Caltech

Questions on: 'Touchdown!'

1) How long has it taken Perseverance to get to Mars?

2) What is the aim of the mission?

3) Find the nicknames given in the article.

Mars:

Perseverance:

4) Why was the landing “seven minutes of terror” for the NASA experts? You aren’t told the answer, give your own opinion.

5) “NASA scientists erupted with cheers and applause!”
What does ‘erupted’ tell you here?

The experts reacted suddenly and noisily.

The experts were happy and excited.

The experts felt under pressure – a bit like a volcano.

6) List the equipment mentioned that is on board Perseverance.

7) What sound has been sent back to Earth for “the first time ever”?

8) What other sounds do you predict might be heard? What do you think will make the sounds?

ANIMAL NEWS

HIPPOS IN SOUTH AMERICA SHOULD BE KILLED, SAY SCIENTISTS

EXPERTS have said that hippos living in Colombia need to be culled as they are damaging local wildlife and the environment.

A few decades ago, a notorious criminal in Colombia bought four hippos for his private zoo.

After his death, the authorities gave most of the animals to zoos in the country, but the hippos were too difficult to move so they were left where they were. It was thought they would eventually die out.

Instead, they have flourished. There are now about 100 hippos living in the River Magdalena – one of the country's main waterways. Hippos, of course, are native to Africa and are not found in South America.

Scientists fear that unless the population is reduced the hippos will cause huge problems. They may affect native animals, such as the manatee, which is already at risk of extinction. Experts have written a report that says about 30 animals should be killed every year to control the numbers.

However, not everyone is for the cull. Many locals love the hippos. Others think it is wrong to kill an animal that is itself threatened.

One of the scientists told the BBC: "It is obvious that we feel sorry for these animals but, as scientists, we need to be honest."



GLOSSARY

CULL – To kill animals in order to reduce their numbers



A manatee, or sea cow

Questions on: 'Hippos in South America should be killed, say scientists'

1) Where are 100 hippos living happily?

In the River _____
in _____
in _____

2) Explain how the animals came to be living in this river.

3) In which continent are hippos usually found?

4) Look at the fourth paragraph. What does the word 'flourished' tell you about the hippos?

5) What do you think is similar about a manatee and a hippo?

6) What do experts think needs to be done to control the hippo numbers?

7) The experts' idea has upset many people. It is **controversial**. Can you find reasons for and against the idea?

Reasons to support the cull	Reasons to be against the cull

8) Now you have thought about both sides of the argument, what is your opinion? What do you think should be done about the hippos?

SPORT NEWS



NOVAK AND NAOMI WIN DOWN UNDER

NOVAK Djokovic and Naomi Osaka have won the singles titles at the Australian Open.

The first major tennis tournament of the season was rather over-shadowed by COVID problems.

Some Australians complained that the tennis stars were allowed into the country at all, when strict travel rules were in place for everyone else.

There was also an outbreak of coronavirus in Melbourne during the tournament, which led to fans being barred for five days.

Despite all the hullabaloo, Djokovic (“jock-o-vich”) stayed focused and came out victorious. He won the men’s championship for the ninth time. The Serbian now has 18 Grand Slams to his name.

In the women’s tournament, Naomi Osaka from Japan took home her second Australian title and fourth Grand Slam overall. Osaka has never lost a major final.

In the men’s wheelchair singles, Britain’s Alfie Hewett lost to Belgium’s Joachim Gérard in the final. But he triumphed in the men’s doubles with fellow Brit Gordon Reid (right).



Questions on: 'Novak and Naomi win down under'

1) Match the tennis player to the correct country.

Novak Djokovic	Britain
Alfie Hewett	Belgium
Naomi Osaka	Serbia
Joachim Gérard	Japan

2) COVID caused problems at this tennis tournament. Why were some people annoyed that the tournament went ahead?

3) Why were fans banned from watching the tournament for five days?

4) What is the nickname for the major tennis tournaments?

5) Complete the details.

	Djokovic	Osaka
Number of Australian Open wins		
Number of Grand Slams in total		

6) What do you think 'hullabaloo' means?

7) What is a 'singles' match in tennis?

What is a 'doubles' match?

8) Why did Alfie Hewett have a 'bittersweet' end to the tournament?

WORLD NEWS

ITALY



MOUNT ETNA ERUPTS

Europe's most active volcano, Mount Etna, erupted throughout last week.

The major eruption is the most spectacular for decades. Fountains of lava and ash have been exploding into the sky.

Experts said they didn't think there was any danger to nearby villages, but the situation was being watched closely. Etna is on the Italian island of Sicily.



JAPAN



HARSH HAIR RULES

A Japanese student has taken her old school to court because it kept telling her off for not having "black enough hair".

The woman's natural hair colour is brown, but the school didn't believe her. The school rules ban students from changing their hair colour.

So the school kept telling her to dye her hair black. She was banned from attending some classes and a school trip because "her hair was not dyed black enough". Eventually, she left the school.

The court agreed that the young woman hadn't been treated well, and said she should be given a sum of money to make up for her distress. But it also said the school's strict rules were acceptable!



USA



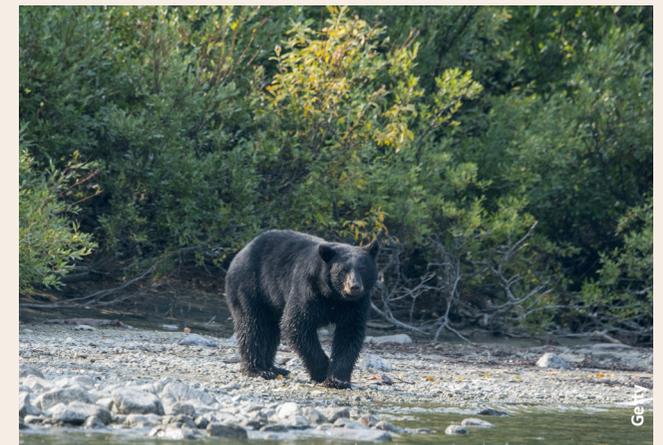
BEAR BUM SHOCK

A woman in Alaska who was camping in the wilderness got the fright of her life when she went to the loo.

As Shannon Stevens sat on the outdoor toilet, something bit her bare bum!

Her brother Erik came to help and was stunned by what he saw. He said: "I opened the toilet seat and there's a bear face just right there at the level of the toilet seat, just looking right back up through the hole, right at me!"

Luckily, it wasn't a serious injury and Shannon was okay.



Questions on: 'World News'

1) Match the topic to the correct country.

An animal attack

Italy

A volcanic eruption

Japan

A court case

USA

Look at the news from Italy.

2) Find two facts about Mount Etna.

1.
2.

3) Which word tells you that the eruptions are very impressive to look at?

4) Why do you think the movement of the lava and ash has been compared to a fountain?

Look at the news from Japan.

5) Why did this school think the girl had broken the school rules?

6) What two judgements were made by the court?

1.
2.

Look at the news from the USA.

7) What fact makes it okay to laugh at this news story?

Consider all the news.

8) Imagine you are a news reporter. Think of one question to ask:

- A volcano expert about Mount Etna
- The Japanese woman
- Shannon Stevens