

UK NEWS

TYNE AND WEAR

TOE OR POTATO?

When a dog walker saw what looked like a toe poking out of the ground she was understandably upset and called the police.

But when officers came to investigate, it turned out (thankfully!) to be just a potato!

Inspector Phil Hamlani said: “The search team did have a chuckle when they realised it was a potato. But the call was made in good faith and we can only praise the vigilance (carefulness) of the woman who made the call.”



STAFFORDSHIRE

BUMBLING BURGLARS!

Two burglars were arrested after one of them called 999 with his bum, during the crime!

It's hard to believe, but one of the burglars sat on his phone, and dialled 999 by accident. The police heard everything the criminals were up to in the house.

Chief Inspector John Owen has described the pair as “the world's unluckiest burglars”. He explained: “We received a call detailing all of their antics up to the point of hearing our patrol [cars] arriving to arrest them!”



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

SAVE ME!

An iguana made a daring escape from a house fire by jumping onto a firefighter's helmet. The fire started after a heated mat, used to keep the reptile warm, caught fire.

When the fire brigade turned up, the iguana clearly recognised that help had arrived!

A person from the fire service said: “The fireman... didn't realise the iguana had climbed on top of him at first – what a surprise he then had to find this iguana chilling on his head, eager to escape the burning building!”

Luckily, no-one was hurt in the fire, including the iguana.



Questions on: 'UK News'

Look at the news from Tyne and Wear.

- 1) Can you explain the mistake made by a dog walker recently?
- 2) Here are the main events of the story. Put them in the correct order.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a phone call | <input type="checkbox"/> an investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a dog walk | <input type="checkbox"/> a shock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a chuckle | |

Look at the news from Northamptonshire.

- 3) What type of reptile was rescued in this fire?
- 4) What started the fire?
- 5) What **surprised** the fireman?

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> He didn't know there was an iguana in the house. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> He didn't know the iguana was on his head. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> He didn't realise how heavy iguanas can be. |

Look at the news from Staffordshire.

- 6) Why is 'Bumbling burglars' a fantastic headline for this news story?

Look at the stories about the potato and the burglars.

- 7) What is similar about the way the two stories have been written and organised? Can you find **two** similarities?

- | |
|---------|
| 1. |
| 2. |

Consider all the news.

- 8) Can you think of a subject that connects **all three** news stories?

BIG NEWS

BRAINY BIRDS!

A NEW study has found that at just four months old, ravens are as smart as orangutans and gorillas!

Ravens are big black birds in the crow family. They are well known for being clever-clogs! Experts know they can work together to find food, and collect and use tools.

A new study has shown just how smart they are compared to other animals.

Scientists adjusted a test usually used on apes such as gorillas, orangutans and chimpanzees. It tested the ravens' learning abilities and their social skills. For example, do they understand where objects go when they can't see them any more? Many animals find this hard.

Eight young ravens were hand-raised especially for the study. They were given the test at four, eight, 12 and 16 months old.

The researchers found that at just four months old, the ravens were able to complete the test just as well as adult apes could. Not bad for a creature with a brain the size of a nut!

Calling someone 'bird-brained' used to be an insult. Perhaps it should now be a compliment!



Questions on: 'Brainy birds!'

1) Find **two** facts about ravens.

1.
2.

2) These tests compared ravens to which group of animals?

- Other birds
 Apes
 Dogs

3) What did experts **already** know about ravens?

4) What did experts **find out** from these tests?

5) Find the details of the test:

Number of birds that took part	
The number of times each bird repeated the test	
Types of skills tested	

6) Find an example of a skill that experts use to test an animal's intelligence.

7) Match the word to the correct definition.

clever-clogs

silly or stupid

bird-brained

where a baby animal is cared for by humans

hand-raised

smart and rather annoying

8) Find two sentences that the writer hopes will make you smile. Did they make you smile? Why are they funny?

BIG NEWS

WIKIPEDIA TURNS 20

WIKIPEDIA – the free online encyclopedia – is 20 years old today (15 January). It is one of the top ten most popular websites in the world.

The beginning

Wikipedia was begun by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger in 2001. They originally wanted the information to be written carefully by experts – just like a book encyclopaedia – but the project was taking too long. Then Larry had a big idea: let everyone write the pages! Wikipedia was born.

A simple idea – a huge success

Anyone can write a Wikipedia page and anyone else can edit and improve it. This freedom has been the secret to its success around the world. There are now over six million pages (in English) and there are pages in 306 different languages. Its information is free to use, it doesn't have adverts and isn't owned by any of the big tech companies.

But is it reliable?

As anyone can write a Wikipedia page, some information is going to be misleading or just plain wrong. In the early days, teachers used to tell their pupils not to use Wikipedia, because the information wasn't reliable, but things have improved over the years.

Nic Smallshaw, Head of Education at First News says: "I'm a big fan of Wikipedia. It is incredibly useful and there is so much to learn by dipping into it. There is a very important 'but' though. You need to know how it is put together!"

"It's important to question where online information comes from. Always check your facts with another reliable source."



DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'wiki' is the Hawaiian word for 'quick'!

Questions on: 'Wikipedia turns 20'

- 1) Why is Wikipedia in the news this week?
- 2) Which **two words** are combined in the name Wikipedia?
What do they mean?

Word 1: **Meaning:**.....

Word 2: **Meaning:**.....
- 3) True or false?
 - a) Wikipedia was started by Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg.
 - b) It is one of the most popular websites in the world.
 - c) It has articles written in over 300 languages.
 - d) It earns money through advertising.
- 4) Look at the first section. What was Larry's "big idea"?
- 5) How did this idea help Wikipedia become successful?
- 6) Why is it also a weakness of the website?
- 7) This is a long article. How has it been written and presented to make it easier to read?
- 8) Do you use Wikipedia? Do you trust what you read?
What would you do if you read something on Wikipedia and you weren't sure if it was correct?

BIG NEWS

THE UK'S FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC BUS CITIES

COVENTRY and Oxford are set to become the UK's first cities to have buses that run entirely on electricity.

Coventry and Oxford beat 17 other towns and cities in a Government competition to become the first all-electric bus cities.

Grant Shapps, the Transport Secretary, announced their success on the 6th January.

Once they have completed their plans, the cities will get a grant of £50 million to transform their bus networks. They will be able to replace their entire fleet of buses with all-electric vehicles and install charging stations.



Getty

Prince Charles uses an Audi e-tron

Mr Schapps says the cities will help to build “the green transport network of the future”.

Over in Norway, more than half of the cars sold last year were electric. That's a first for anywhere in the world. The four best-selling vehicles in the country were the Audi e-tron, the Tesla Model 3, the Volkswagen ID.3 and the Nissan Leaf – all fully electric.



Getty

Questions on: 'The UK's first all-electric bus cities'

1) Which two cities are going to have all-electric buses?

- Brighton Oslo Durham
 Oxford Coventry

2) Who is Grant Shapps?

3) What do you think he does? You aren't told the answer, say what you think.

4) What have the cities got to do before they get their £50 million?

5) Look at this paragraph.

“Once they have completed their plans, the cities will get a grant of £50 million to transform their bus networks. They will be able to replace their entire fleet of buses with all-electric vehicles and install charging stations.”

Which word means...

to change completely	
an amount of money given for a particular purpose	
to put a piece of equipment in place	
a group of vehicles	

6) What subject links the news from the Government with the news from Norway?

- electric buses electric vehicles
 cars government announcements

7) Which part of the article tells you that Prince Charles drives an Audi e-tron?

8) What do you think transport will look like in 20 years' time? What other changes do you expect in the next 50 years?