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SCHOLASTIC

NEWS

with
Weekly
Reader

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Tortoise Turnaround

A rare tortoise species is making a comeback.

In 2003, the future wasn't looking bright for Burmese star tortoises. Fewer than 200 of the rare reptiles were left in the wild. But thanks to conservation efforts, the species is making a slow but steady recovery.

Burmese star tortoises are found only in Myanmar, a country in Southeast Asia that used to be known as Burma. The unusual star-shaped patterns on their shells have made the tortoises popular with people who want exotic pets. Many tortoises are illegally caught by poachers, who sell them for thousands of dollars.

The tortoises are "tattooed" with numbers so researchers can identify them in the wild.



More than 2,000 Burmese star tortoises are born in the sanctuaries each year.

Since 2004, conservationists have been leading the effort to save the tortoises. They gathered about 175 of the endangered reptiles, most of which had been seized, or taken, from poachers by local authorities. The tortoises were placed in sanctuaries so they could breed in a protected area. Today, more than 14,000 Burmese star tortoises live in the sanctuaries.

Conservationists have been slowly releasing some of the tortoises back into the wild over the past few years. First, they attach electronic tracking devices to the animals' shells and mark

them with numbers in order to identify each tortoise. This has helped crack down on poaching. So far, seven poachers have been arrested for stealing tortoises released from the sanctuaries.

Brian Horne works for the Wildlife Conservation Society, one of the groups that is helping to save the tortoises. He hopes the number of Burmese star tortoises in the wild will one day climb to 100,000.

"I am very excited about the recovery of the species," he says.

Word to Know

exotic adjective. unusual; introduced from another country

Licking the Competition

It's not polite to stick out your tongue. But don't tell that to Mochi, the Saint Bernard who holds the Guinness World Record for the dog with the longest tongue. The 8-year-old pooch's tongue measures 7.3 inches long. That's about the length of an unsharpened pencil! Mochi (pronounced MOE-chee) lives with her owners in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. They say Mochi's new title makes the years of cleaning up her slobber worth it!





Moana and Maui in a scene from the movie

Moana's New Mission

A hit movie helps keep a dying language alive.

For one week in September, moviegoers in New Zealand got a chance to see a special new version of the hit movie *Moana*. Instead of being in English, all the lines were spoken in Maori, the language of the island nation's indigenous (native) people. It's one of only a few films ever recorded in the Maori language. The goal of the movie is to get kids excited about learning the language and help save it from dying out.

Centuries ago, the Maori people became the first settlers of the islands we know today as New Zealand. They spoke only one language, called *te reo Māori*. But the arrival of European settlers beginning in the 1600s brought big changes to the Maori way of life. After New Zealand officially became a British colony in 1841, the government took over Maori schools and students were taught only in English. Over time, fewer and fewer Maori were **fluent** in their native language.

New Zealand gained its independence in 1947. In the past few decades, New Zealand's government has made efforts to

bring the Maori language back. For example, it's now taught in many schools. Still, as of 2013, only about 20 percent of the nearly 600,000 Maori in New Zealand could hold a conversation in the language.

One big reason *Moana* was chosen to be translated into the Maori language is that it takes place in Polynesia. This group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean includes New Zealand. The plot and the characters were also inspired by Polynesian legends, including those of the Maori.

Katarina Edmonds was part of the team that translated *Moana* into Maori. She hopes to see many more popular movies get the same treatment in the future.

"Language can only survive if the young people speak it and make it important in their lives," she says.



KID SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Ethan Sonneborn
AGE: 13
HOMETOWN: Bristol, Vermont

▶ WHAT HE'S DOING:

Ethan is too young to vote, but that's not stopping him from running for governor of his state. To run for governor in most states, a person must be at least 18—the same minimum age for voting in state and national elections. But Vermont doesn't have an age requirement to run for its top job. When Ethan found that out, he decided to run for governor. Before he can officially enter the race, Ethan has to collect 500 signatures from voters in Vermont. The election will take place on November 6, 2018.

▶ WHY HE'S DOING IT:

Ethan hopes to get elected. But he admits that he'd be happy to just inspire other kids to get involved in government—even if they can't run for office yet.

"I hope I can send that message," he says.

▶ ETHAN SAYS:

"This country and this planet are going to be given to us at some point. We have to be prepared to fight for it."

Word to Know

fluent adjective. able to speak a language easily and accurately

DISNEY/VOXAL/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK (MOANA); GLEN RUSSELL/BURLINGTON FREE PRESS/USA TODAY (ETHAN SONNEBORN); JIM MCMAHON/MAPMAK' (MAP)

An Ancient Army

China's famous ancient clay warriors pay a visit to a museum in Philadelphia.

In 1974, farmers digging a well in an orchard in central China struck pieces of broken clay. The fragments turned out to be quite a find. They were from life-sized statues of soldiers that were more than 2,200 years old. Archaeologists have since uncovered a whole army made of terra-cotta, or baked clay, in the area. Now visitors to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, can see part of that army up close. Ten of the statues are on display as part of an exhibit called "Terracotta Warriors of the First Emperor."

Words to Know

painstaking *adjective*. requiring great care and effort

disintegrated *verb, past tense*. broke apart or decayed into small pieces

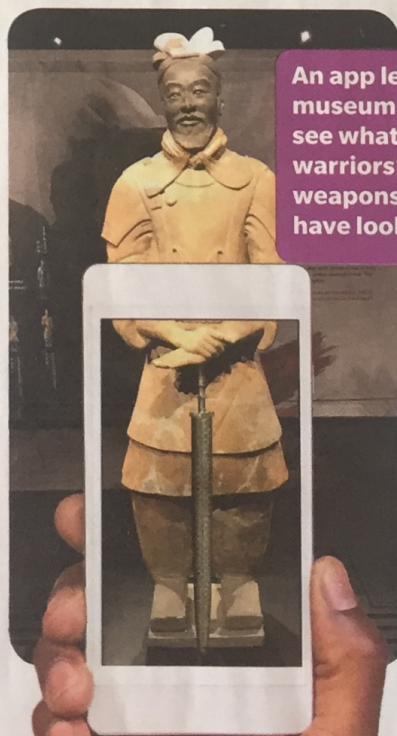
Forever On Guard

The statues were found near the tomb of the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huangdi (cheen shur hwong-dee). In 246 B.C.,

the 13-year-old Qin came to power after his father died. He soon became a feared leader. Within 25 years, Qin had united China for the first time by conquering six rival kingdoms. Qin established a vast army to control and protect his empire.

Qin believed he would continue to rule in the afterlife. So during his reign, he ordered an estimated 700,000 workers to build a massive underground palace where he would be buried when he died. The burial complex was like a city beneath the earth—it was about the size of Manhattan Island in New York City. It took more than 30 years to build.

The army of terra-cotta soldiers was meant to guard the tomb and protect the emperor in the afterlife. The burial site includes several huge pits where



An app lets museum visitors see what the warriors' missing weapons may have looked like.

One of the pits containing the statues is nearly the size of three football fields.



terra-cotta soldiers are neatly lined up, as if ready for battle. Most of the figures wear suits of armor. Each stands about 6 feet tall and weighs about 600 pounds. Some soldiers ride on chariots pulled by clay horses.

“When you look at them all together, they symbolize great strength,” says Karen Elinich. She’s the director of science content and learning technologies at the Franklin Institute.

About 2,000 clay warriors have been found so far, but the pits are only partially dug out. Archaeologists think the army may include up to 8,000 statues. Each one was created with **painstaking** detail, and no two warriors look exactly alike. Sculptors carved each statue’s facial features and hairstyle by hand. As a final touch, artists painted each statue to make it look more lifelike (see “True

Colors”). Experts think each statue was modeled after an actual soldier in Qin’s army.

A Peek Into the Past

The exhibit at the Franklin Institute highlights not only how Qin’s clay army was created but also how it has been rebuilt.

“What many people don’t realize is that all of the statues are found in pieces,” Elinich explains. Fragments of different statues ended up together in piles. Archaeologists had to figure out how to put each one back together without a guide for what the figures originally looked like.

“This process can take many years,” Elinich says.

Though researchers have rebuilt a number of the clay statues, the wooden weapons that many soldiers once held have long since **disintegrated**. Visitors to the exhibit can see what those weapons may have looked like, using technology

called augmented reality. Visitors can download an app to their smartphones. When they hold their phones up to the statues, the warriors appear to be holding their missing spears, swords, and crossbows. (Similar technology is used to place cartoon characters in real-world places in *Pokémon Go*.)

In addition to the 10 original statues, the exhibit features dozens of full-sized replicas, or exact copies, of other warriors. Visitors can also see artifacts from ancient China, including gold ornaments, coins, and replicas of two bronze chariots.

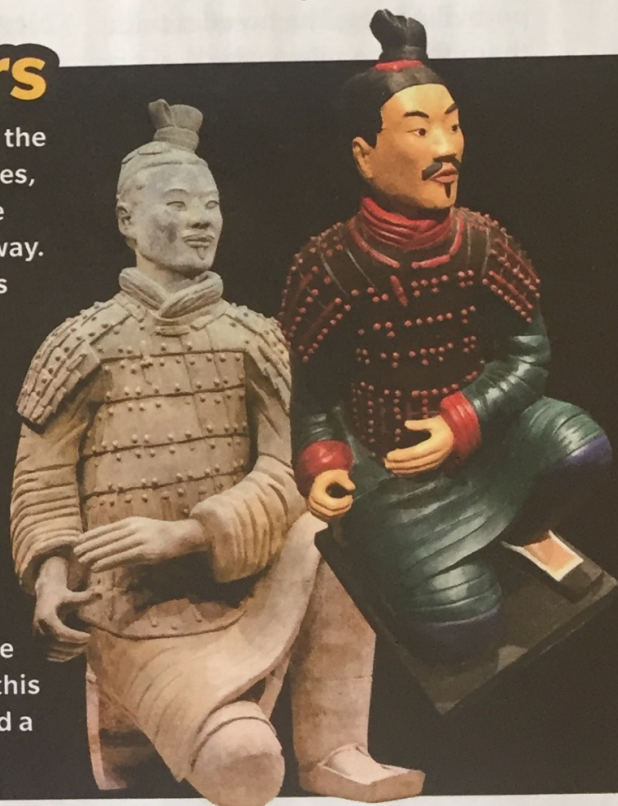
Elinich says the exhibit gives visitors a window into life in ancient China, as well as one of the wonders of the ancient world.

“The construction and burial of the terra-cotta warriors over 2,000 years ago represents a remarkable achievement in human history,” says Elinich.

—by Jennifer Marino Walters and the editors of Scholastic News

True Colors

As archaeologists dug up the first of the warrior statues, they ran into a problem: The paint would quickly flake away. Now, as soon as new statues are uncovered, a special chemical is applied to preserve as much of the paint as possible. This method has helped scientists re-create soldiers with brightly colored clothing and even painted-on facial hair and eyelashes. The exhibit at the Franklin Institute includes this original kneeling archer and a fully-painted replica.





Full-grown pigs at the Lil' Orphan Hammies rescue center in California

A Big Pig Problem

"Mini pigs" are popular pets. But experts say buyers should beware.

The Monroys were taken by surprise. In 2013, the family from El Monte, California, bought a new pet: a Vietnamese potbellied pig. The breeder told them that the pig, named Hammond, was a mini pig that would grow to be only about the size of a small dog. But after about a year and a half, he had ballooned to nearly 180 pounds.

Stories like the Monroys' have become more common in recent years, as piglets have gained popularity as pets. Once these pigs grow to full size, many owners realize they can no longer care for them and give them away to shelters.

Sue Parkinson runs Lil' Orphan Hammies, a rescue center for potbellied pigs in Solvang, California. She says she gets so many calls from people wanting to give up their pet pigs that she often has to turn them down.

"The craze is just out of control," says Parkinson, who cares for 140 pigs at her center.

Not-So-Little Piggies

Mini pig, micro pig, teacup pig. You may have heard those terms to describe small pigs. But none of them is an actual breed of pig. In reality, no pig breed stays "mini" very long. The most popular pet breed, the Vietnamese potbellied pig, usually weighs 150 to 200 pounds as an adult. Some pigs do grow to be only about 50 pounds, but those are rare, according to experts.

Experts say part of the problem is dishonest breeders. **Reputable** breeders show buyers a piglet's parents to give a clear idea of how big the animal will grow. But others will tell buyers that piglets are actually adults and instruct them to limit the pig's diet so it stays small.

The Monroys were told to feed Hammond just one cup of food a day. But the pig's naturally big appetite took over, and he started breaking into the kitchen pantry to find food. The family decided to keep Hammond in their backyard, but he devoured nearly everything.

"We had basically no grass left, no flowers," says Eva Monroy.

In 2014, the Monroys gave Hammond away to Lil' Orphan Hammies, where they sometimes visit him. The full-grown pigs at the center are up for adoption, but Parkinson makes sure new owners realize what they're getting into.

"We won't adopt out if we feel it's not going to be good for both pig and human," she says.

—by Joe Bubar

Word to Know

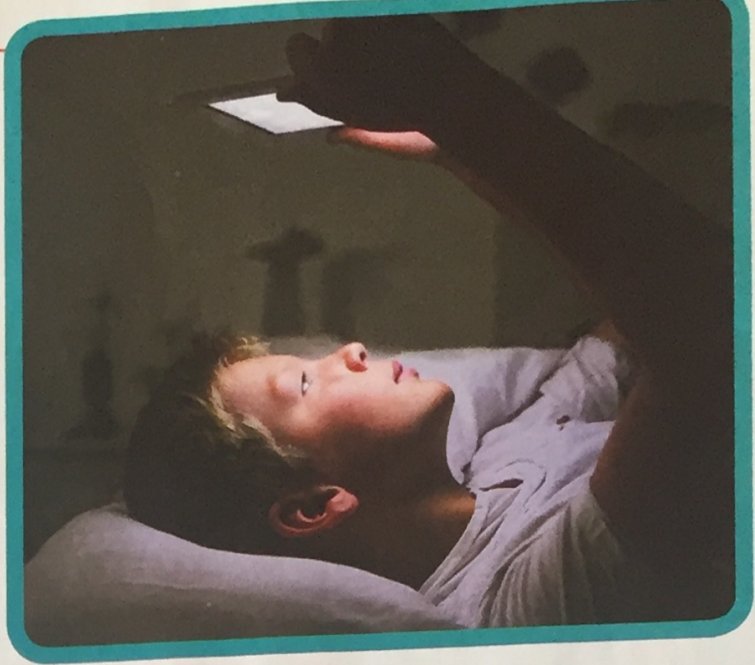
reputable adjective. honorable and trustworthy; having a good reputation

Should Your Bedroom Be Screen-Free?

When kids want to watch TV, play video games, or surf the web, many of them don't go to the family room—they go to their bedrooms. A recent study by the National Sleep Foundation found that 72 percent of kids ages 6 to 17 have at least one screen, such as a TV or a tablet, in their bedroom.

Many people worry that kids who have electronic devices in their bedroom don't spend enough time interacting with their family. There's also evidence that it could be bad for their health. In June, researchers in the United Kingdom released a study of kids who had a TV in their bedroom since they were 7 years old. The study found that those kids were more likely to be overweight by the time they turned 11 than kids who didn't have a TV in their room.

Also, doctors are concerned about kids staring at screens before bedtime. The bright light from screens can trick the brain into thinking it's daytime, making it harder to fall asleep. The National Sleep Foundation



study found that kids who keep a TV on when they go to bed get nearly 45 minutes less sleep each night than other kids do.

But not everyone thinks kids' rooms need to be screen-free. Some people argue it's not *where* you watch screens that matters, it's *how much* you watch them. They say as long as parents set limits on the amount of time kids spend on screens, it's OK to have them in their rooms. They also say kids can benefit from having time to themselves to watch shows and videos that may not interest other family members.

Here's what two of our readers think.

Yes! Kids should keep screens out of their bedrooms.

My parents don't let me have screens in my bedroom, and I'm OK with that. If I were to keep my iPad or a TV in my room, I might get distracted from focusing on more important things, like my chores and homework.

Also, kids who have screens in their rooms might stay up late watching videos or playing games. In a recent study, researchers at Kings College London found that 41 percent of kids and teens who have screens in their rooms reported that they don't get enough sleep.

Plus, if kids have screens in their rooms, their parents won't be able to make sure they're watching videos that are appropriate.



Laila Mbabali, Massachusetts

No! Kids should be allowed to have screens in their bedrooms.

My parents let me have a TV and computer in my bedroom because they know I'll be responsible with them. Watching TV helps me relax. Also, having a TV in my bedroom helps cut down on arguments with my brother over what to watch. If parents are concerned that their kid may watch inappropriate shows, they could just set parental controls on the TV to block those shows.

I like doing my homework on my computer in my room because there are fewer distractions there than in the family room. Finally, a huge number of parents have screens in their bedrooms, so why shouldn't kids?



Shane McGraw, California

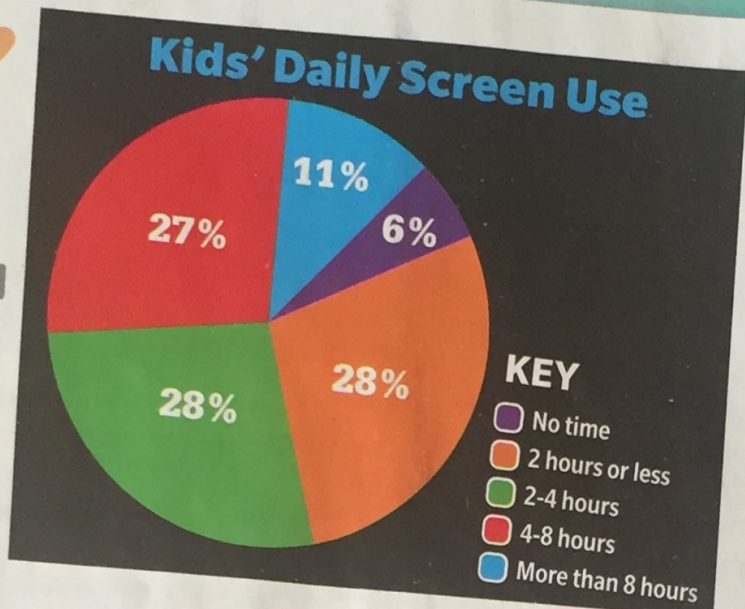
What's Your OPINION? Go online to cast your vote and download an opinion-writing skills sheet: www.scholastic.com/sn56

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News Graph

Kids ages 8 to 12 spend an average of more than 4 hours a day with a screen, excluding time spent at school and doing homework. Read the chart, and then answer the questions.



1. What percent of kids don't spend any time using screens each day?

2. About _____ of kids spend from 2 to 4 hours on screens each day.
 (A) 1/3 (C) 1/2
 (B) 1/4 (D) 2/3
3. True or false? More than half of kids spend 4 or more hours on screens per day. Explain.

SOURCE: COMMON SENSE MEDIA 2015

News Review

An Ancient Army pages 4-5

4. Terra-cotta is a type of _____.
 (A) army (C) underground palace
 (B) soldier (D) baked clay
5. Why do archaeologists think the first emperor of China had an army of statues placed in his underground palace?
 (A) to hide them from rival kingdoms
 (B) to protect him in the afterlife
 (C) to protect them from his enemies
 (D) to create an underground museum
6. An artifact that has *disintegrated* _____.
 (A) was recently discovered
 (B) is no longer whole
 (C) is worth a lot of money
 (D) was painted with bright colors
7. Visitors to the exhibit at the Franklin Institute can use an app on their smartphones to see _____.
 (A) all 2,000 warrior statues that have been found
 (B) what the fully painted warriors looked like
 (C) images of the real soldiers the warrior statues are based on
 (D) the statues holding their original weapons

A Big Pig Problem page 6

8. What is the purpose of the article?
 (A) to explain why pigs have become popular pets
 (B) to tell the story of a family and their pet pig
 (C) to warn readers about possible problems involved in owning pet piglets
 (D) to encourage readers to adopt a pig
9. Which statement about pigs is true?
 (A) Teacup pigs are the smallest breed of pigs.
 (B) Potbellied pigs can weigh up to 200 pounds.
 (C) Most pig breeds grow to be about 50 pounds.
 (D) Mini pigs get too big only when they're overfed.
10. You can tell that Sue Parkinson is *reputable* because she _____.
 (A) has a lot of pigs
 (B) thinks the pet pig craze is out of control
 (C) tells people that piglets are actually adults
 (D) only lets people who realize what they're getting into adopt her pigs

