

NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR*



First News

2.6M READERS*

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NO TREES ARE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF FIRST NEWS. IT'S MADE FROM 100% RECYCLED PAPER.

FIRST NEWS TAKES A LOOK AT THE YEAR AHEAD

NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS



PRESIDENT TRUMP IS BACK



WOMEN'S RUGBY WORLD CUP



EPIC UNIVERSE OPENS!



COP30 COMES TO BRAZIL



LIVE-ACTION SNOW WHITE



NASA'S X-59 SET FOR TAKEOFF



COULD WARS END?

BRING ON 2025

THE YEAR AHEAD IS JAM-PACKED WITH BLOCKBUSTER MOVIES, SPACE MISSIONS, WACKY EVENTS AND SPORTS TOURNAMENTS. WITH SO MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO, IT'S SET TO BE AN EPIC 12 MONTHS. PLUS, AS WARS CONTINUE ACROSS THE WORLD, WILL THIS BE THE YEAR WE FIND PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS?

* Newspaper Awards 2023, Niche market Newspaper of the Year. First News readership is 2,626,625. Source: Opinion Matters 2020. First News is the widest-read of all children's publications audited in the UK. First News supports children's charities.

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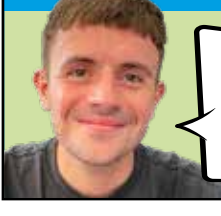
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With very special thanks to Isabella Wharton.

IMPORTANT DATES

IN this special issue of *First News*, we look ahead to see what's in store for us this year! From space missions to wacky events, the hottest new movies to big sporting competitions, we've got you covered. Get your calendars at the ready, as we've got all the dates you need to know! Let's kick things off with some key special days to look out for.



JANUARY

20: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY

Practise your best speeches in honour of Martin Luther King Jr – a rights campaigner who championed equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their colour. He gave the famous 'I Have A Dream' speech at the March on Washington rally in 1963.



25: BURNS NIGHT

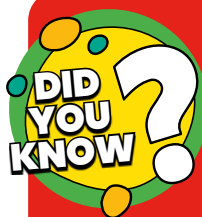
Celebrate Scottish poet Robert Burns and tuck into a haggis.

27: HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

A day to remember the six million Jewish people who were killed in the Holocaust during the Second World War.

29: CHINESE NEW YEAR

When Chinese people celebrate the start of the new lunar year. In the Chinese zodiac, this year marks the Year of the Snake – a symbol of wisdom and transformation.



THE Chinese zodiac is a cycle of 12 animals representing each year, such as rat, tiger and dragon. Chinese folklore says your personality is shaped by your birth year animal. Do you know yours?



All pics: Getty and iStock



FEBRUARY

3-9: CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

The theme of this year's week is 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself', which is all about being self-aware and exploring what that means for you.



7: NSPCC NUMBER DAY

Take part in fun maths activities and help raise money for the NSPCC children's charity.

11: SAFER INTERNET DAY

Can you spot fake news? Do you know how to keep yourself safe online? The UK's biggest awareness day of online safety hopes to help!



14: VALENTINE'S DAY



17: INTERNATIONAL RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS (RAK) DAY

Spread some kindness at school, among friends and family, and all around you!

28: RAMADAN BEGINS

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and one of the holiest months for Muslims. It is observed with fasting, prayer and reflection.





MARCH

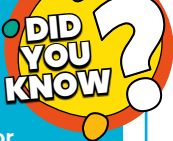
**4: SHROVE TUESDAY**

Get ready to flip those pancakes!

7-16: BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK

A ten-day celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths.

FIRST News is teaming up with the National Trust for our second nature photography competition. Look out for all the details in March!

**14: HOLI**

A Hindu festival known as the Festival of Colours. It celebrates the triumph of good over evil.

**18: GLOBAL RECYCLING DAY****21: RED NOSE DAY**

The funniest day of the year is back! Get ready to challenge yourself and help raise money for children in the UK and across the world.

21: WORLD POETRY DAY**22: WORLD WATER DAY**

A day to raise awareness of how important water is for a happy and healthy life, and how more than two billion people still live without safe drinking water.

**30: EID AL-FITR**

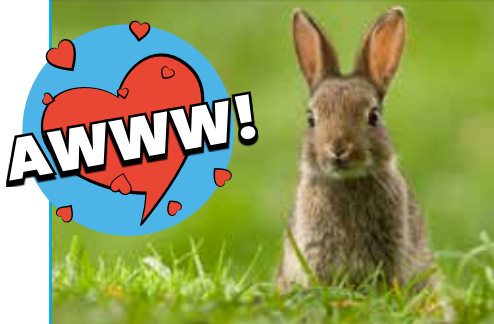
Muslims celebrate the end of fasting for Ramadan.

30: BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS

Clocks go forward an hour at 1am, giving us lighter evenings again.



APRIL

**1: APRIL FOOL'S DAY****12: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR STREET CHILDREN**

Celebrations take place in more than 130 countries to raise awareness of street children.

15: WORLD ART DAY

Showcase your arty skills for all to admire!

**18: GOOD FRIDAY**

A Christian holy day, marking the death of Jesus. It's also a bank holiday in the UK.

20: EASTER SUNDAY

A day when Christians celebrate Jesus coming back from the dead. People often gift Easter eggs.

21: EASTER MONDAY

A day of remembrance for Christians and a bank holiday in the UK.




MAY

4: STAR WARS DAY

May the 4th be with you! (Get it?!)

4: WORLD LAUGHTER DAY**5: MAY DAY**

A celebration of spring and a bank holiday in the UK.

8: 80 YEARS SINCE VE DAY

VE Day is short for Victory in Europe Day. On 8 May 1945, Nazi Germany agreed to surrender to the Allies, marking the official end of the Second World War in Europe.

**12-18: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK**

A chance to raise awareness and funds for better mental health for everyone.

**18: INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY****26: SPRING BANK HOLIDAY****28: WORLD HUNGER DAY**

How can we all work together to end hunger and poverty across the world?



JUNE

**PRIDE MONTH**

Celebrate the LGBT+ community!

6: D-DAY

A very famous day in history. Back in the Second World War, on 6 June 1944, the Normandy invasion began. The Allies invaded the beaches of northern France to push the Nazis back.

14: TROOPING THE COLOUR

A ceremony and parade marking the official birthday of the British monarch (King Charles right now).

**20: WORLD REFUGEE DAY**

An international day dedicated to honouring people who have been forced to flee their homes. It's also a chance to highlight the rights that they're entitled to.

21: SUMMER SOLSTICE

The longest day of the year. Lots of people gather at Stonehenge to celebrate.

22: WINDRUSH DAY

A day to honour the contributions of all the migrants who travelled to the UK from the Caribbean on HMT Empire Windrush back in 1948 and in the years after.



THE disposable vape ban comes into effect on 1 June. That means it'll be against the law to sell single-use vapes.

JULY

JOKE OF THE MONTH

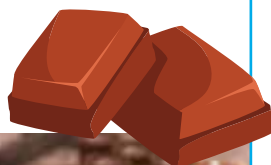
HOW do you make a tissue dance? You put a little boogie in it!

1: INTERNATIONAL JOKE DAY**4: US INDEPENDENCE DAY**

Americans celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence (the founding of the United States) with picnics, parades and fireworks!

**7: WORLD CHOCOLATE DAY**

As if we needed any excuse to eat our favourite sweet treat!

**20: WORLD CHESS DAY**

An annual celebration of the popular board game.

**30: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FRIENDSHIP**

Celebrate your friends on this special day!

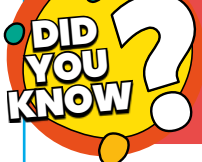
AUGUST

**12: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY**

A United Nations day dedicated to empowering young people and giving them a voice.

19: WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY DAY

Snap photos of friends and family, or what's around you, and create lasting memories!

**21: GCSE RESULTS COME OUT****25: BANK HOLIDAY**

HALF of the people on our planet are 30 or younger, and this is expected to reach 57% by the end of 2030.

All pics: Getty and iStock

SEPTEMBER

FIRST NEWS' LOOK UP CAMPAIGN MONTH

As everyone heads back to school, we're reminding you to look up from your phone or put it away as you walk to and from school to avoid road accidents.

**1: BACK TO HOGWARTS DAY**

For those who love Harry Potter, this day marks the annual tradition of wizards returning to Hogwarts on the Hogwarts Express.

**1-5: ZERO WASTE WEEK****8: THE KING'S ACCESSION GUN SALUTE**

A 41-gun salute is fired by the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery in Green Park, and a 62-gun royal salute is fired by the Honourable Artillery Company at the Tower of London, marking the anniversary of the King taking the throne.

8: INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY**19: INTERNATIONAL TALK LIKE A PIRATE DAY****21: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE**

Has the aim of promoting peace across the world.

21: ZERO EMISSIONS DAY

A day to think about how fossil fuels and carbon emissions affect the environment, and how we can help to stop the damage.

22 SEPT – 5 OCT:**FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT**

Everyone's encouraged to buy Fairtrade products to help farmers and workers get paid a fair amount so they can have better living and working conditions.

**22: ROSH HASHANAH**

The Jewish New Year celebrates the creation of the world and a fresh start. Rosh Hashanah means 'head of the year' in Hebrew.

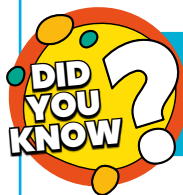
OCTOBER

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

A celebration of black heritage and culture.

4: WORLD ANIMAL DAY**5: WORLD TEACHERS' DAY**

Do you have a favourite teacher? Make sure to thank them on this day!

**10: WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY****16: WORLD FOOD DAY**

FROM October, there will be a ban on junk food being advertised on TV before 9pm.

20: DIWALI

Diwali is a five-day Hindu festival, known as the Festival of Lights. The main celebrations are on the third day, which is 20 October this year. The festival celebrates light over darkness and good over evil.

**24: UNITED NATIONS DAY**

The United Nations was created on 24 October 1945 to bring countries together after World War Two and create a better world.

26: BRITISH SUMMER TIME ENDS

Clocks go back one hour at 2am.

31: HALLOWEEN

NOVEMBER

5: GUY FAWKES NIGHT

Also known as Bonfire Night. It marks the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, when Guy Fawkes and his fellow plotters tried to blow up Parliament and kill King James I of England.

**9: REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

A number of events take place across the country to remember members of the armed forces who have fought and died for their country. The King and political figures attend a service of remembrance at the Cenotaph in London.

**13: WORLD KINDNESS DAY****16-22: ROAD SAFETY WEEK**

Organised by the road safety charity, Brake, the week aims to highlight how you can stay safe on British roads, as well as the impact that dangerous driving can have. Exact dates still to be confirmed.

20: WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

A time to celebrate young people coming together, and improving children's welfare across the world.

**27: THANKSGIVING DAY**

An annual holiday in the US, marked with fireworks, food and parades.

DECEMBER

**10: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

A day to highlight the rights that everyone should have as a human being – no matter what race, colour, religion, gender or nationality.

21: WINTER SOLSTICE

The northern hemisphere (including the UK) has its longest night and shortest day of the year. It's also known as midwinter.

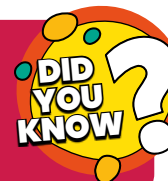
**24: CHRISTMAS EVE****25: CHRISTMAS DAY**

A Christian holiday marking the birth of Jesus Christ. People celebrate by giving gifts and spending time with loved ones.

**26: BOXING DAY****31: NEW YEAR'S EVE**

Officially the last day of 2025!

BACK in Victorian times, Boxing Day saw rich people box up gifts to give to those in need. Servants would be given the day off to spend with their families, too.



EVENTS ACROSS THE UK

THERE'S no need to jet abroad with all the amazing events happening right here in the UK! From festivals and carnivals to new exhibitions and free events, there's loads to keep you entertained.

GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

THE UK's biggest live music festival returns to Worthy Farm from 25–29 June, with tickets selling out last November in just 40 minutes!

The line-up will be announced in the run-up to the festival, although many big acts are rumoured to be headlining, including Matty Healy's band The 1975, Harry Styles and Ed Sheeran. Sir Rod Stewart has been confirmed to play the Sunday teatime legend slot.



Thousands attend the famous Glastonbury Festival, and loads of it is shown on the BBC

Heritage Open Days

ARE you nosy like us? Every September, English Heritage lets you explore loads of hidden places not usually open to the public.

The festival aims to celebrate the heritage and history across England, with events taking place in castles, museums and tourist sites. Keep your eyes peeled as to what's happening nearer the time! Heritage Open Days runs from 12–21 September this year.

Chelsea Flower Show

GARDENING has never looked as good as it does at the annual RHS Chelsea Flower Show, running from 20–24 May.

The best gardeners from around the world come to London to display their amazing garden creations and plants.

The entire area of Chelsea also gets involved in the fun, with shops decking themselves out in colourful floral displays and sculptures. It makes for a great walking tour!

The royal family are regular visitors to the event.



What a roarsome selfie!

Notting Hill Carnival

COLOURFUL fun fills the streets of London for two days at the Notting Hill Carnival.

On Sunday 24 August, the festival hosts Children's Day – a chance for families to enjoy live music, parades and performances. There are stages scattered around the Notting Hill area and you can check out some amazing floats along the way.

Notting Hill Carnival is a celebration of Caribbean culture and honours the music, food and history of many different communities.



Get ready to dance!

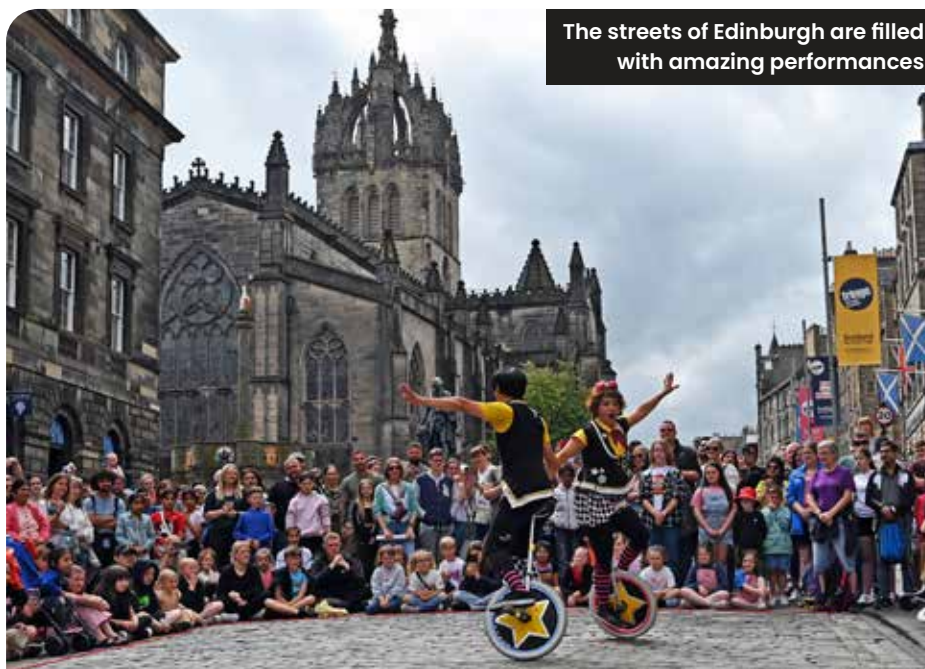
Edinburgh Fringe

THE world's largest performance arts festival comes to Scotland every summer, to delight thousands of visitors.

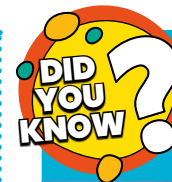
For three weeks in August (1–25), the city of Edinburgh welcomes artists and performers from all over the world to showcase their talents. From famous faces to unknown performers, the festival features everything from theatre and comedy, to dance, musicals and exhibitions.

At the end of the festival, the funniest joke is crowned! Last year's winner was Mark Simmons with this gigglesome gag: "I was going to sail around the globe in the world's smallest ship, but I bottled it."

What will win this year?



The streets of Edinburgh are filled with amazing performances



THE famous Boat Races between Oxford and Cambridge universities take place on 13 April.





All pics: Getty and iStock

Bristol International Balloon Fiesta

LOOK to the skies between 8–10 August and you may spot up to 100 balloons!

The annual balloon fiesta in Bristol celebrates the history of hot-air ballooning and will see people coming from all across the UK and the world to show off their colourful balloons.

The festival lasts for three days, with balloons going up at both dawn and dusk. The infamous Night Glows are a particular highlight, with dozens of hot air balloons inflating together and using their burners to glow in time to a soundtrack of music by BBC Radio Bristol.

V&A East Storehouse opens

ON 31 May, the V&A's East Storehouse opens, spread over four levels and bigger than 30 basketball courts.

The Storehouse (a huge warehouse-type space in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford) has been designed by famous architects and will provide a home for more than 250,000 objects from the V&A's collections. Visitors will be able to go behind the scenes of how a museum is run, find out how objects are found and cared for, and see objects that are usually too large to put in a normal museum.

Highland Games

THE Highland Games kick off in May and run until September, with more than 30 events happening across Scotland each month.

Each of the events honours a Scottish tradition, and most of the Games will feature piping and drumming competitions and highland dancing.

One of the craziest events is the caber toss. Competitors aim to hurl a huge log that can weigh up to 11 stone (70kg), get it to flip over and then land straight!

Blackpool Illuminations

THE world's largest free light show, the Blackpool Illuminations, is back in August!

There's normally a big switch-on event at the end of summer, with the lights shining bright right through to January. Visitors to Blackpool can see fantastic light displays, lasers and interactive features, all while enjoying miles of family fun along the promenade.



EXHIBITIONS AND FESTIVALS



Courtesy of David Aaron daidaaron.com

Making Egypt

THE Young V&A has announced its second exhibition, **Making Egypt**.

It will open in London in February and explore how stories and images from ancient Egypt continue to influence art, design and pop culture today. You'll be able to see more than 200 creative works and ancient artefacts, as well as enjoy hands-on activities including designing your own amulet (an object to protect its owner from trouble).

Let's talk science

THE British Science Festival was held for the first time in York way back in 1831 and, this year, it's making its ninth appearance in Liverpool.

It's on from 10–14 September but, if you don't want to wait that long, from 13–16 March on the other side of the country, you can visit Hull's Colliderfest, which celebrates both science and art.

Over Easter, there's the amazing Edinburgh Science Festival (5–20 April). This year it promises to use science fiction and space travel to "explore the challenges of living on a planet with finite resources".

Over in Belfast, Steve Backshall and Maddie Moate are just two of the big names who'll be appearing at the NI Science Festival from 12–23 February.

For readers in Wales, the Swansea Science Festival dates haven't been announced yet, but it's likely to be in October. The 2024 festival featured stars like Andy Day, Megan McCubbin and TikTok star Big Manny.



Bricktastic fun!

THE UK's largest LEGO event takes place in Manchester this year, with giant LEGO models and activities.

At Bricktastic, from 22–23 February, you can check out loads of LEGO buildings, animals and vehicles and build a section of a giant LEGO mosaic that'll contain more than 100,000 bricks! The event supports the charity Fairy Bricks, which provides LEGO bricks to sick children in hospital.

NATURAL WORLD

THE climate will undoubtedly be headline news throughout the year, as the Met Office says that 2025 is likely to be one of the top three warmest years on record. You can raise awareness and help the planet by taking part in events and marking special days, such as those listed below. Look out for lots of cute animal arrivals, too!



COP30 HITS BRAZIL

THE 2025 UN Climate Change Conference will take place in Belém, Brazil, between 10 and 21 November.

The 30th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference, dubbed COP30, is set to welcome more than 60,000 people into the heart of the Amazon rainforest. The location of the summit has been hit hard by deforestation, so environmental officials hope that, by welcoming the COP30 summit, changes can be made.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said: "If everyone's talking about the Amazon, then why not hold the COP in an Amazon state so that they can find out more about the region – about its rivers, its forests, its fauna [animals]? People get ready, because visitors from all over the world are coming, and they'll be amazed by the city of Belém."

World Rivers Day

THE world's waterways will be celebrated on 28 September.

The day highlights the importance of rivers for people and wildlife, as well as highlighting the need to keep them clean.



WWF's Earth Hour



EARTH Hour invites people across the world to switch off their lights for one hour to show they care about the planet.

From 8:30pm to 9:30pm on Saturday 22 March, families, communities and famous landmarks will go dark to encourage people to think about the future of Earth and what we can do to protect it.



The Eiffel Tower in Paris goes dark

Big Garden Birdwatch

THE world's largest garden wildlife survey is back from 24–26 January, and you can get involved!

You just need to spend an hour counting birds in the garden to see how different species are doing.

More than 600,000 people took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch last year, counting a whopping 9.7 million birds!

To join in, visit www.rspb.org.uk.



The house sparrow was the most spotted bird last year

World Environment Day

THE Republic of Korea will host World Environment Day on 5 June.

This year's focus is on ending plastic pollution across the world.

Jeju, an island off the coast of South Korea, will be the venue for talks after local officials declared their aim to become free of plastic pollution by 2040.



The world produces more than 430 million tonnes of plastic annually

World Wildlife Day



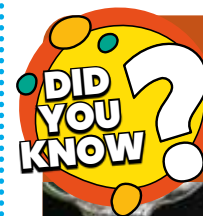
UNITED Nations World Wildlife Day (WWD) is celebrated every year on 3 March to celebrate wild animals and plants.

Every year, people are asked to think about the unique roles that wildlife plays in our lives and on the planet.

Endangered Species Day

WE'RE all encouraged to think about endangered species and how to protect them on 16 May.

Endangered species are animals, plants or insects that could become extinct in the near future if we don't protect them.



WOOF! The world's biggest dog show, Crufts, takes place in March.



World Oceans Day



ON 8 June, we celebrate the importance of the world's oceans, and why they need protecting.

World Oceans Day was introduced by the United Nations to encourage people to think about the major role the oceans have in everyday life – from regulating global temperature to providing a home for all sorts of animals and plants. They're also a big help in the fight against global warming, as they absorb around 30% of the carbon dioxide produced on our planet.

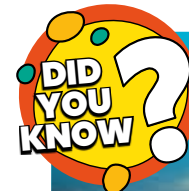
All pics: Getty and iStock

2025 UN Ocean Conference

THE United Nations will host a conference in Nice, France, from 9–13 June all about the oceans.

The aim is to support the 14th Sustainable Development Goal, which is to 'conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'.

The conference will bring together governments, scientists and people in power to discuss how we can look after the oceans sustainably.



THE ocean covers 70% of the planet and produces at least 50% of the planet's oxygen!



The National Trust turns 130

HAPPY birthday to the National Trust, which is celebrating its 130th anniversary this year!

The organisation was founded all the way back in 1895 by Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley to protect natural and historic places for generations to come.

One hundred and thirty years later, the National Trust is now the biggest conservation charity in Europe. It cares for more than 250,000 hectares of farmland, more than 780 miles (1,255km) of coastline and more than 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves.

Events will take place in venues across the UK to celebrate the impressive milestone.



Blickling Estate in Norfolk

Look out for our photography competition with the National Trust launching this March!



ZOO NEWS



New native species zone

IN March, Marwell Zoo will open a new UK Native Species Zone to help conserve white-clawed crayfish and sand lizards.

The zone will feature new conservation habitats and different areas for guests to discover how they can help protect UK wildlife in their own gardens and communities.

Return of the bat cave

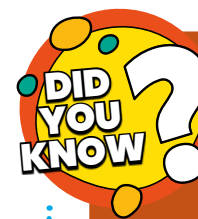
LONGLEAT'S famous bat cave reopens in spring.

The bat cave had to close in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, but work began last year to start rebuilding a habitat for 30 new Egyptian fruit bats.

Keepers say the reopening of the bat cave is a great next step for conservation and protecting endangered bat species.



WOW!



ZSL London Zoo and Whipsnade Zoo will carry out their annual weigh-ins throughout August. Every animal is counted, checked and weighed to keep a record of the species' health. The results are shared around the world to help zookeepers monitor threatened species.



New animal habitat

A BRAND-NEW habitat is coming to Twycross Zoo in spring.

The full list of species and details around this new habitat haven't been announced yet, but the zoo says it'll be home to "some of the world's most endangered reptiles and insects" and a 3m-long (10ft) boa constrictor (pictured).

SCIENCE

THE joy of science is that it's always changing and moving forward, so we can't wait to see what 2025 has in store. Whether it's a new species, a treatment for disease, a fix for climate change or a solution to one of the world's many other problems, you'll be sure to read about it in *First News*. Until then, here are a few things that should be happening this year – and one that sadly won't be.

FEELING SUPERSONIC



IF tests on the ground continue to go well, NASA's X-59 should be ready for its first test flight in the early part of the year.

This experimental aircraft has been designed to go supersonic (faster than the speed of sound), but without the noisy 'sonic boom' that other planes make.

The loud booms created by jet fighters are capable of breaking windows on the ground and scaring animals if they fly low enough, which is why supersonic passenger flights over land aren't allowed.

You might have heard of Concorde, the luxury passenger jet that was retired from flying in 2003. It was the world's only supersonic passenger plane and was

capable of going at twice the speed of sound over the ocean. However, it had to slow down over land, which greatly increased its flight times.

The aim of NASA's Quesst mission is to allow the development of supersonic passenger planes that produce a barely noticeable 'sonic thump' that doesn't disturb people or cause damage.

To get to this point has taken years of experimenting with designs on computers and testing models in wind tunnels but, in 2025, things are about to get real.

The big problem that NASA hasn't addressed is that fast planes are generally going to use more fuel and carry fewer people, which means their carbon emissions per passenger will be much higher than for a slower jet.

Concorde fact file

- **CRUISING SPEED:** 1,350mph (2,160km/h)
- **SPEED OF SOUND:** 767mph (1,235km/h)
- **NUMBER OF PASSENGERS:** 100
- **LENGTH:** 62.1m (203ft 9in)
- **LONDON TO NEW YORK JOURNEY TIME:** Under three and a half hours (compared to eight hours for a regular flight)
- **FUN FACT:** Concorde got so hot during supersonic flight that its metal frame would expand and make the plane longer by as much as 25cm!
- **FIRST COMMERCIAL FLIGHT:** 21 January 1976
- **LAST COMMERCIAL FLIGHT:** 24 October 2003



Concorde flying alongside a World War Two Spitfire fighter plane. It's not as random as it seems – the picture was taken by Rolls-Royce to boast about both planes being powered by its engines

Hope for cleaner air

POLLUTION in our rivers was big news in 2024, but did you know that air pollution kills an estimated seven million people around the world every year? That's more than the entire population of Scotland.

It causes breathing difficulties, asthma attacks and heart problems, and is also linked to cancer, low birth weight and mental health conditions.

That's why scientists and doctors will be hoping for some progress at the Second Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, which is due to take place in Colombia from 25–27 March.

Politicians, mayors, health experts, researchers, town planners and industry representatives will gather to



hear the latest evidence and solutions and, hopefully, take some steps that allow us all to breathe a little easier.

This report is from the
Science Museum Group

SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP

THE National Science and Media Museum in Bradford explores the science and culture of image and sound technology, from film and photography to animation and videogames.

When it opened in 1983, it hosted the first ever IMAX screen in Europe, and Britain's biggest cinema screen. As digital culture evolved, the museum's displays did too, to include the impact of the internet on our lives.

As part of its grand reopening this year, the museum has a surprising object joining its galleries – its first ever meme on display. It's a tweet by the Museum of English Rural Life that went viral in 2018, about its picture of an "absolute unit" of a sheep.

You can visit the revamped National Science and Media Museum from 8 January 2025.



The viral tweet that's now a museum exhibit!

The year of the robots

ROBOTS have been getting steadily better for years but, with recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI), many are expecting huge improvements in what machines will be able to do for us in 2025.

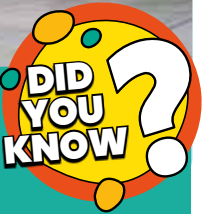
Although dreams of a robot butler that can make your breakfast, wash your clothes and tidy your room are unlikely to come true for decades, this year could still be pretty exciting.

The Robotics Summit & Expo in Boston, US, from 30 April to 1 May should see lots of interesting reveals.

Then, since a tough competition is always a good way to encourage innovation, the annual RoboCup in Brazil this summer should be one to watch. It has leagues for rescue robots and more, but the main attraction is always the football contest. The overall aim of RoboCup is to produce a team of humanoid robots that can beat the World Cup holders by the middle of this century. It may seem unlikely but, as the organisers point out, the first ever powered flight was in 1903 and, by 1969, men were standing on the moon. So, maybe a robot Ronaldo or mechanical Messi could soon be a reality...



JUST last month, Toyota's CUE6 robot set a Guinness World Record with the farthest basketball shot by a humanoid robot. It lobbed the ball right in the middle of the net from an incredible 24.55m (80ft 6in), which is almost the complete length of an NBA court (28.65m or 94ft). Steph Curry might have some competition!



One of the potential sites where the Dream Chasers could come in to land is Spaceport Cornwall!



Dream Chaser set for lift-off



THE sleek-looking Dream Chaser spaceplane could be making its first flight sometime from May this year.

The first of a planned fleet of similar planes is called Tenacity, and the private company that built it, Sierra Space, has delivered it to NASA for final testing.

The purpose of building Tenacity isn't particularly glamorous – ferrying cargo to the International Space Station (ISS). But the Dream Chaser is a cool name and it does look like a cross between the old NASA Space Shuttle, a sports car and something from *Star Wars*, so we're quite excited about seeing it take off.

For launch, its wings will be folded up and the whole thing will be blasted into orbit by a Vulcan Centaur rocket. But the plane-like design means that it can come back down to Earth and land on a runway, just like NASA's Shuttle did. Because it's reusable, it should bring down the cost of sending stuff up to the ISS.

This DC-100 version doesn't have a crew, so it'll be controlled remotely. Sierra Space is also planning a DC-200 version that'll be capable of taking people to the ISS as well as cargo.

Sierra Space

Maybe next year...

IT'S still not clear whether incoming president Donald Trump will slash NASA's budget and hand lots of its work to his buddy Elon Musk's SpaceX, but it's thought that the Artemis space programme will survive.

After all, if it succeeds in putting people on the moon for the first time since 1972, Trump will get to go down in history as the man in the White House when it happened.

Unfortunately, we're all going to have wait a bit longer for that to happen though, after NASA last month put back the Artemis II mission to 2026. It was due to carry out further tests of the technology on a trip around the moon and back in September this year, but that's definitely not going to happen now.

In case you're having a feeling of déjà vu, Artemis II was also in our last year ahead issue. It was due to launch first in November 2024 but, hopefully in April 2026, we'll finally get to see those four astronauts lift off. See you back here in a year's time!



CRAZY BUT TRUE



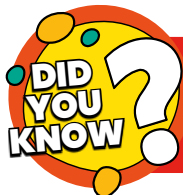
NOTHING beats a wild and wacky event to make you smile, and there are plenty of giddy goings-on in 2025! We'll be reporting on lots of them on our regular Crazy But True page each week, but here's a little flavour of what you can expect.



RUBIK'S CUBE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

CAN you solve a Rubik's Cube? If you can, how quickly can you do it?

From 3–6 July the Rubik's Cube World Championship in America will bring together people from across the world to see who can solve the popular puzzle game in the fastest time.



MAX Park holds the record for the fastest time to solve a 3x3x3 rotating puzzle cube, completing it in just 3.13 seconds!

Twins Day Festival



TWINNING is winning, right?!

The world's largest annual gathering of twins is due to take place in Twinsburg, Ohio, between 1–3 August. The town was actually founded by twin brothers in 1819!

The festival is also open to other multiples, such as triplets and quadruplets, and it's expected that the siblings come dressed in the same clothes.



Spot the twins!

Lumberjack World Championships

WHEN it comes to more unusual sporting events, this one is high on the list.

Every year, America hosts the Lumberjack World Championships, which this year takes place between 17–19 July. Competitors get to show off their skills with all things wood-based, and there are more than 20 events, including men's and women's log-rolling, power-sawing, speed-climbing, axe-tossing and chopping!



Speed-climbing isn't for the faint-hearted

World Gravy Wrestling Championships

DO you ever look at your Sunday roast and think: 'I could wrestle in that gravy'? This could be the competition for you!

Competitors in fancy dress wrestle in a pool of gravy, scoring points based on their technique and their ability to make the crowd laugh. After each match, the pool is topped up with fresh, steaming gravy. The winners get their name engraved on the World Gravy Wrestling Championships trophy.

The event takes place in Rossendale, Lancashire, in the UK every August and raises money for charity.



Cheese Rolling

CHASE that cheese!

Competitors will throw themselves down Cooper's Hill near Gloucester on Monday 26 May, chasing after a wheel of Double Gloucester cheese. The cheese is given a short head start and can reach up to 70mph (113km/h)! Most contestants end up losing their footing and rolling down the 200-yard (183m) hill because it's so steep.



World Custard Pie Championships



READY, steady, pie!

On 7 June, pie-throwing teams will battle it out to be crowned the champs in this comical competition. One year, a team came all the way from Japan to bring a load of pies – that really is dedication!

GUINNESS World Records Day will take place in November, with hundreds of records being attempted across the world. Maybe you could even break one yourself?



World Bog Snorkelling Championships

ONE of our favourites every year, this competition is splashingly good fun to watch.

Taking place in the Waen Rhydd peat bog near Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys, competitors take the plunge to snorkel the bog as quickly as they can. Swimmers

often come decked out in fancy dress and can do any type of swimming stroke they want. Hundreds of people from across the world take part in the championships, which are held over the August bank holiday weekend.



All pics: Getty and iStock

El Colacho Baby Jumping Festival

DEFINITELY don't be trying this one at home, folks!

Every June, the Spanish village of Castrillo de Murcia holds a festival where men representing the devil leap over tiny babies to protect them from evil and disease. After the jump, the babies are then blessed by priests.

Thankfully, in the 400 years of the festival, there have been no recorded injuries.



Man v Horse Marathon

COULD you outrun a horse?

That's what competitors are challenged to do in the Man v Horse Marathon in Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys, on 14 June. Runners race alongside riders on horseback across 23 miles of road, trail and rocky terrain. The competition started in 1980 and it took 25 years before a man finally beat a horse for the first time in 2004!



FOOD FIGHT!

La Tomatina

THE town of Buñol in Spain is famous for its epic food fight festival, La Tomatina.

On 27 August, thousands of people will join in the fun, which sees more than one 100 tonnes of over-ripe tomatoes thrown in the streets. Prepare to be covered!



Battle of the Oranges

THE people of Ivrea in northern Italy will take part in a very sweet, epic three-day food fight dubbed the Battle of the Oranges, from 2-4 March.

People pelt each other with 900 tonnes of oranges in a playful re-enactment of a rebellion from around 1200 that saved Ivrea from an evil dictator.



World Conker Championships

YOU always know it's autumn when conkers are about.

If you're a pro at playing conker games, you could be in with a chance at the World Conker Championships in Northamptonshire on 12 October. It's open to kids and adults, and has taken place since 1965.



WORLD NEWS

THE UK is made up of four countries, but the world is made up of another 191, so we're never stuck for fascinating international stories to bring you throughout the year. Here's just a small selection of things we have to look forward to in 2025, from politics, parties and parades to races and rip-roaring new rollercoasters...

USA: TRUMP TAKES CHARGE



DONALD Trump returns to the White House as President of the USA this month.

The 78-year-old will be 'sworn in' at a ceremony in Washington, DC on 20 January, where he'll have to take the presidential oath to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Trump is replacing Joe Biden, who decided not to run for president again. Trump beat Biden's vice-president, Kamala Harris, in a fiercely-fought election in November. Trump needed to win 270 of the 538 electoral votes to win overall, and he collected 312.

His first spell as president was from 2017 to 2021. However, his return to the job has had a mixed reaction. Once he's sworn in, he'll become the first sitting president with a criminal record in the country's history, for lying about his business records.

He was also accused of triggering a riot at the US Capitol building in January 2021 and trying to overturn the result of the election that he lost to Joe Biden. However, these charges had to be dropped when he won November's election, as US law says that a sitting president can't be put on trial.

Trump's big promises

Immigration: To deport (remove) immigrants from the USA, unless they have the right documents to stay there.

Climate: Cut back on climate protections and increase drilling for fossil fuels.

War: Come up with a deal that will end Russia's war with Ukraine "within 24 hours".

ALSO...



Pop pals Swift (left) and Carpenter

Awards season in Los Angeles

The **Grammy Awards**, which honour the best music of 2024, will be held on 2 February, with Taylor Swift and Sabrina Carpenter going head-to-head for several awards, including best album and best song. A month later, on 2 March, it's the turn of the **Oscars**, celebrating the best films and actors of the year.



Super Nintendo World

New theme park opens in Orlando

Universal opens the gates to **Epic Universe** on 22 May! The park will have 50 new attractions, with areas dedicated to the likes of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Super Nintendo World and *How To Train Your Dragon's* Isle of Berk. An outer space area called Celestial Park will include a 62mph rollercoaster, too!



Home time at long, long last!

Astronauts come home

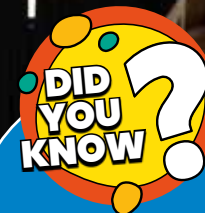
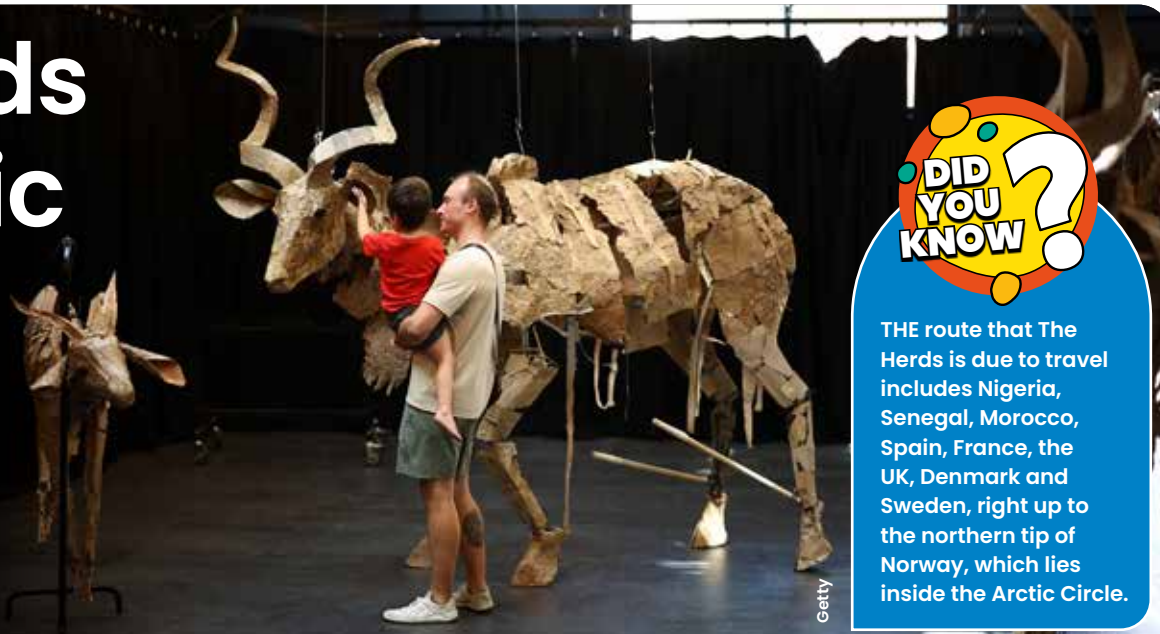
After many long months stranded up in space, NASA astronauts **Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore** will finally return to Earth in March or April. They arrived on the International Space Station in June and were due to return in a week, but technical issues meant they've had to wait for a lift home with another crew!

Congo: The Herds set off on an epic adventure

IN April 2025, an animal puppet art project called **The Herds** will embark on a 20,000km journey from the Congo Basin in Africa, rampaging through city centres all the way up to the Arctic Circle.

It represents animals fleeing climate disaster, in order to raise awareness of the crisis. A team of artists made the life-size animal puppets from recycled materials.

The organisers hope that half a million people along the route will show up to see the stampede, with many others seeing it online.



THE route that **The Herds** is due to travel includes Nigeria, Senegal, Morocco, Spain, France, the UK, Denmark and Sweden, right up to the northern tip of Norway, which lies inside the Arctic Circle.



Gaza



Ukraine

An end to war?

THROUGHOUT 2024, *First News* brought you reports of wars in the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and beyond.

The Council on Foreign Relations says there are 28 conflicts happening around the world right now, causing

pain and suffering to innocent people wrapped up in them, including millions of children.

It's our sincere hope that, in 2025, leaders can find paths to peace, and we can bring you news of the end of some – if not all – of these wars.

South Africa: The Ultimate Race

AROUND the time that your school is gearing up for sports day, extreme athletes will embark on one of the toughest events in the world!

Known as the 'ultimate human race', the Comrades Marathon is the biggest and oldest ultramarathon in the world. It was created in 1921 by soldiers who'd

fought in World War One, and sees competitors completing 89km (55 miles) across all sorts of tricky terrain.

This year, it's being held on 8 June and at least it's (mostly) downhill – it starts high up in the hills of Pietermaritzburg and finishes at sea level in Durban, on the shores of the Indian Ocean.



That's a lot of laps of the school field!



France: First-ever Disney Music Festival

DISNEYLAND Paris is hosting an all-new Disney Music Festival between 19 April and 7 September 2025.

The entire park will be involved in the magic, from Minnie Mouse's parade, with her very own marching band, to live pop and rock performances of classics from our favourite Disney and Pixar movies.



Brazil: Carnival time!

THE world's biggest carnival rolls back into Rio de Janeiro for a week filled with festivities.

The loud and colourful celebration of Brazil's culture and history starts on 28 February – but it's not just a Rio thing. Cities nationwide celebrate the carnival too, and it makes around £1.3 billion for the country's economy.

Brazil will also host the COP30 climate conference in 2025. Starting on 10 November, it will bring countries together to discuss fixing the climate crisis (see p8).



Amsterdam celebrates 750th birthday!

IF you saw the viral videos of Dutch fans at Euro 2024, you'll know that they can party!

On 27 October, their capital city, Amsterdam, is 750 years old. It's celebrating with a year-long series of events, including shutting the A10 ring road that loops round the city on 21 June and throwing it open to pedestrians for a day packed full of music, food, theatre and more!

Couples will even get the chance to get married right there on the tarmac of the 15km ring road. You might call it the biggest 'wedding ring' of all time!



The museum also includes a large garden of native plants

UAE: Lift-off for massive museum

THIS astonishing new museum will open in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this year.

The Zayed National Museum is being built on Saadiyat Island, and is in the shape of the wings of a flying falcon. Inside, visitors will explore exhibits that show off 300,000 years of human activity in the UAE.

Known for its gleaming modern skyscrapers, the nation is now keen to show off its historic identity to the world.

PLUS...



Norway loves electric cars



Norway hopes to ban the sale of all new diesel and petrol cars this year.



Thailand will legalise same-sex marriages on 22 January.



Switzerland will host the Eurovision Song Contest, with the final on 17 May.



Bulgaria will become the 21st country to use the euro as its currency from 1 July.

ENTERTAINMENT

IT'S set to be another blockbuster year at the cinema, with loads of big releases in the pipeline! There are also some great new stage shows to look forward to, and will Sabrina Carpenter be able to rival Taylor Swift's huge tour of 2024?!



MOVIES



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Elio

Disney and Pixar are joining forces again for a new animated adventure called *Elio*. Coming to cinemas in June, *Elio* will follow the story of 11-year-old Elio Solis, who accidentally gets sent to space by aliens and becomes an intergalactic ambassador for Earth.

A Minecraft Movie

The much-loved videogame is getting its very own Hollywood movie in April! The film follows a group of humans who are sucked into the Overworld and have to embark on a magical quest to protect it from zombies and other creatures. Can they master this world and get back home? Jack Black is bringing the laughs as Steve, while Jason Momoa plays a human called Garrett Garrison.

Wicked: Part Two

The first movie was a worldwide sensation, so you can only imagine how excited fans are to see the second part of the story! In November, Glinda (Ariana Grande) and Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) will be back to continue their magical adventure in Oz.

Lilo and Stitch

Disney's family favourite *Lilo & Stitch* has been given the live-action treatment! Crash landing in May, the film focuses on Lilo, a lonely Hawaiian girl who adopts a small ugly "dog" that she calls Stitch. But it turns out Stitch has escaped from an alien planet and fallen to Earth! Watch as this duo enjoy some big adventures and become best pals.

Jurassic World Rebirth

Dinosaurs are roaring back into cinemas in July! The seventh film in the *Jurassic Park* series, *Jurassic World Rebirth*, will follow a brand-new cast five years after the events of the last film. Starring Scarlett Johansson and Jonathan Bailey, the movie explores the small number of dinosaurs left on Earth and their benefits to humankind.

How To Train Your Dragon

Cressida Cowell's much-loved classic novel and animated film series will be transformed into a live-action movie in June. Fan-favourite characters Hiccup and Toothless will return, with Mason Thames playing the lead role and Nico Parker playing Astrid. Gerard Butler will reprise his role as Stoick.

Snow White

We'll be whistling while we work in March as the live-action adaptation of *Snow White* arrives in cinemas. The musical stars Rachel Zegler as Snow White (right) and Gal Gadot as the Evil Queen, and features songs by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul of *The Greatest Showman* fame. That means it's bound to be full of catchy tunes!



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TV Dancing On Ice

We're skating into the new year with another brave group of celebrities on *Dancing On Ice*. Holly Willoughby and Stephen Mulhern are set to present, as the likes of Olympic rower Sir Steve Redgrave, TV presenter Michaela Strachan and *Coronation Street's* Sam Aston take to the rink.



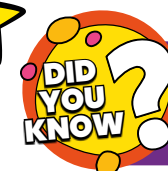
Percy's back!

Percy Jackson and the Olympians

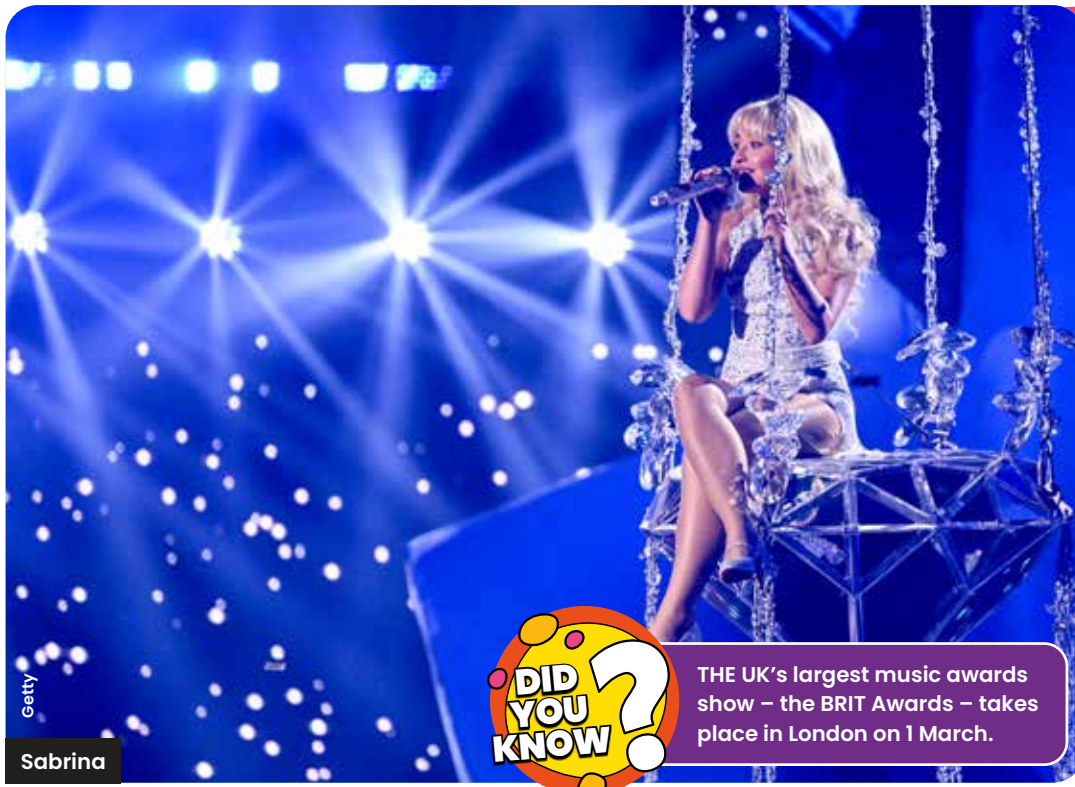
Percy Jackson returns to Disney+ with the second season of *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*. Season two will follow the plot of the second book in Rick Riordan's best-selling series, *Percy Jackson and the Sea of Monsters*. Percy returns to Camp Half-Blood, but it comes under siege from the forces of Kronos. Can Percy put things right? The original cast is expected to return, including Walker Scobell as Percy.

The Famous Five

The Famous Five returned for a second series just before Christmas, and there's more to come this year! The plot is being kept under wraps, but we can expect the gang to enjoy more adventures, mysteries and secrets to uncover.

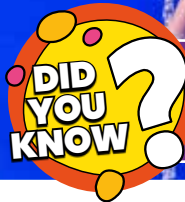


MAYA Jama will join the panel on ITV's *The Masked Singer*, replacing Rita Ora.



Getty

Sabrina



THE UK's largest music awards show – the BRIT Awards – takes place in London on 1 March.

MUSIC



Sabrina Carpenter on tour

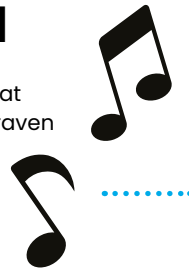
American pop star Sabrina Carpenter is returning to the UK for her new Short n' Sweet Tour. Throughout March, she'll perform in many of the UK's biggest cities including Birmingham, London, Glasgow and Manchester.

Coldplay hit London and Hull

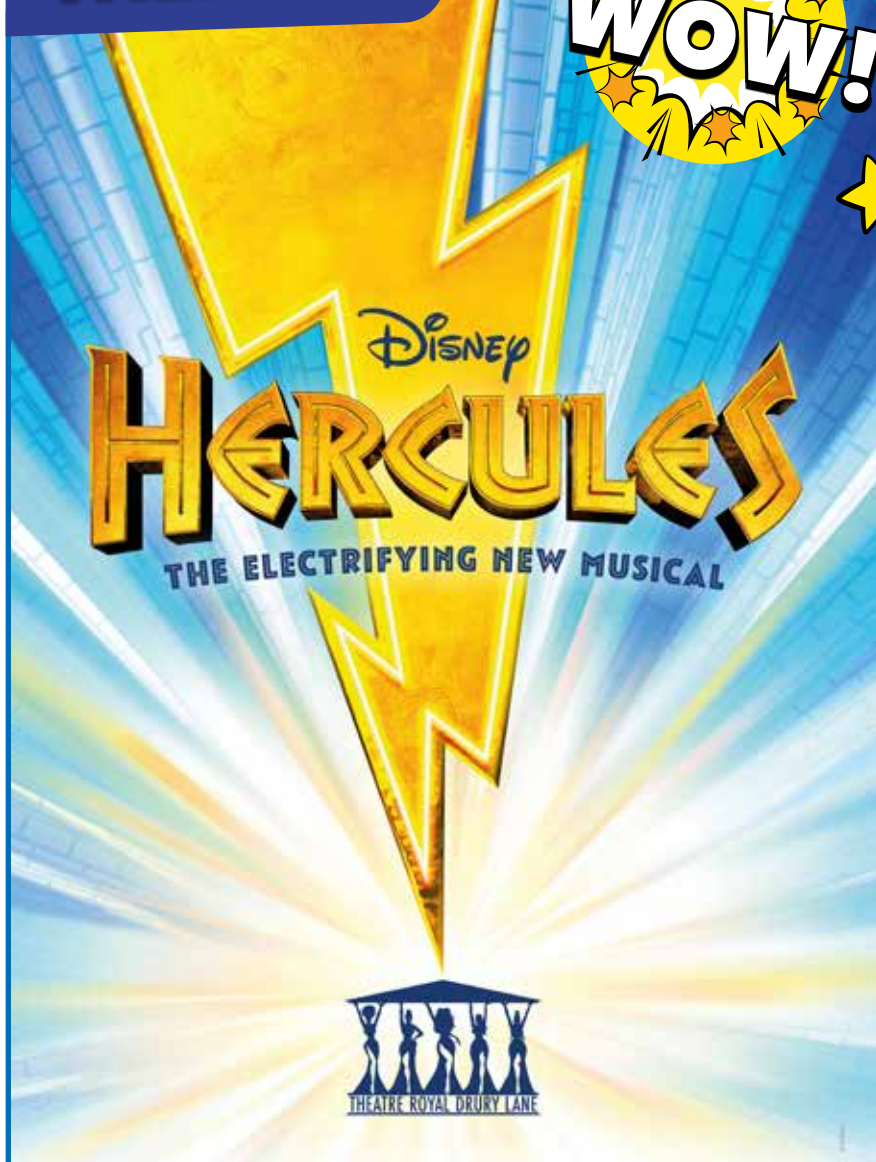
Coldplay are returning to their home country, playing ten dates at Wembley in August and September. They'll play two nights at Craven Park in Hull, too, but these are their only European gigs in 2025!

Olivia Rodrigo headlines

Olivia Rodrigo will perform for her biggest UK crowd on 27 June in London as part of Hyde Park's annual British Summertime Festival. Also playing in Hyde Park are Hugh Jackman from *The Greatest Showman* and record-breaking folk-pop star Noah Kahan.



THEATRE



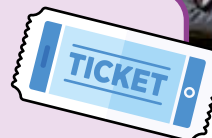
Disney's Hercules

Disney's hit animated film *Hercules* is coming to the West End stage! The legendary musical will follow the same much-loved plot of the film, with characters Hercules, Meg and Hades all appearing in live musical numbers with even more added songs. You can catch the Greek hero at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane from June.



Matilda the Musical

Matilda the Musical on tour



Opening in October 2025, audiences across the UK will have the chance to see the award-winning *Matilda the Musical* as it embarks on its 15-year anniversary tour. This is *Matilda's* second national tour, and the show will be stopping in Leicester, Bradford, Liverpool, Plymouth, Sunderland, Edinburgh and Manchester.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe on tour

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of CS Lewis' famous novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, a special stage show of the story is touring the UK. The classic family show will visit major towns and cities in the UK and Ireland, bringing the magic of Narnia to thousands of theatregoers.

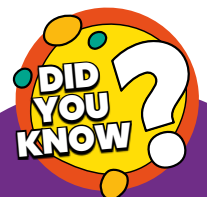


The Lion King was among the shows that took part in Kids Week last year

YFX Youth Festival



In July, Sadler's Wells will present its first YFX Youth Festival – a new annual festival that celebrates young dancers from across the UK. The theatre is partnering with One Dance UK to present work from the National Youth Dance Companies of England, Scotland and Wales, as well as workshops and talks for young people.



KIDS Week will take place during the summer holidays. During Kids Week, children under the age of 17 can attend productions in the West End for free as long as they go with a paying adult. You can enjoy everything from musicals and comedy, to dance performances and plays.



GAME ZONE



If you thought that 2024 was a great year for gaming, just wait until you see what's lined up for 2025!
Get your game on with our pick of the best...



Football Manager 2025 (finally) arrives



THE latest edition of the *Football Manager* series is set to launch in March 2025 after being delayed from November 2024.

The classic game allows football fans to become a manager of their favourite club and guide the team to glory. The game's developer, Sports Interactive, says it will be "the biggest technical and visual advancement in the series for a generation." New features include the introduction of women's football to the series, opening up a world of possibilities with new teams, leagues and players to take to the very top.

Also, we know many of you will be fans of the Premier League, which is fully licensed in *FM* for the first time. This means you'll see official logos, kits, branding and player photos.

FM25 comes to PC in March, plus *FM25 Console* for PS5 and Xbox Series X/S. *FM25 Touch* will be on Nintendo Switch, and *FM25 Mobile* returns to Netflix.

Pokémon Legends: Z-A

POKÉMON Legends: Z-A is one of the most eagerly-anticipated games of 2025.

It's a continuation of the *Legends* spin-off series, meaning we're heading back to Lumiose City. This area in the Kalos region was first featured in 2013's *X* and *Y*, but in this game a plan is underway to "shape the city into a place that belongs to both people and Pokémon".

There are rumours that more details will be released on 27 February, which is Pokémon Day. The first trailer was released on this day in 2024, with Pikachu (right) making an appearance.

Pokémon Legends: Z-A comes to Nintendo Switch in 2025.



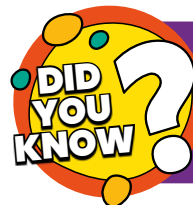
Pikachu in the trailer

Hello Kitty Island Adventure

ORIGINALLY released on Apple Arcade in 2023, *Hello Kitty Island Adventure* is expanding soon to major platforms.

In fact, Japanese company Sanrio's colourful cast of characters will be available to everyone except Xbox users in 2025. The game involves wandering around the cosy island community doing fun tasks along the way. Craft rare items, solve ancient puzzles and make new friends! Due to its success on Apple Arcade, frequent updates mean it has more than 80 hours of content for players.

Hello Kitty Island Adventure comes to Switch, PC, PS4/5 in 2025.



EGX – the UK's biggest celebration of all things gaming – will be back in London in 2025. There'll be the opportunity to play the latest games and dive behind the scenes of your favourite virtual worlds.

Professor Layton and the New World of Steam

THIS puzzle game will be the first of the Professor Layton series since the release of *Layton's Mystery Journey: Katrielle and the Millionaires' Conspiracy* in 2017.

It follows Professor Hershel Layton – revived as the main character – and his first apprentice, Luke, on a new adventure in America. The series features 3D gameplay for the first time, which can be explored from a first-person perspective.

Professor Layton and the New World of Steam releases on Nintendo Switch in 2025.



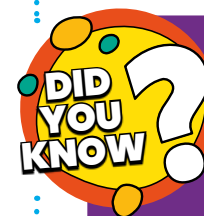
Professor Layton and his sidekick Luke

Nintendo Switch 2

THE hype is ramping up for the official unveiling of the Nintendo Switch 2.

By the time it's released (rumoured to be in March 2025), it'll have been eight years since the original Switch was released.

So far, Nintendo has kept tight-lipped about the details of the new console.



MCM Comic Con London returns from 23–25 May. The convention features around 500 exhibitors of comics, videogames, sci-fi and anime.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!

DON'T MISS IT!

THIS IS YOUTH CELEBRATION

HERCULES STAGE SHOW

WICKED WRITERS COMPETITION

Where does money go when you spend it?

USBORNE
Be Curious.

Lift the flaps to answer all the questions you've ever had about money

What happens inside a bank?

Can you trade things instead of using money?

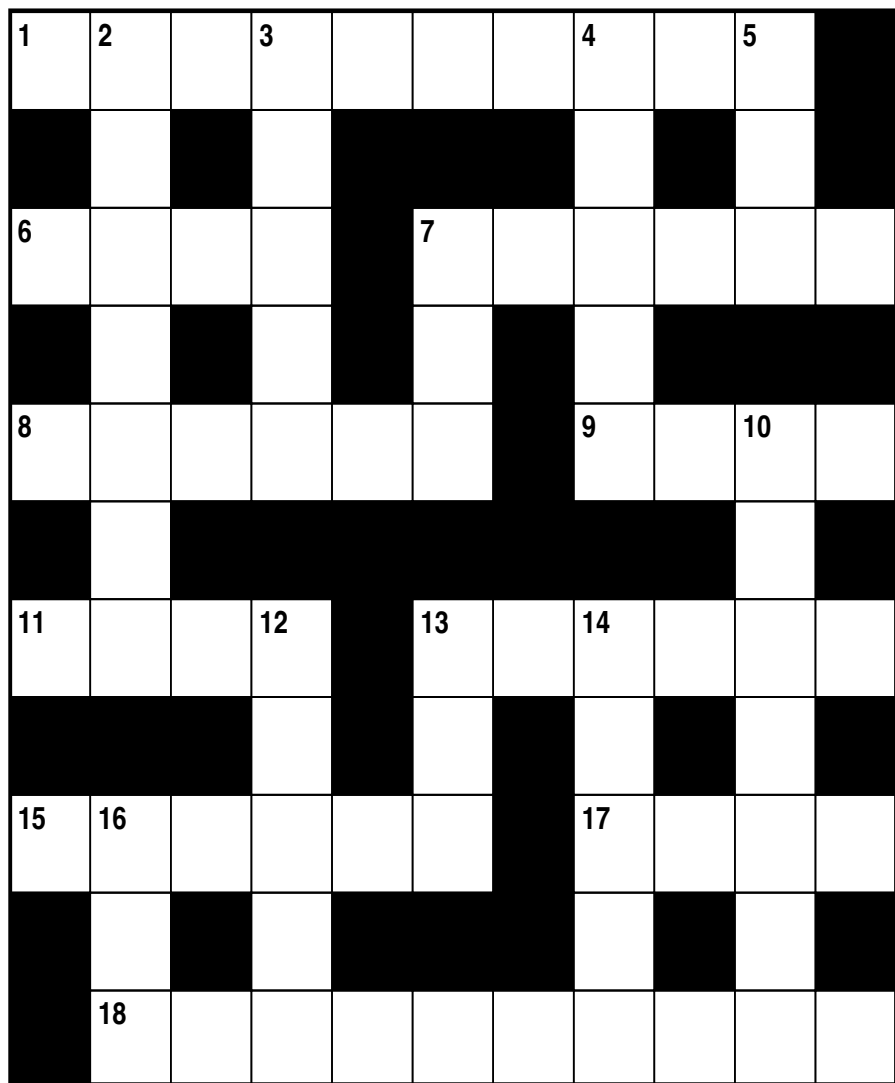
Find out more

This QR code should be scanned by a responsible adult



CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



ACROSS

- 1 Space travellers (10)
- 6 Large primates (4)
- 7 Mad _____: *Alice in Wonderland* character (6)
- 8 Child of your aunt or uncle (6)
- 9 At any time (4)
- 11 Scratch; an urge (4)
- 13 How tall a person is (6)
- 15 Play a TV show again (6)
- 17 Waterbird (4)
- 18 Fair and right (10)

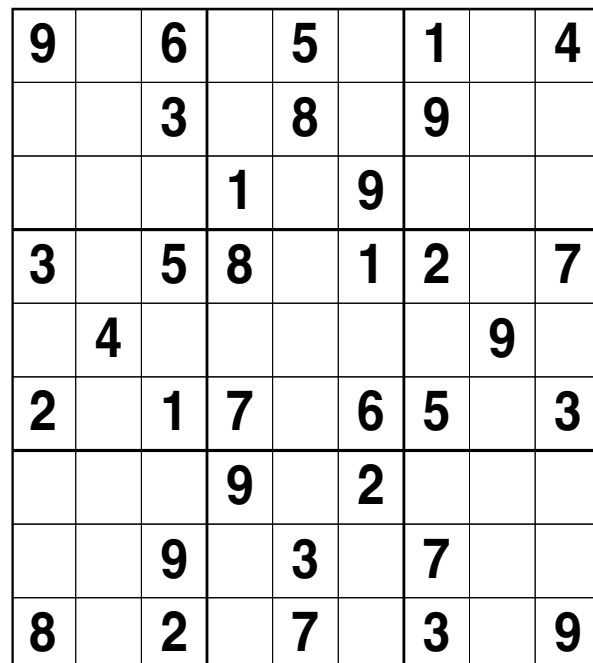
DOWN

- 2 Help and assist (7)
- 3 Flowers that have thorns (5)
- 4 Loosen a knot (5)
- 5 Observe (3)
- 7 Adult female chicken (3)
- 10 Moral (7)
- 12 Dog-like nocturnal African mammal (5)
- 13 Small wooden building (3)
- 14 Country whose capital is New Delhi (5)
- 16 The part of your body that lets you hear (3)



Sudoku

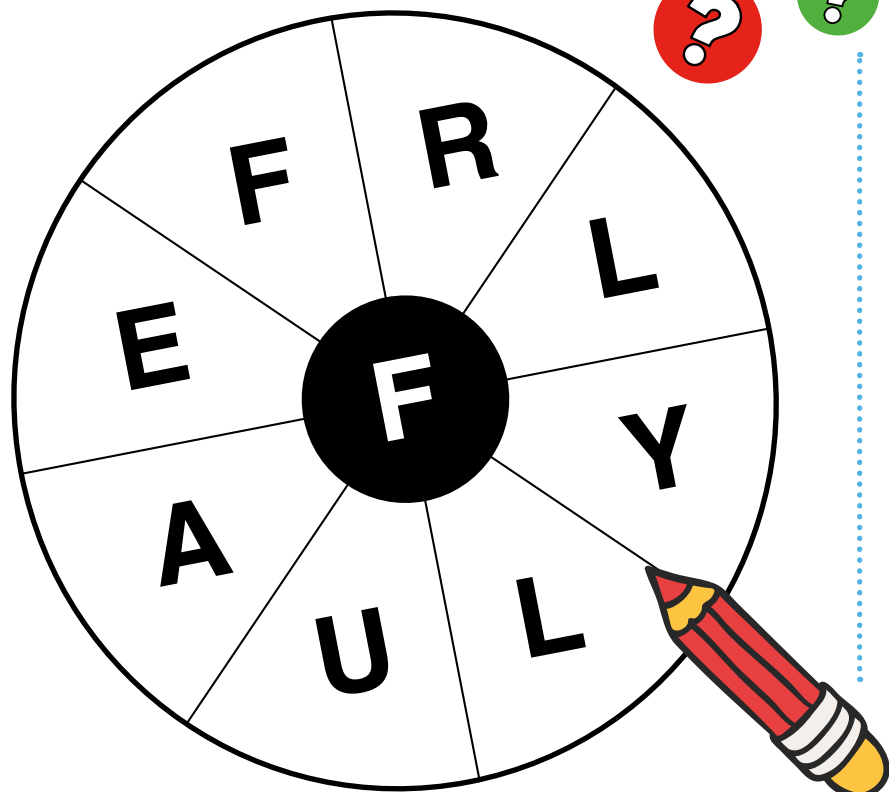
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?



COMPETITIONS: To enter, email us at win@firstnews.co.uk putting 'competition name' (e.g. Holiday), in the subject box or visit firstnews.comps. *First News* competitions are only open to those aged 15 and under and residents of the UK & Republic of Ireland, except employees of *First News*, First Group Enterprises Ltd, Reach plc and any associated companies and their families. Winners will be selected at random from all those with the correct answer. No purchase necessary. *First News* will not enter into any correspondence. All winners will be notified accordingly. If you are a winner, your details will be securely passed on to the person who is providing the prize so they can post it out to you. If you are contacted but don't reply within 28 days, we may offer the prize to another entrant. No cash alternative for any prizes will be offered. The winner may be required to partake in media activity relating to the competition. Your personal data will be held for a maximum of 12 months after the competition and then destroyed. It will not be used for any other purpose unless you have given us permission. If you would like your data deleted before this, please do get in touch with us. You have the right to complain to the ICO if you believe there is a problem with the way your data has been handled.

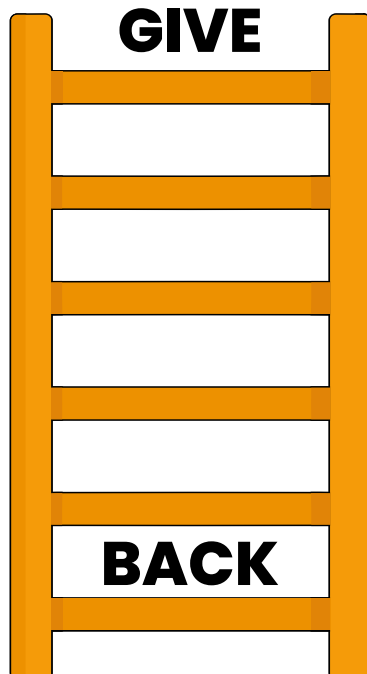
Word wheel

SEE how many words of three or more letters you can make, using the middle letter in each one. And can you find the word that uses all the letters?



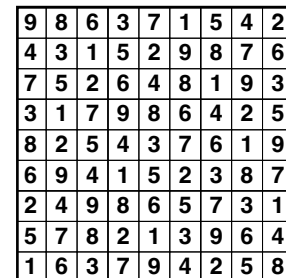
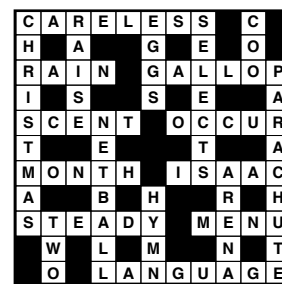
Word ladder

SEE if you can get from the top of the ladder to the bottom by changing one letter at a time to make a new word.



ISSUE 966 ANSWERS:

Word wheel: concealed.
Word ladder: rain, gain, grin, grip, drip, drop.



Enjoying the puzzles?
See the *First News* app for more fun, quizzes and games!
This QR code should be scanned by a responsible adult.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

CAN you spot the ten changes we've made to this carnival scene?




Wordsearch


Can you find all of these fun venues in the wordsearch? Tick them off as you go!

- Museum
- Gallery
- Cinema
- Theatre
- Zoo
- Aquarium
- Soft play
- Castle
- Stadium
- Restaurant

c j b i b o x c x t f n s t a d i u m a b d
 k v s x w q o a q u a r i u m o j n n b e p
 x y g r s k d f i w v p c c q l c r a s w l
 f s a y o e p q k p c d o t n c h g f n k y
 s e l a f c z x k z o c n m t w q c e t h i
 e a l z t c p y m h g a u i y h x i g e h x
 m i e e p p y u a w r e c n u l e p u d a i
 x z r g l d u o a u s w a m x b z a v u j w
 d l y m a b y p a u v k s o p u b c t j t s
 z o o l y x f t m h f q t j e f u h c r o r
 q r e j h r s p x m d n l o w g m d g n e d
 z s w z t e y p d j n w e x g x u p f e w j
 d i n z r g c i n e m a f t j v k r c l t d



BOOKS



BROWSE the books below and see if anything catches your eye – they're all on their way to libraries and shops near you this coming year! Don't miss those diary dates, too, for some big book anniversaries and celebrations in an action-packed year ahead.



**OUT:
NOW!**

The Boy Who Didn't Want To Die
Peter Lantos

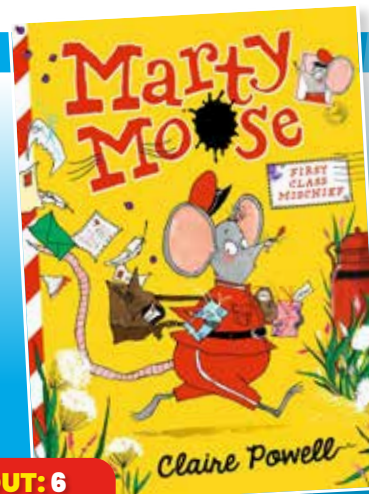
A new, graphic version of the story of a boy's survival in Nazi Europe.



**OUT: 6
FEBRUARY**

Magicalia: Thief of Shadows
Jennifer Bell

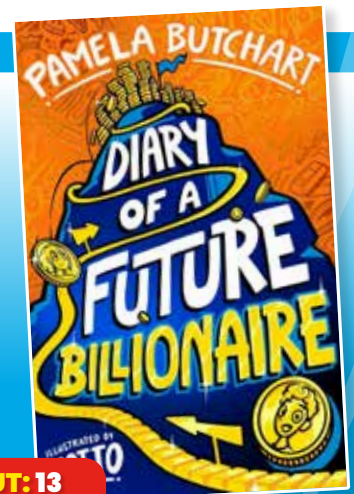
The second book in Bitsy, Mateo and Kosh's fantasy adventure!



**OUT: 6
FEBRUARY**

Marty Moose: First Class Mischief
Claire Powell

A gorgeously-illustrated story of a postmouse's mad first day at work.



**OUT: 13
FEBRUARY**

Diary Of A Future Billionaire
Pamela Butchart

The diary of a boy set on becoming the world's richest ten-year-old!



**OUT: 6
MARCH**

The Greatest Stuff On Earth
Steve Tomecek

A cool guide to how everything we encounter each day really works.



**OUT: 6
MARCH**

Wildlands
Brogen Murphy

Two kids must survive in a futuristic UK that's wild and human-free!



**OUT: 13
MARCH**

Dadbot
Jack Noel

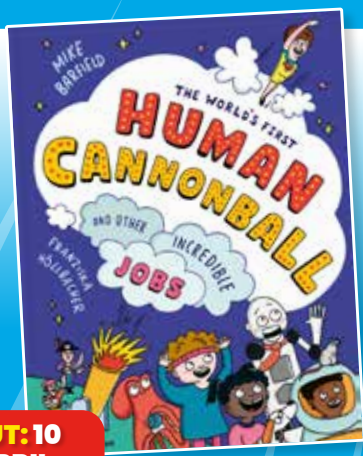
Josh and Daisy embark on an adventure with a new robo-parent!



**OUT: 13
MARCH**

Meet the Mubbles
Liz Pichon

A brand-new graphic novel series from the creator of Tom Gates.



**OUT: 10
APRIL**

The World's First Human Cannonball and Other Incredible Jobs Mike Barfield

All about the world's wildest jobs!



**OUT: 10
APRIL**

The Seaside Sleepover
Jacqueline Wilson

Daisy hopes for her dream summer holidays at the seaside.



**OUT: 24
APRIL**

The First Year
Matt Goodfellow

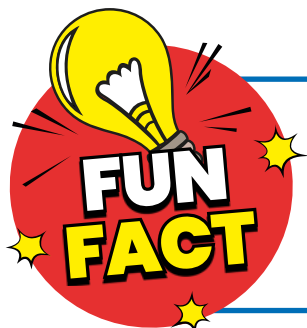
The follow-up to *The Final Year* sees Nate start secondary school.



**OUT: 8
MAY**

Somadina
Akwaeke Emezi

A tale of twins with magical gifts, inspired by Nigerian Igbo culture.



10,000

THAT'S how many children's books are published every year – and that's just in the UK. So, there'll be lots more to enjoy besides the ones you see here!

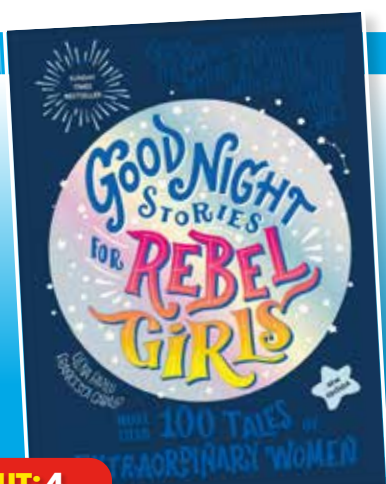


**OUT: 27
FEBRUARY**

Grumpfort

Jamie Hammond

Mo, the world's worst monster hunter, sets off on a crazy mission!



**OUT: 4
MARCH**

Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls

Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo

A new edition with over 100 bedtime tales of inspiring real-life women.



**OUT: 1
APRIL**

The Dragon's Apprentice
James Riley

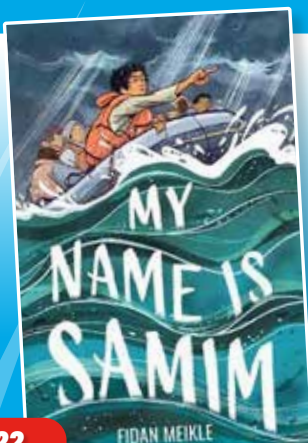
A girl teams up with a cranky dragon to learn forbidden magic!



**OUT: 3
APRIL**

Clem Fatale Has Been Betrayed
Eve Wersocki Morris

Clem, the youngest crook in 1950s London, sets out to save her dad!



**OUT: 22
MAY**

My Name is Samim
Fidan Meikle

Teenage refugee Samim sets off from Afghanistan to the UK.



**OUT: 5
JUNE**

The Hidden Heroes of Science
Peter Gallivan

Discover the unnamed heroes behind top scientific discoveries!

BIG dates for book fans!

**18
JANUARY**

Winnie the Pooh Day

Winnie the Pooh Day falls on the birthday of the books' author, AA Milne, and has celebrated the much-loved bear since 1986!



**14-16
FEBRUARY**

Waterstones Children's Book Festival

Happening in the historic city of Lincoln, the first ever Waterstones Children's Book Festival will feature author events and talks to encourage the joy of reading.

**2
MARCH**

Dr Seuss Day

Have you read a Dr Seuss book? This date – the author's birthday – aims to bring pupils together to enjoy reading in school.



**6
MARCH**

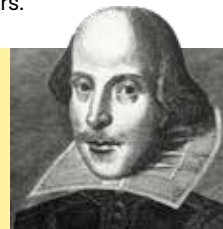
World Book Day

World Book Day aims to get children reading for fun! Everyone can get a book with £1 book tokens and you can dress up as your favourite book characters.

**24-30
MARCH**

Shakespeare Week

Open to primary school children, this week aims to give you experience of Shakespeare's famous stories.



**3
MAY**

Free Comic Book Day

The comic book industry uses this day to give away free comic books to encourage younger generations to support their local comic book shops.

**22
MAY –
1 JUNE**

Hay Festival

The annual Hay Festival of Literature and Arts attracts writers, poets, philosophers, historians, scientists, comedians and musicians to give talks or perform at the festival.

**13
SEPTEMBER**

Roald Dahl Day

An annual celebration of Roald Dahl's stories, characters and worlds. Roald Dahl Day invites us to dress up as one of his characters to raise money for charity!

OCTOBER

Harry Potter Book Day

A chance for fans to celebrate the series with events, parties and other festivities. The exact date hasn't been decided yet.



**16
OCTOBER**

This classic turns 75 years old!

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe by CS Lewis turns 75! Events, including a tour of the West End musical of the book, will happen across the UK.

**16
DECEMBER**

Jane Austen's 250th birthday

Author Jane Austen was born in 1775. Special events will be taking place across the year in her home town of Chawton, Hampshire.



2025

80th anniversary of Moomin

The first Moomin book was published in 1945 to comfort people in World War Two and, 80 years on, the sweet stories are still loved today!



FYI: WEEKLY NEWS SHOW



FIRST News has teamed up with the BAFTA Award-winning Sky Kids weekly news show FYI. Each week, the FYI team of young reporters investigate the big issues that young people need to know about. There are reports from around the globe, explainers, debates, Fake News or Fact?, 'Kidversations' between young people around the world, and in-depth reporting. You can watch loads of cool videos from them by heading to first.news/fyi or checking out the First News app. Here are just some of the videos that you can watch right now!



STOP THE SCAMMERS!

HAVE you ever been scammed? Maybe in a videogame or on a website? FYI presenters Braydon and Lara investigate scamming and some of the ways you can avoid it.

WHAT IS A SCAM?

A SCAM is a dishonest plan to trick someone into giving away money, personal information or valuables. Scammers pretend to be someone they are not. They might promise you something that sounds too good to be true, or ask for personal details to try to get into your online accounts to steal your money or something valuable from you. Scamming is a crime, so it's really important to look out for it and be aware of it. You might think that scamming only happens to adults, but it happens to kids too!



Let's talk Trump

WE asked young people in America how they feel about Donald Trump becoming president again.

YOUR SHOUT!

Quamaine says: "I really wanted Kamala to win. I wanted to see some history – first woman, first black woman to be a president for the United States."

Gianny says: "I'm happy that Trump won because I feel like he did a good job of running the country and I want him to continue doing a good job so our country can be safe."


first.news/fyi

Watch daily FYI video news reports on the First News app or at first.news/fyi, along with the weekly news show and documentaries.

A wicked film!

PART one of the *Wicked* movie broke box office records, so we found out some fun facts to celebrate.

- Cynthia Erivo, who plays Elphaba, said it could take up to four hours to cover her skin in green make-up. She also had to have prosthetic ears to cover up her piercings.
- Ariana Grande said she had voice and acting lessons every day for six months because she wanted the role of Glinda so badly!


DID YOU KNOW?

ONE in six species are threatened with extinction in the UK.

Fake news or fact?

ARE haggis actually real wild animals living in Scotland?

We saw videos going viral online about the so-called wild Scottish haggis. The four-legged animals apparently come in all shapes and sizes from different parts of Scotland, but are they real?! (Erm... no, actually!)


QUICK NEWS

LAST year marked the 50th anniversary of the Rubik's Cube!

The puzzle was created in 1974 by Hungarian inventor and professor Ernő Rubik. He originally invented the cube to help his students understand the principles of 3D objects.



FEATURE ON THE SHOW!

Want to be in an episode of FYI? Just ask your teacher to set up a **First News FYI News Club** at your school. You'll get access to an FYI News Club chat sheet, a weekly quiz and opportunities to write for First News and report for the show. Find out more at first.news/FYInewsclub.



Ask an adult to scan this QR code to see more FYI: Weekly News Show videos!



TELL US YOUR NEWS!

WE love to hear from our readers and that's why we dedicate a special page to you every week! *Your News* is your chance to share your amazing reports with us and have your voices heard on all sorts of different topics.

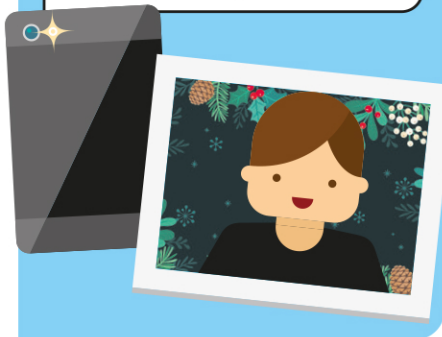


HELLO! I'm Milly, the leader of the *First News* FYI News Club.

Last year was jam-packed with fabulous reports from readers about everything from fun days out and shows, to charity challenges and amazing achievements. I can't wait to hear all about the exciting things you get up to in 2025! Make sure to write in to us and tell us about them for your chance to be in *First News*!

LET'S KICK THINGS OFF...

Tell us about your Christmas holidays or exciting plans for the next few months! Did you get up to anything fun that you'd love to share with others? Or maybe you've got something exciting lined up for the year ahead? We love to get your news reports and photos. Off you go then!



Write to us!

Ask a responsible adult to email us at yournews@firstnews.co.uk

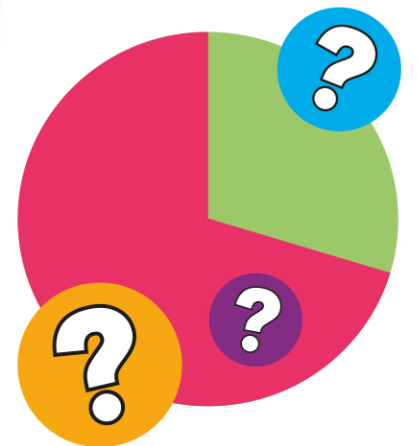
CALLING ALL JUNIOR JOURNALISTS!

Would you love to be invited to cool events and report on them for *First News*? If it's a big yes, get your teacher to sign up to the News Club at first.news/fyinewsclub.



Vote in our weekly poll

Every week, we ask you a question about the news! Let us know what you think.



Cast your vote in our polls at first.news/polls

Love reading

FirstNews?

There's even more on the *First News* app!

DAILY NEWS

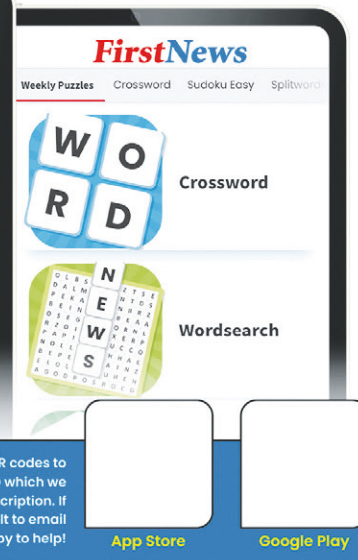
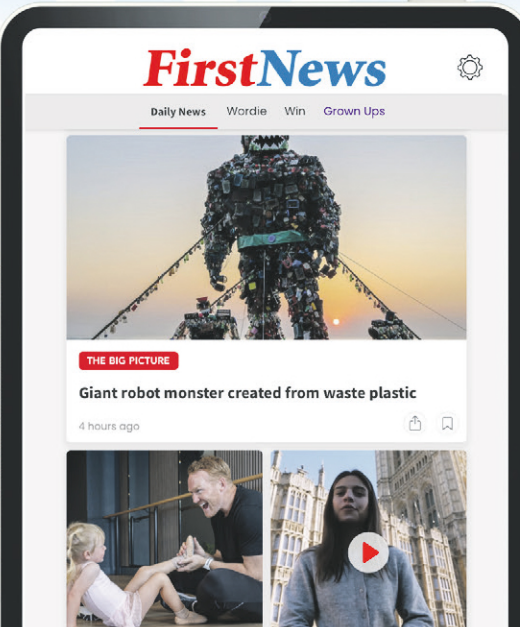
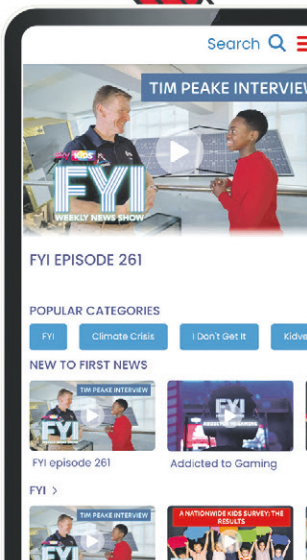
PLAY FUN GAMES

AWESOME PUZZLES

WATCH SKY FYI

PLAY OUR WEEKLY NEWS QUIZ!

VIDEOS



Get an adult to scan one of these QR codes to download the app. They'll need the Web ID which we emailed to the person who paid for your subscription. If they can't find it please ask an adult to email info@firstnews.co.uk and we will be happy to help!

App Store

Google Play

FirstNews Quiz

THE answers to all these questions can be found in the pages of this issue. Why not set yourself, or your friends and family, a time challenge to see who can get the highest score in the quickest time? See how well you did by checking the answers at the bottom.

1 2025 marks the year of what animal in the Chinese Zodiac?



2 In which country would you see the Battle of the Oranges?



3 What is the name of the Young V&A's second exhibition?



4 In what month does the disposable vape ban start?



5 Where is the Eurovision Song Contest being held?



6 Astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore have been stuck in space since June 2024. How long was their mission originally meant to last?



7 What big birthday is the National Trust celebrating this year?

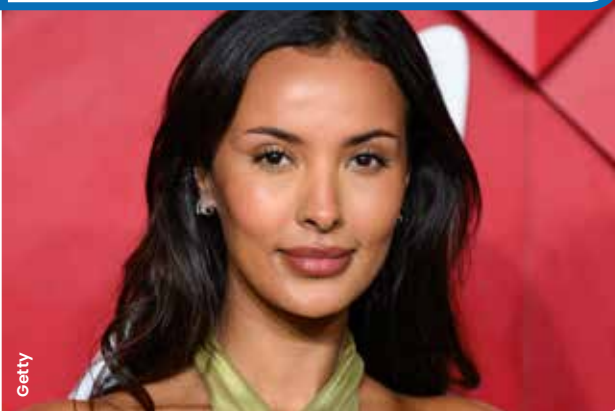


8 What is the name of CS Lewis' famous novel that's celebrating its 75th anniversary?

9 Where is COP30 taking place?



10 Maya Jama is joining the panel of which ITV talent show?



11 What Disney show is making its West End debut in June?

12 Which famous person helped to set up the Invictus Games?



13 Which country is hosting the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup?



14 What is the main focus for this year's World Environment Day?



15 Which famous UK landmark do lots of people visit to watch the summer and winter solstices?



If you enjoyed this, why not check out our Quiz that you can play online as an individual or with your family? You can find it at [firstnews.co.uk/quiz](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/quiz) and on the *First News* app!

FirstNews WEEKLY NEWS QUIZ!
Check out our new online Quiz!

Answers:
1 Snake 2 Italy 3 Making Egypt 4 June 5 Switzerland 6 A week 7 130th 8 The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe 9 Belém, Brazil 10 The Masked Singer 11 Hercules 12 Prince Harry 13 England 14 Plastic pollution 15 Stonehenge.

First News team details available at www.firstnews.co.uk/team. For editorial enquiries, contact newsdesk@firstnews.co.uk. For home subscription enquiries, email subscriptions@firstnews.co.uk or call 0330 333 0186 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm). For school subscription enquiries, email education@firstnews.co.uk or call (01371) 851 898 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm).

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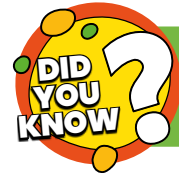
SPORT

DO you feel the need for speed? There's a lot of it this year, with the British Grand Prix, the London Marathon and the World Athletics Championships all lined up. Hold on tight, as it's set to be a competitive ride!

BRITISH GRAND PRIX

FANS will have four Brits to root for in the race this season: Lewis Hamilton, Lando Norris, George Russell and newcomer Ollie Bearman.

The race takes place at Silverstone, the home of British racing, from 3-6 July. It will mark Lewis Hamilton's first home Grand Prix since his move to Ferrari and he will be aiming for a record-breaking tenth win at Silverstone.



THIS year marks the 75th anniversary of Formula 1's first ever race at Silverstone!



All pics: Getty and iStock

Lewis Hamilton

World Athletics Championships

SOME of the world's top athletes will come together in Tokyo, Japan, from 13-21 September to show off their sporting skills.

The competition is set to welcome more than 2,000 athletes from 200 countries, with events ranging from long-distance jumps and javelin throws to track races and hurdles.



London Marathon

THOUSANDS of runners will take to the streets of the capital for the TCS London Marathon on 27 April.

The huge event first took place in 1981 and it has become one of the most popular marathons in the world. The route, which is 26.2 miles long, passes by some of London's most famous landmarks, including Buckingham Palace and Tower Bridge. If you're going along to watch, keep an eye out for *First News*' very own senior reporter Chris Towers, who's taking part for UNICEF!



Open Championship



IT'S time to tee off, as the oldest golf tournament in the world is coming to Northern Ireland for the first time since 2019.

The Open Championship is happening at Royal Portrush from 13-20 July and will welcome the best golf players from across the world, as well as a small number of non-professional golfers who are invited to compete.

Great North Run

THE world's biggest half marathon is taking place on 7 September.

The AJ Bell Great North Run will see up to 60,000 runners race from Newcastle to South Shields, with many raising money for charity. The Junior and Mini Great North Run will happen the day before the main event, on 6 September. Will you be joining in? We'd love to hear from you if you are!

Invictus Games

THE first-ever winter Invictus Games are touching down in Vancouver and Whistler in Canada from 8-16 February.

The games were set up for wounded servicemen and women and will bring together more than 500 athletes from over 20 nations. This year, alpine skiing and snowboarding, Nordic skiing and biathlon, skeleton and wheelchair curling have all been added to the list of sporting events.

Prince Harry helped to set up the Invictus Games back in 2014



Women's FA Cup

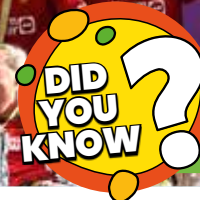
THE winners of the 2025 Women's FA Cup will be decided at Wembley on 18 May.

It's the top annual knockout cup competition for women's clubs in English football. A total of 514 teams entered this year's competition, but there can only be one winner.

Last year, that team was Manchester United, who won the competition for the first time. Ella Toone and her team-mates will begin the defence of their title with a fourth-round match against West Bromwich Albion on 12 January.



Manchester United winning the Women's FA Cup in 2024



ARSENAL have won the most Women's FA Cups, with 14 titles under their belts.

SPORT

THIS year, a lot of it's about the women, as we celebrate the Women's Rugby World Cup, the Women's Cricket World Cup and the Euros! Other fast and fabulous events we've got to look forward to include the Six Nations, Wimbledon and the FA Cup to name just a few. Get ready to cheer your heart out, folks!

WOMEN'S RUGBY WORLD CUP

COULD the cup be coming home?! It's England's turn to host the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup in the summer, giving hope to thousands of fans.

Scheduled to take place between 22 August and 27 September, the tournament will see 16 teams from across the world taking part.

Matches will be held in rugby stadiums across England, from Exeter to Sunderland.

New Zealand are the current world champions, but will they be able to hold onto their title?



UEFA Women's EURO 2025

SWITZERLAND will play host to the European Championship between 2–27 July.

The tournament will feature 16 teams from across Europe and will take place in eight venues. England's Lionesses will be returning to the competition as the defending champions, having won the event back in 2022. Germany has won it the most times, with eight titles, while no other country has won it more than twice!



England celebrate their win in 2022

Wimbledon



STRAWBERRIES and cream at the ready, as Wimbledon gets underway in June.

The oldest tennis tournament in the world and one of the four major tennis tournaments (Grand Slams) will take place from 30 June until 13 July. The world's best players travel to London to take part and you can expect to see lots of famous faces, including royalty, in the stands watching!



Carlos Alcaraz won the men's tournament last year, beating Novak Djokovic

Six Nations

THE Six Nations is an annual international rugby union competition between England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland and Wales.

The men's Six Nations kicks off on 31 January in Paris as Wales take on France in the opening game. Matches will take place across the six countries throughout the annual tournament, which finishes up on 15 March.

The Women's Six Nations then begins on 22 March. Defending champions England face Italy in their opening match.



Premier League



THE Premier League – the highest level in English football – will draw to a close on 25 May.

Manchester City began the season hoping to defend their winning streak and claim a remarkable fifth straight title. However, Pep Guardiola's side have been in dodgy form this season.

Liverpool have been the pace-setters under their new boss, Arne Slot, with Chelsea and Arsenal in the chase, too.

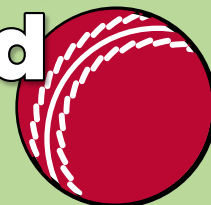
At the other end of the table, this season's promoted teams, Southampton, Ipswich and Leicester, have a job to do to survive the relegation scrap!



Can Man City recover to defend their title?

All pics: Getty and iStock

Women's Cricket World Cup



WHO will bowl us over in the 2025 Women's Cricket World Cup in India?

That's the big question fans are asking! Australia, England and South Africa have already qualified for the competition, with two automatic qualification spots still up for grabs.

THE Hundred cricket tournament is set to return to stadiums across England and Wales this summer. Keep an eye out for dates!

DID YOU KNOW?



Issue 968 | £2.95



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