



# supernova

The mag for curious kids

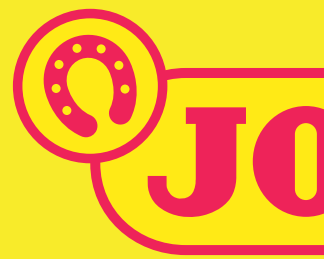
Vol  
12.5



## LEOPARDS on the loose

PUZZLES | SCIENCE | NATURE | ACTIVITIES | SPORTS | COMICS





# TEMPER



WIDE  
RANGE OF  
COLOURS!

HOW TO MAKE  
A RECYCLED MONEY  
BOX WITH TEMPERA



250 ml



500 ml



jovi\_southafrica



# JIVI

## RA PAINT





# Hi SuperKids



**Candice**

Welcome to another exciting issue of your favourite kids mag! In this issue, we're diving into stories that will inspire, challenge, and amaze you.

Let's start with one of the most fascinating creatures in the wild – the leopard! Reading about these big cats, we learn that survival is about being flexible and making the most of the environment you're in – a great lesson for us all!

Next, we're traveling back in time to meet the builders of ancient America! From the towering temples of the Maya to the ingenious stone roads of the Incas, these ancient civilisations achieved wonders that still amaze us today. As you explore their achievements, remember that knowledge passed down through generations is powerful. We can all learn from the wisdom of those who came before us!

And finally, we had the incredible honour of interviewing Dr. Sian Proctor, the first African American woman astronaut to venture into space! Dr. Proctor's journey from Earth to orbit teaches us that dreams really do come true with hard work and perseverance. Her courage and passion are a reminder to never stop reaching for the stars, no matter who you are or where you come from. So, get ready to embark on a journey of discovery, courage, and inspiration!

We hope these stories spark your curiosity and remind you that the world is filled with amazing things to learn. Who knows? Maybe you'll be the next great explorer, scientist, or protector of nature! Happy reading, and stay curious kids!

## Nicole's top picks in this issue!

Hey guys! These are my absolute top picks that you **HAVE** to check out in this new issue!

### Reading Conversations with Candice (page 43)

helped me realise that I'm not the only one who fights with their sibling sometimes!

Learning about all of the different careers out there is so interesting! Check out our new ProFile article (page 14)!



Learning how to practice mindfulness (page 15) is such an important skill. Emotions can be confusing and overwhelming, and finding out how to understand them makes all the difference!



**Nicole**  
Writer

I love to explore, and learning about all about the awesome astronaut, Dr. Proctor, in our Feature article (page 34) was so inspirational!

She is the first African American woman to pilot a commercial spaceship, she's practically a professional explorer! It was so cool to meet her and talk to her in person.



ISSN: 2224-1442  
EMAG ISSN: 2413-8207  
Legal deposit: 11/2023

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Published every two months by:  
**BK Publishing (PTY) LTD**  
[www.bkpublishing.co.za](http://www.bkpublishing.co.za)  
Reg: 2015/060893/07

**BK PUBLISHING**  
P.O. Box 6314  
Pretoria  
0001  
South Africa  
T: +27 12 342 5347



Printed by:  
**Zero Plus Printers, Pretoria**



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# The Features

## 24 Leopards on the loose

Get ready to leap into the world of leopards! In this issue, we'll uncover the secrets of these amazing big cats — from their stealthy hunting skills to their super cool spots and climbing talents. Discover why leopards are some of the sneakiest and smartest hunters, and learn how they survive in the wild!



## 29 Make a leopard print t-shirt

Want to make your own wild style? Turn an ordinary potato into a stamp that makes amazing leopard spots! With just some paint, a T-shirt, and a bit of creativity, you'll be ready to rock your very own leopard print look.



## Meet the builders of Ancient America

Step back in time to discover the incredible world of the Builders of Ancient America — the Mayans, Incas, and Aztecs! In this exciting feature, we'll explore the amazing cities, temples, and pyramids these civilisations built and learn about the science, art, and inventions that made them famous.

30



## 34 Interview with an astronaut

Blast off into an out-of-this-world interview with Dr. Sian Proctor! As the mission pilot for SpaceX's Inspiration4, Dr. Proctor made history as the first African American woman to pilot a commercial spaceship. Join us as she shares her incredible journey to the stars, what it was like to float in zero gravity, and her inspiring message for young space enthusiasts.



Answer for Brain Games, page 40:



Answers for What'cha Reading, page 41:

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1a. Cusco    | 2a. cacao beans |
| b. chinampas | b. sun          |
| c. Valeriana | c. Mayans       |
| d. quipu     | d. Glyphs       |



# Ask Jules?



## Jules

Yes, plants can grow in space — but it's a little tricky! Here on Earth, plants rely on gravity to tell their roots to grow down into the soil and their stems to reach up toward the sunlight. In space, there's hardly any gravity, so scientists have to find creative ways to help plants figure out which way to grow. Instead of planting them in soil, astronauts sometimes use special "grow bags" with nutrients and water that flow around the roots. Space plants also need special lights to act like the sun, giving them the energy to grow.

But why are scientists so interested in growing plants in space? Well, plants could one day provide fresh food for astronauts on long space missions, like trips to Mars! Plus, plants release oxygen, which is super important for humans to breathe. By experimenting with plants in space, scientists are learning how to support future space explorers — and maybe even help us set up gardens on other planets!

Tiffany (8)  
from Bloemfontein asked us:

# Can plants grow in space?

# Taking on the stars

**Meet Reneiloe Mathebula, a 15-year-old South African actress whose dreams are taking her all the way to Hollywood!**

Recently, Reneiloe became the first South African selected for the prestigious Universal Actors Sessions in Los Angeles! She competed against talented young actors from around the world, impressed the judges at the IMTA (International Modeling and Talent Association) convention in New York, and earned the Top 10 Best Actress award! Reneiloe's passion for acting began when she was just a child, and with incredible dedication, she's already starred in several music videos, including a recent one for Grammy-winning superstar, Tyla!

Her journey proves that with hard work and confidence, anything is possible — even joining the ranks of Hollywood's best! Reneiloe hopes her story will inspire other young people to dream big and believe in their potential.



Photo: DanzLuss Photography

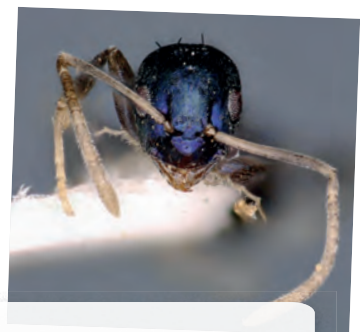
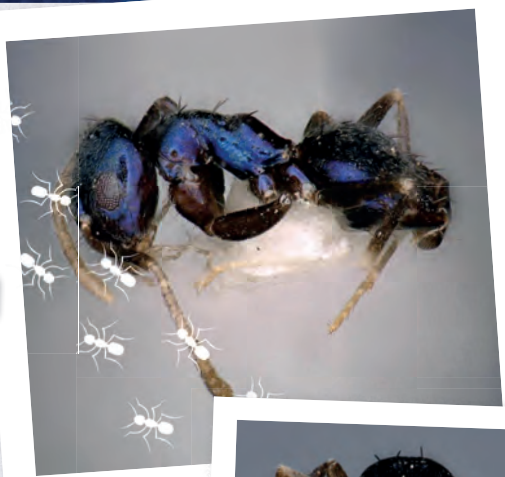


Photo: DanzLuss Photography



# Discovering the new blue ant

In June 2024, scientists made an exciting discovery in the Siang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh, India — a brand new species of ant called *Neela parapatrechina*! Researchers exploring a tree trunk with a small hole about 3 metres high, found these tiny ants, each less than two millimetres long. What makes *Neela parapatrechina* so special is their rare, metallic blue body — the rarest color found in any ant species! The name 'Neela', meaning "blue" in Hindi, highlights its unique colour. Discoveries like this remind us of the amazing creatures that still wait to be found and how important it is to protect their habitats.



## ?! Get this!

Unlike colours like brown or yellow, which come from pigments in animals, blue is usually created by the way light reflects off tiny structures in their bodies!

## Creature FEATURE

The mossy leaf-tailed gecko is one of nature's ultimate masters of disguise! Found only in the rainforests of Madagascar, this amazing gecko has a body that looks just like a piece of mossy bark or a lichen-covered leaf, which helps it hide from predators. It even has jagged edges along its body and tail to make it look even more like tree bark! This clever camouflage allows the gecko to stay perfectly still and invisible while it waits for insects to wander by, making it a stealthy night time hunter. Unlike most geckos, the mossy leaf-tailed gecko has no eyelids; instead, it has a clear layer over its eyes that it cleans with its tongue! These fascinating reptiles are also known for their 'sticky' toe pads that let them climb trees with ease. Because they are so rare and specially adapted to Madagascar's forests, the mossy leaf-tailed gecko reminds us of how unique and important it is to protect its rainforest home.

Photo: Konrad Wothe



Photo: Kevin Schafer



Photo: Nicky Bay





## The Pinboard

### Did you know?

There are more  
than 1.4 billion  
insects

for EACH HUMAN on the planet.



# Learn your Local Languages

Sepedi edition



KE A LEBOGA!  
Thank you!

HLE  
Please



DUMELA, LEINA LA KA KE...  
Hello, my name is...

LA BO MPSA LE DUBJA LE SA FISA  
Meaning: A tree must bend while still young



Problems must be resolved as soon as possible, before they get bigger

SALA GABOTSE  
Goodbye



O TSOGILE BJANG?  
How are you doing?



PHIRI YA MEKOKA MEDEDI E PHATLOGA NOKA  
Meaning: You can't do two things properly at once



SEHLARE  
Meaning: tree/medication



SEHLARE SA MUSI KE GO SE KATOGA  
Meaning: Play away from a fire that causes too much smoke



If you recognize a problem, find a way to save yourself

THABA  
Meaning: mountain/happy



### Did you know?

Even after having  
its head cut off, a  
cockroach can still  
live for weeks.

Even stranger, a  
cockroach's head can  
actually survive by  
itself for a few hours,  
too.





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## The Squid and Bat Nebula

Photo by Daniel Nimmervoll

The **SH2-129**, also called the Squid and Bat Nebula, is a super cool space object in the Cepheus constellation. What's really exciting about it is that it's like two nebulae in one! The "bat" part is made of glowing red gas, while the "squid" in the middle is a faint, bluish cloud known as **Ou4**. The squid was only discovered in 2011, which makes it a new and rare find! It's so faint that even powerful telescopes have a hard time seeing it. The whole nebula is about 2,300 light-years away from us, which means it's really far, but still an amazing sight in space!







# Freddie Mercury

The Queen of rock 'n roll

Freddie Mercury wasn't always called Freddie, and he wasn't always a rock star! He was born as Farrokh Bulsara on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1946, on the island of Zanzibar.

He grew up in a family that loved music, and Freddie started learning piano when he was just a kid. Little did he know that one day he would become one of the most famous musicians in the world!

When Freddie was a teenager, he moved with his family to England.

He always had a big imagination, and he loved performing.

He joined several bands while he was studying, but it wasn't until he met three other musicians that his life changed forever.

In the early 1970s, Freddie teamed up with Brian May (guitar), Roger Taylor (drums), and John Deacon (bass), and they formed the band, Queen. With Freddie's incredible voice and stage presence, they quickly became a huge hit.

But Freddie wasn't just a singer — he was a songwriter too, and he wrote some of Queen's most famous songs!

When Freddie wrote '*Bohemian Rhapsody*' in 1975, some people thought it was too weird. It became one of the biggest hits in rock history, and one of the coolest, most unique songs ever written.

Freddie's voice was like no other. He could sing high, low, soft, or loud, and he made every note sound amazing.

People loved watching him perform because he was full of energy and excitement on stage. He was known for his outrageous costumes and his ability to make every concert feel like a giant party.

Queen became one of the best-selling bands of all time, and Freddie's influence reached far beyond music.

In 1985, Queen performed at Live Aid, a huge concert to raise money for charity, and their performance is often called the greatest live show ever.

Freddie Mercury passed away in 1991, but his music and spirit live on. Queen's songs are still played all around the world, and millions of people sing along to Freddie's unforgettable voice.

In 2001, Queen was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and were awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2002.



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# UNIQUE LIGHT FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

Around the world, light plays a special role in celebrations. Whether it's flickering lanterns, glowing candles, or colourful fireworks, light brings people together and fills the air with magic. Let's explore three exciting festivals that shine bright and spread joy!

Illustrations by Alexandra Botha-Green

Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is celebrated by millions of people in India and across the world. During this five-day festival, homes, temples, and streets are decorated with clay lamps called *diyas* to chase away darkness and welcome good fortune. Families light fireworks, exchange sweets, and tell stories of Rama returning home after defeating a demon king. It's not just about lights – Diwali is all about new beginnings and spending time with loved ones.



In snowy Sweden, winter can feel long and dark. But the Festival of St. Lucia brings a warm glow to the season! On December 13<sup>th</sup>, young girls dress in white robes and wear crowns made of candles to honour St. Lucia, a figure of light and hope. They lead processions through schools and churches, singing beautiful songs, and handing out gingerbread cookies and *lussekatter* (saffron buns). This festival brightens up chilly mornings and reminds people to bring kindness into the world.



Ever wonder what it's like to see the night sky filled with glowing lanterns? The Lantern Festival marks the final day of the Chinese New Year celebrations, and it's a breathtaking sight! People hang colorful lanterns in streets and homes, and some release them into the sky, carrying their wishes for the year ahead. Kids have fun solving tricky riddles written on the lanterns, and everyone enjoys eating sweet rice balls called *tangyuan*. It's a festival that brings families together under a sky full of dreams and light!





# The History of clocks

Words by Loyiso Momoti  
Layout By Janko Collyer

Have you ever wondered how people used to tell time before smartphones and digital clocks? From sundials to watches, clocks have helped humans track time for thousands of years!

## Chasing shadows

It all started with the sundial, one of the oldest ways to tell time. The ancient Egyptians invented it around 1500 BCE. They placed a stick in the ground, and as the sun moved, the shadow told them what time it was. But sundials only worked when the sun was shining — so what did they do at night? That's where water clocks came in! Ancient Greeks and Egyptians used these clever devices, which measured time by the flow of water from one container to another.

Gnomon



## Gears and bells

Fast forward to the Middle Ages, when European monks created the first mechanical clocks. Powered by gears and weights, these early clocks didn't have minute hands but rang bells to signal the time for prayers.

Imagine a whole village waiting for the church bells to chime the hour!

## Swinging into time

In the 1600s, the pendulum clock changed everything. Thanks to scientist Galileo Galilei, we learned that a pendulum's swing could keep time really accurately.



## ?! Get this!

Wristwatches only became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were first only worn by women, but men started wearing them in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in World War I.



## Modern Timekeeping

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, clocks became even more precise with quartz clocks and later, digital clocks. Today, we have smartwatches, which do more than tell time. You can check your heart rate, your walking or running distance, number of steps and more!



# Women who changed the tech world

Words by Amelia Thomashoff  
Layout by Janko Collyer

When we think of tech geniuses, we often picture modern gadgets and computers. But did you know that some of the most important breakthroughs in tech history were made by brilliant women? Let's meet three incredible women who helped shape the tech world as we know it today!



## Ada Lovelace

### The First Computer Programmer (Even Before Computers Existed!)

Back in the 1800s, when computers didn't exist yet, British mathematician Ada Lovelace had a brilliant idea — she predicted machines could do more than just crunch numbers. She worked with inventor Charles Babbage, who was building a super early computer called the Analytical Engine. While he built it, Ada wrote instructions on how it could solve complex problems, making her the first-ever computer programmer!

### ?! Get this!

Grace is also famous for popularising the term "bug" in computer science after finding an actual moth stuck in a computer's circuits!

## Grace Hopper

### The Queen of Code

Grace was one of the first people to work on a computer called the Mark I during World War II. But she didn't stop there — she realised that programming could be easier if computers understood English-like commands instead of just numbers. So, she developed COBOL, one of the first programming languages that is still used today.



## Hedy Lamarr

### The Movie Star Who Invented Wi-Fi's Great-Great-Grandparent

Hedy Lamarr, a famous 1940s actress, was also an amazing inventor! During World War II, she and composer George Antheil created a system called "frequency hopping" to guide torpedoes without enemy interference. This idea later became the foundation for Wi-Fi, GPS, and Bluetooth. So, every time you connect to Wi-Fi or use GPS, you can thank Hedy!





# Environmental Geologist



Hello, my name is Uriel Tshimweneka!

*I am an aspiring scientist who is passionate about geological and environmental sustainability. I am dedicated to understanding and addressing important issues so that I can make a positive impact.*

## What does a geologist do?

A geologist is a scientist who studies the Earth: it's history, nature, materials and processes. We use this information to safely extract minerals and then use that to see the planet's formation over time.

## What does a typical day look like for you?

Exploration geologists are mostly in the field. The day starts early, and is a combination of intense fieldwork, precise data recording, and teamwork, all aimed at discovering and analysing the mineral resources we find in a sustainable and efficient way.

## What is the best part of your job?

I love being able to travel to new places, meet new people and lose myself in diverse cultures.

I also enjoy seeing how my research relates to the work that I am doing.



## Do you need qualifications to do your job?

Yes, you need a BSc (Honours) degree with Geology as a major subject that follows either the Geology Study Programme, or the Engineering and Environmental Geology Study Programme. After completing your degree, you will need to register for SACNASP.



## What are some challenges in your job?

Being a geologist is both challenging and rewarding work! It wasn't easy getting my degree – it was a lot of hard work and late nights. There were a lot of times where I failed and questioned if this was the right path for me. You must be able to work past these failures and let your passion fuel you!

### **U** Uriel's advice

*It is important to be passionate about the work that you are doing. It may be hard at times, but you just need to push through until you succeed!*



# Emotions

## Staying calm & being mindful

Words by Stefanie Meyer

Layout by Janko Collyer

**There are so many different emotions that can sometimes be big and scary. There also are many reasons why you might feel these different emotions...**



Good and bad emotions can be overwhelming sometimes and make us do things that we won't normally do. This is why it's important to know how to work through them so that they don't control you. When you learn this skill, you will be able to use it for the rest of your life. When emotions bubble up, try to name what you're feeling. Are you sad, angry, excited, or worried? Once you name it, it's easier to deal with. It's like shining a flashlight on something in the dark — once you see it clearly, it's not so scary.

**There are a few things you can do that will help you feel more in control:**

- Take a few deep breaths and relax your muscles
- Take a relaxing bath
- Count to 10 in your head
- Go for a short walk or do some exercises
- Listen to your favourite song
- Have your own dance party to shake off all your feelings



**When you learn to work through your emotions you will:**

- Feel happy and relaxed
- Have better relationships with your family and friends
- Do better in school
- And many more...



### ?! Get this!

You have 43 muscles in your face that you use to express your emotions.

### ?! Get this!

People mimic each other's emotions without even knowing it.





# The colourful islands of Cabo Verde



Cabo Verde

Words by Andrea Vermaak

I'm  
on holiday  
on the West  
African islands  
of Cabo  
Verde...

...Just  
soaking up  
the sun and  
exploring the rich  
history, nature  
and music.





# A tropical home

Cabo Verde (recently also known as Cape Verde) is not just one island, but an archipelago of ten volcanic islands. These islands lie between 600 and 850km west of Cap-Vert in Senegal, the western-most point of Africa.

Portuguese and Genoese navigators discovered the uninhabited islands of Cabo Verde around 1456. The islands soon became the first European settlement in the tropics. I visited the oldest settlement in Cabo Verde, Cidade Velha ('old town' in Portuguese), on Santiago Island. Portuguese traders founded this city in 1462. It was the capital city before Praia became the capital in 1770.



Our Lady of the Rosary church

Cidade Velha is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's not hard to see why with its old royal fortress, the oldest colonial church in the world (the Our Lady of the Rosary) constructed in 1495, and a town square from the 1500s.



After an evening in Cidade Velha, I began my exploration of Sal Island. It's the flattest island of Cabo Verde with desert sand that the wind blows in from the Sahara Desert! The beaches are stunning, especially at the seaside town of Santa Maria, where we did some snorkelling.

# A sad history

Unfortunately, the islands played a role in the transatlantic slave trade from the 1500s to the 1800s. Later, the islands became an important commercial centre and stopover on major shipping routes. Cape Verde only gained independence in 1975, which is why Portuguese is still the official spoken language across the archipelago.

# Conscious conservation

Many of the islands' land and sea creatures are either threatened or endangered, including loggerhead sea turtles, lemon and nurse sharks, Cape Verde giant skinks, Cape Verde shearwaters (seabirds) and the Cabo Verdean dragon tree.

Many are doing their best to help with conservation, but they also need help with funding. Why not save your pocket money and look for a conservation group that you could help with a donation?



The most interesting site on Sal is the Buracona, or the Blue Eye. When the sun shines at a specific angle on seawater in the large cave's opening, it looks just like a big blue eye. There were even a few divers in the cave, swimming through the underground tunnel into the sea!



# CROWNS

## around the WORLD

Throughout history, crowns have been more than just shiny accessories – they're powerful symbols of leadership, authority, and culture. But did you know that crowns don't always look the same in every culture?

Illustrations by Benoît Knox

### ?! Get this!

Crowns originated as symbols of power, and were used to distinguish rulers from ordinary people. Over time, the crown became the ultimate symbol of monarchy and leadership, with each culture adding its own unique twist!

### The British Crown

When you think of crowns, you most likely imagine the dazzling ones worn by the kings and queens of England. The Imperial State Crown, used in the coronation of the UK's British monarchs, is packed with 2 868 diamonds, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, 269 pearls, and 4 rubies! Its most famous jewel is the Cullinan II Diamond, one of the largest diamonds in the world.

### ?! Get this!

Queen Elizabeth II found the crown a bit heavy – it weighs a whopping 1.06 kg!



HEDJET

DESHRET

### The Pharaohs' Crowns

In Ancient Egypt, pharaohs had a few types of crowns, each one with a special meaning. The *Pschent*, or the Double Crown, was a symbol of the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. It combined the red *Deshret* (crown of Lower Egypt) with the white *Hedjet* (crown of Upper Egypt). Pharaohs also wore the *Khepresh*, or the blue war crown, during battles.

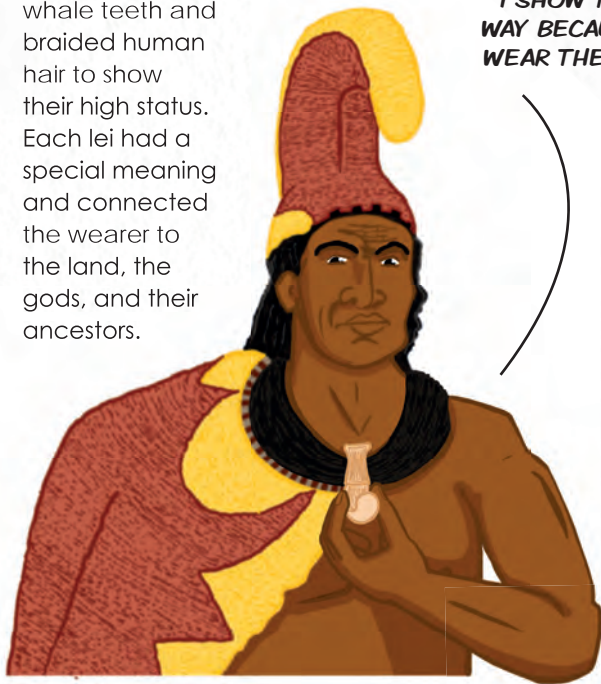
### ?! Get this!

Pharaohs often added an *uraeus*, a cobra figure, to their crowns, symbolising protection and the power of the sun god, Ra.



## The Hawaiian Lei

In Hawaii, kings and queens wore *leis* — necklaces made of flowers, leaves, or shells — as signs of power and respect. Today, leis are used to welcome or show friendship, but long ago, Hawaiian royalty wore special ones called *lei niho palaoa*. These were made from whale teeth and braided human hair to show their high status. Each lei had a special meaning and connected the wearer to the land, the gods, and their ancestors.



AS A CHIEF,  
I SHOW THE  
WAY BECAUSE I  
WEAR THE LEI!



### ! Get this!

The Nahal Mishmar crown is considered one of the oldest crowns in the world. It dates back to around 4000 BCE and was discovered in Israel in 1961, near the Dead Sea.



## The Japanese Imperial Regalia

In Japan, the emperor doesn't wear a crown in the traditional sense. Instead, the Japanese monarchy uses three sacred treasures known as the Imperial Regalia of Japan: a sword (Kusanagi no Tsurugi), a mirror (Yata no Kagami), and a jewel (Yasakani no Magatama). These objects represent the emperor's divine right to rule, wisdom, and virtue. The exact location of these treasures is kept secret, and only a few people have ever seen them! Talk about a royal mystery!

## The Ashanti Crown

For the Ashanti people of Ghana, their 'crown' is not something you wear — it's something you sit on! The Golden Stool (or Sika Dwa Kofi) is a symbol of the Ashanti Kingdom's soul and unity. According to legend, the stool descended from the sky and landed on the first Ashanti king's lap. The stool is so sacred that no one, not even the king, is allowed to sit on it. Instead, it's kept in a place of honour and brought out during important ceremonies.



## The Maori Crown

Instead of crowns, the Maori chiefs of New Zealand wore beautiful feather cloaks called *korowai*. These were made from native bird feathers and signified a chief's *mana* (prestige, power, and spiritual strength). The more elaborate the cloak, the higher the chief's status. These feather cloaks are still highly respected in Maori culture today and are worn during important ceremonies.







# OUR MOON

## and its phases

### Our Moon

Photo by Florian Pircher

Our very own night light in the sky is not as simple as it seems. Our Moon is what we call a natural satellite. This means that it lies just close enough to Earth to orbit us without getting too close. The Moon is quite big, being one-fourth the size of Earth; the Moon has enough mass to create its own gravity. In fact, because of this gravity created by our Moon, we have things like high and low tides because the Moon's gravity physically pulls the water from one side of the Earth to the other. While our Moon is locked in orbit to Earth, it is not perfect, and the Moon drifts away from Earth at around 3.8 cm each year.





### New Moon

Photo by fehmi2029, Greece



Every 30 days, a new Moon phase begins. The Moon is between the Earth and the sun, so we can't see it from Earth because the sunlit side is facing away from us. [#InvisibleVibes](#) [#WhereDidItGo](#)



### Waxing Crescent

Photo by Colin, UK

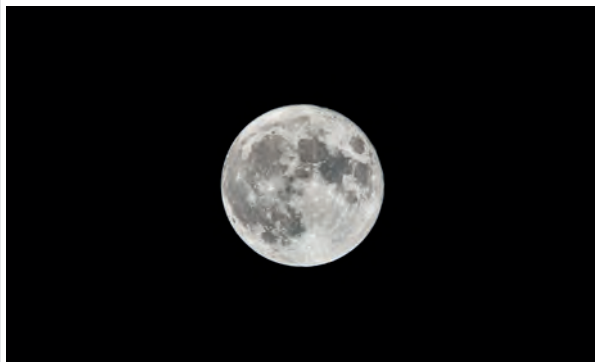


A small sliver of the Moon starts to appear on the right side. This is the Moon "growing" toward a full moon. It looks just like a little smile! [#TinyButMighty](#) [#MoonGlowUp](#) [#SlowAndSteady](#)



### Full Moon

Photo by Brayden Pelletier, USA



The entire face of the Moon is illuminated and bright, because the Earth is now between the Moon and the Sun. [#FullPowerMode](#) [#WerewolfParty](#) [#ShiningBright](#)



### Solar Eclipse

Photo by Bitbyte2015, Bloomington



During a solar eclipse, the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, casting a shadow on parts of the Earth and temporarily blocking out the Sun. [#MoonPhotobomb](#)



### Blood Moon

Photo by Niranjana, USA



The Moon turns red because Earth's atmosphere bends sunlight. Instead of going straight to the Moon, the sunlight filters through Earth's atmosphere, allowing only red and orange hues to reach the Moon. [#BloodMoonMagic](#) [#RedMoonRising](#) [#LunarGlowUp](#)



### Blue Moon

Photo by Gail Hampshire, UK



You may have heard the expression 'Once in A Blue Moon', meaning something is scarce. But a Blue Moon isn't actually blue in colour! Instead, it refers to the rare occurrence of having two full moons in a single calendar month. [#ExtraMoonMagic](#)





## 'I'm too sexy for my love'

Photo by Artur Stankiewicz

Hippos are some of the most fascinating animals in Africa! Even though they look like they're slow and lazy, they can actually run up to 30 km per hour on land! Hippos spend most of their time in water to stay cool, as they don't sweat. Instead, they secrete a natural sunscreen that looks like pink, oily goo! Surprisingly, hippos are one of the most dangerous animals in Africa due to their powerful jaws and protective nature. They also have big teeth that can grow up to 50 cm long! Although they're herbivores, they are known for their mighty strength and strong territorial instincts.

Finalist in the 2024 Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards competition

NIKON  
Comedy Wildlife  
AWARDS







# LEOPARDS

## on the LOOSE

Words by Candice Robertson  
Illustrations by Benoît Knox



You need sharp eyes to spot a leopard when it doesn't want to be seen.

Their iconic, spotty coat allows them to blend into most backgrounds, and their prey never sees them coming.

That's why I'm happy to spot this one from the safety of my car!





## Habitat

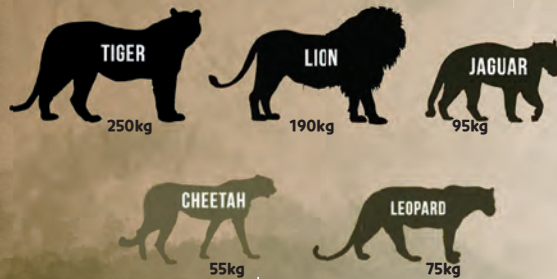
Leopards are amazing animals that can live in many different places across South Africa. Whether it's thick forests or dry, open areas, leopards do well in all kinds of environments. They have a flexible diet and are very sneaky, which helps them survive. While they like places with lots of bushes or trees to hide in, leopards can live almost anywhere, making them one of the most common big cats around! Unlike most wild animals, leopards are not confined to nature reserves and game parks. They roam free and are known to occur on many farms.



Leopards are strong and great at climbing! During the day, you can often spot them relaxing on a tree branch. When they catch their food, leopards will sometimes hide it up in a tree so hyenas and lions can't steal it.

### ?! Get this!

While leopards are the largest spotted cat, they are one of the smallest of the large cats, which includes lions, tigers and jaguars.



### ?! Get this!

Female leopards can weigh between 20kg and 60kg, and males can be up to 50% bigger, weighing up to 75kg.



Leopards like to spend time alone and they mark their territory by leaving behind poop, scenting the space with urine, and scratching trees.

## Diet

Leopards are flexible hunters, which means they'll eat almost anything they can catch! As meat-eaters, or carnivores, they enjoy a wide range of animals — from small creatures like birds, monkeys, snakes, and lizards to bigger ones like gazelle and antelope. Because they aren't picky, leopards can survive in places where other big cats can't. When food is hard to find, they'll even hunt animals that aren't their first choice if it means they'll have something to eat.

## Hunting

Leopards hunt alone and use their sneaky skills to get as close as possible to their prey without being seen. With amazing patience, leopards quietly creep forward until they're close enough to jump. When they're ready, they leap forward with their strong bodies and catch their prey in a fast, powerful attack. Leopards mostly hunt at night (they are nocturnal), or around sunrise and sunset. Their excellent night vision and quiet steps help them become top hunters, even when it's dark!



Leopards can run at a speed of 60 km per hour, and leap 6 metres in a single bound. They can also jump 3 metres straight up in the air.



## Adaptations and Anatomy

Every part of a leopard's body is fine-tuned for survival, making them one of the most efficient predators in the animal kingdom.

Let's break down each body part and see how it helps them thrive in the wild.

### Long, thick tail

Leopards have long tails that they use for balance when climbing trees or running fast. Their tails also help them balance when making sharp turns during a chase. The tail is almost as long as their body, which gives them excellent control.

### Thick fur

Leopards living in colder mountain areas have thicker fur to protect them from low temperatures, while those in hotter climates have shorter, sleeker fur to stay cool.

### Padded paws

Their large paws are cushioned with thick pads, which means they can walk almost silently while stalking prey. The soft padding also helps them grip different surfaces without slipping.



### Camouflage

The leopard's coat is one of its greatest survival tools! The rose-like spots on their golden fur help them blend into their surroundings, whether it's the shade of a forest or the tall grass of a savanna. This camouflage is key to their stealth when stalking prey.



### Muscular and compact body

Leopards have muscular, yet small bodies that make them both strong and agile. Their small size gives them an advantage when hunting in dense forests or rocky areas, where they can get around easily compared to larger predators like lions. Their flexible spine helps them make quick, sharp turns and pounce on prey with precision. This agility also helps them climb trees and easily jump between branches.

### Powerful legs

Leopards have strong, muscular legs that help provide the burst of speed they need for their ambush hunting style. Their rear legs are slightly longer than their front legs, giving them extra power when leaping forward during an attack.





## Strong skull

Their large skull holds powerful jaw muscles that give them the strength to carry heavy prey into trees. This is key to their ability to hoist carcasses high up into the branches, away from scavengers.

## Eyes

Leopards have exceptional vision, especially in low light. Their eyes are adapted to see in near-total darkness, which means they are very good at hunting at night. They have a reflective layer behind their retinas which enhances their night vision by reflecting light back through the eye. Like other predators, leopards have forward-facing eyes, giving them excellent depth perception. This helps them judge distances accurately when pouncing on prey.

## ?! Get this!

Leopards' ears can hear five times more sounds than the human ear.

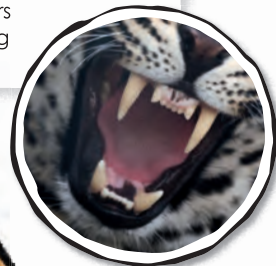
## Ears

Leopards have very good hearing, allowing them to detect the slightest movement or sound of prey or predators in their environment. Their ears can rotate to pinpoint the direction of sounds, helping them track prey even in the thick bush.



## Powerful jaw and teeth

Leopards have strong jaws capable of delivering a lethal bite to their prey's throat or the back of the neck. Their sharp, canine teeth are designed to puncture and hold onto struggling prey. They also have sharp molars for tearing meat.



## Retractable claws

Like all big cats, leopards have retractable claws, which they use to grip prey, climb trees, and defend themselves. When not in use, their claws are retracted to keep them sharp for hunting.







## Offspring

Female leopards can have babies at any time of the year, usually giving birth to two or three cubs. The mother is pregnant for a short time — only about three months — so the cubs are still tiny and undeveloped when they are born (and they are born blind!). The baby leopards grow up safely in a protected spot, like a cave or den.

Some scientists think the short pregnancy helps the mother keep hunting easily without a big belly getting in the way. The mother stays with her cubs until they're around two years old, when they're ready to hunt and take care of themselves.



### ?! Get this!

Leopard cubs are born without spots, which gradually become visible as they mature.

### ?! Get this!

Male and female leopards will only come together to mate, which can last two to five days. Male leopards are not involved in raising their babies.

## Threats

Leopards' enemies include crocodiles, lions and, unfortunately, humans. Leopards are seen as status symbols in some cultures, and leopard skins are worn as a ceremonial dress to show that person's importance. Leopards are also hunted and their body parts are used as medicine. As human territories expand, they often overlap with leopard habitats. Leopards adapt but may prey on livestock and even pets in these areas, leading to conflicts that can endanger their survival.



These majestic cats are vital to the ecosystems of South Africa...

...and their beauty, strength, and mystery make them one of the most fascinating animals on the planet!







# Make a leopard print T-shirt

*Get ready to create your own wild fashion! In this fun craft, we'll use a potato stamp to make a cool leopard print pattern on a T-shirt, perfect for any jungle explorer!*

## What you need:

- White shirt
- Fabric paint in two different colours
- Potato
- Knife
- Paintbrushes

## !! Warning

Ask an adult to help you cut shapes into the potato halves – you don't want to lose a finger!

## ?! Pro Tip

Use your potato stamp within two hours. It doesn't last very long!



Place cardboard or old magazines inside an old white or light-coloured T-shirt to prevent paint from 'bleeding' through to the other side.



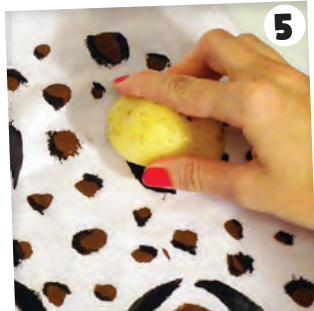
Paint some random circles on your shirt. The circles don't have to be perfect!



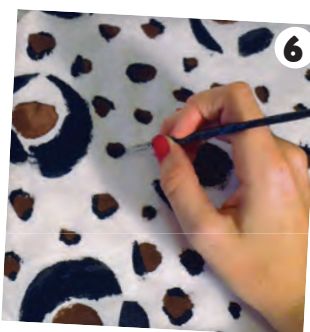
Cut a potato in half. Use a sharp knife to cut leopard print shapes, for example squiggly C's and O's, out of each half of the potato.



Paint your shapes with black fabric paint.



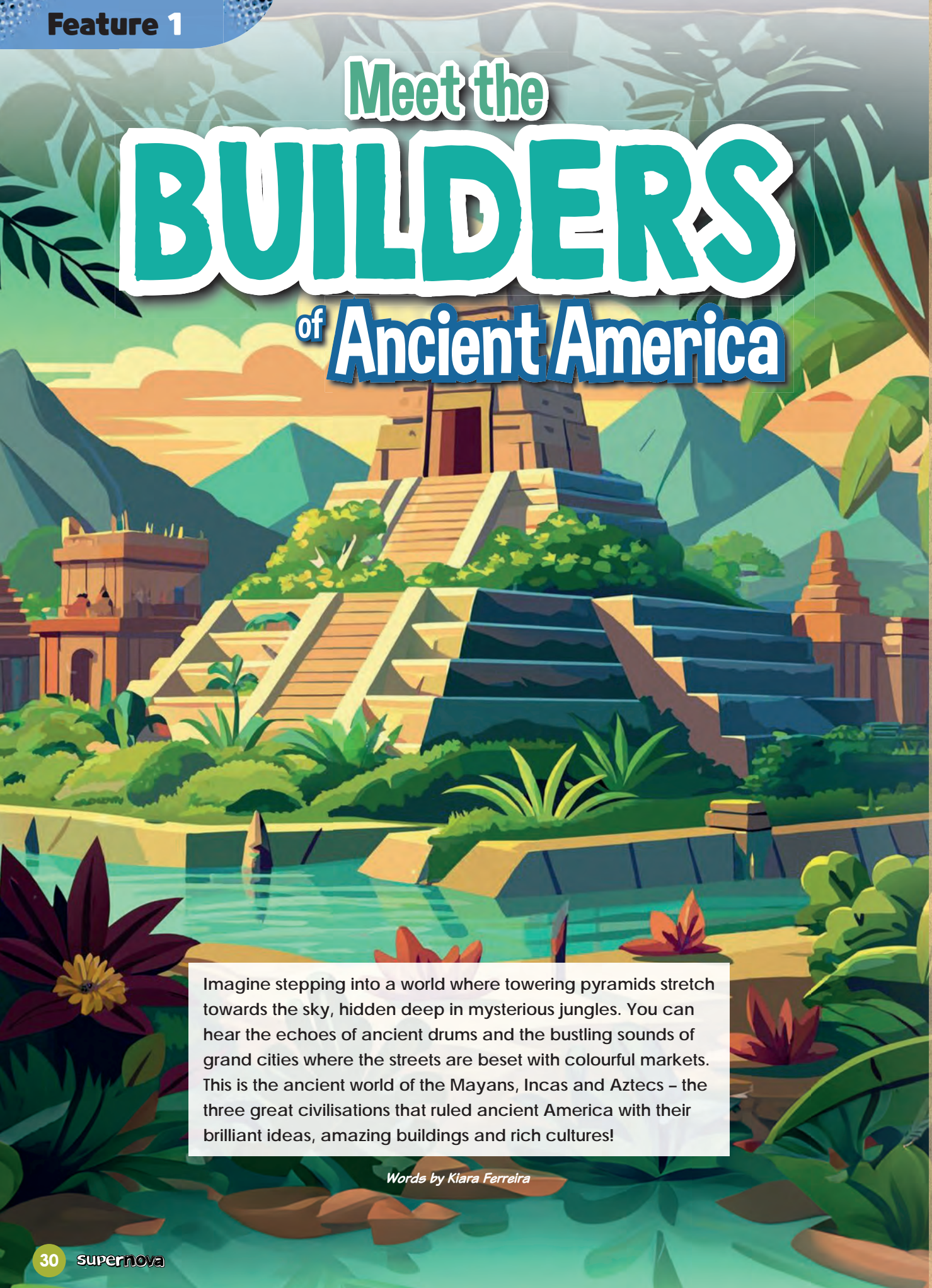
Use the 'C' stamps to create an outline around each painted 'O' shape. Use the different shapes in different ways. Be creative!



Fill in the gaps around the circles with dots using black fabric paint or a marker.



# Meet the **BUILDERS** of Ancient America



Imagine stepping into a world where towering pyramids stretch towards the sky, hidden deep in mysterious jungles. You can hear the echoes of ancient drums and the bustling sounds of grand cities where the streets are beset with colourful markets. This is the ancient world of the Mayans, Incas and Aztecs – the three great civilisations that ruled ancient America with their brilliant ideas, amazing buildings and rich cultures!

*Words by Kiara Ferreira*



# The Mayans

## Scientists of the stars

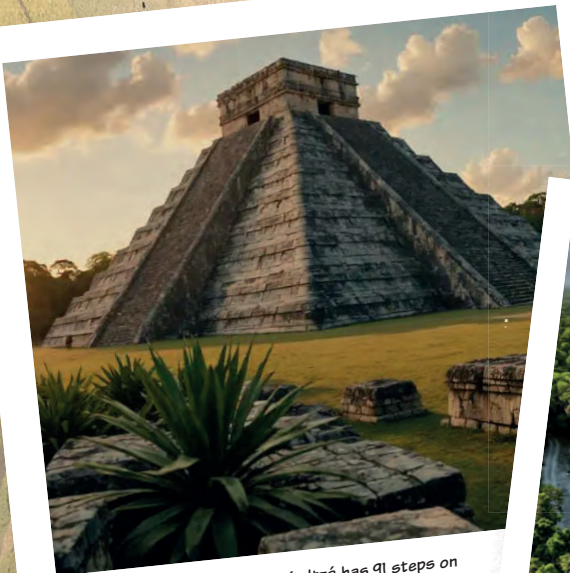


- Where they lived: *Southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras*
- Time period: *2000 BCE – 900 CE (though small Mayan communities still exist today!)*

These ancient scientists were obsessed with the night sky. They studied the stars, planets, and moon without telescopes and even created some of the world's **first calendars** — three, to be exact! Their calendars helped them plan everything from farming to festivals. The Mayans were also expert builders, creating giant step pyramids and temples deep in the jungles of Central America. One of their greatest cities, Tikal, was home to towering pyramids where kings were buried. And don't forget Chichén Itzá – this city features a pyramid so precisely built that during the spring and fall equinoxes, the sun creates a shadow that looks like a snake slithering down its side!

### ?! Get this!

The Mayans kept very detailed records of the movements of the stars, sun, moon, and planets – they believed that these were gods moving back and forth between the heavens, the underworld, and the Earth.



The Kukulkan Pyramid in Chichén Itzá has 91 steps on each of its four sides. The total number of steps, when combined with the temple at its summit, equals 365 – the number of days in the Mayan solar year!



Some of the Mayan cities are still being discovered today – like the city of Valeriana which was only found in 2024!

### ?! Get this!

The Mayans invented a form of writing with glyphs – symbols that stood for words or ideas – and developed the concept of zero long before Europeans!



# The Incas

## Engineers of the Sky

Where they lived: *Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina*  
Time period: *1200 CE – 1533 CE*

High up in the Andes Mountains, the Incas built an empire as impressive as their high-altitude home. These mountain masters were brilliant engineers, creating terraces (giant steps carved into hillsides) to grow crops like potatoes and maize. They also built a road network over 40 000km long, connecting cities with stone highways and grass bridges stretched across deep valleys. Their most famous city, Machu Picchu, still stands today — a stone wonder nestled among clouds. No one knows exactly why it was built, but it's believed to have been a royal estate or a religious site.



Machu Picchu wasn't known to the outside world until 1911. Experts were amazed to see the ruins still standing despite being on a mountain that experiences earthquakes. Today, people from all over the world travel to visit Machu Picchu, hiking along the Inca trail that was used 500 years ago.



### Get this!

The Incas didn't use money! Instead, they traded goods and used a system called *quipu* — knotted strings to record information like taxes and food supplies.



### Get this!

Evidence shows that the Inca performed brain surgeries!



### Get this!

The Inca called their capital city, Cusco, the "belly button of the world".



The Inca cut the stones of their buildings to fit together without any binding material. That way, when an earthquake struck, the stones could bounce around before settling back into place.



Inca artists created gold and silver treasures like this mask of the sun god, Inti.



# The Aztecs

## Keepers of the Sun



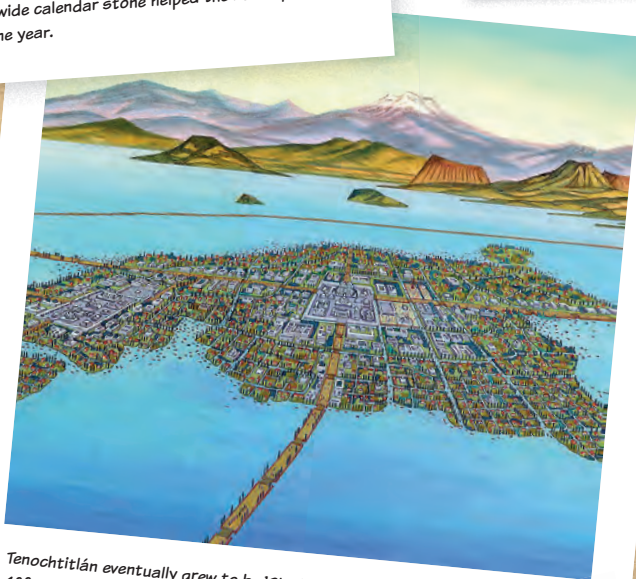
Where they lived: Central Mexico (modern-day Mexico City)

Time period: 1300 CE – 1521 CE



Photo: Sébastien Lecocq

This 3.5 metre-wide calendar stone helped the Aztec people keep track of the year.



Tenochtitlán eventually grew to be 13km<sup>2</sup>, and was home to around about 400 000 people! The city was destroyed by Spanish troops in 1521, and on the ruins, they built Mexico City. Descendants of the Aztec still live in the area.

### ?! Get this!

The busiest market days in Tenochtitlán drew 50 000 people. Compare that to the size of your grocery store!

### ?! Get this!

To keep the gods happy, they made lots of sacrifices – including humans.

The Aztecs believed they had a sacred duty to keep the sun shining. Their capital city, Tenochtitlán, was built on an island in Lake Texcoco, connected by canals and floating gardens called *chinampas*. Imagine paddling a canoe through bustling markets, passing by towering temples, and hearing the hum of life all around you! At the heart of Tenochtitlán stood Templo Mayor, a massive temple built to honor the sun god, Huitzilopochtli, who fought each day to keep the world in balance. And here's a tasty fact: The **Aztecs made the world's first chocolate drink** from cacao beans, which they believed were a gift from the gods. You can thank them every time you enjoy hot cocoa or a chocolate bar!

### ?! Get this!

The Aztecs built Tenochtitlán on a lake — almost like an ancient Venice! Their city had canals instead of roads, with boats carrying goods through the markets.

Although these ancient civilisations have long since disappeared, their knowledge and achievements are still part of our world today. Their stories show us that history is full of surprises — and who knows? Maybe you will discover the next big idea that changes the world!



# INTERVIEW WITH AN ASTRONAUT



By Nicole Dean

Imagine travelling into space to explore the stars, make art, and inspire people around the world. Dr. Sian Proctor has done just that! She's a geoscientist, artist, and astronaut who combines her love for science with her creativity and big dreams for a better future. As the mission pilot for SpaceX's Inspiration4, Dr. Proctor became the first African American woman to pilot a commercial spaceship.

But she hasn't just made history — she's shown that space can be a place for everyone to express themselves and care for our planet.

## Q WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO FOLLOW A CAREER IN SPACE EXPLORATION?

A When I was younger, I wanted to be an explorer, and I thought an astronaut was the ultimate explorer experience. However, I thought I couldn't be an explorer outside of space, because explorers discover new amazing things for humanity. But I realised that, in reality, I could be an explorer every day as long as I was discovering new things for myself. So, I really embraced the explorer nature and lifestyle — chasing lifelong learning and ways to explore the world around me every day. That has led to amazing opportunities, like going to space and becoming an astronaut!

Dr. Sian Proctor



**Q WERE YOU NERVOUS TO ACTUALLY BE SHOT UP INTO SPACE?**

**A** There is nothing better than the feeling of floating in space! But in order to get there, you first have to lift off from the rocket. As the clock counts down to zero, it's an amazing feeling because you are so excited that you finally made it to this opportunity.

There is nothing but pure joy and happiness, and I was not afraid at all.

**Q WHO WAS YOUR ROLE MODEL GROWING UP?**

**A** My dad was definitely a role model for me. He was working at the NASA tracking station during the Apollo missions when I was born, so he was there when we landed humans on the moon. I grew up among all this NASA memorabilia thanks to my dad, including Neil Armstrong's autograph thanking my dad for helping with the Apollo 11 moon landing! As a kid that definitely had an influence on me, imagining myself being able to do that one day. My dad would also always encourage me and tell me that I could do anything.



Dr. Proctor & Earth

**Q WHAT WAS THE COOLEST THING YOU ATE IN SPACE?**

**A** SpaceX made me gluten-free pizza with pepperoni and jalapeños! It was a delicious cold pizza in space. We also had M&M's and Skittles! They gave us lots of comfort food, since it's important that you don't have hangry astronauts, and keep your mood up.



**Q HOW DID YOUR SPACESUIT FEEL?**

**A** Having a spacesuit that is tailor-made to fit you like a glove is amazing! I love my spacesuit. I'm so happy that next year it will go on display at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum to represent me.



Dr. Proctor floating in space

**Q HOW DO YOU TRAIN TO BE AN ASTRONAUT?**

**A** We did six months of training with SpaceX. We trained exactly the same way that NASA astronauts do, using the same simulations and learning the same launch and return sequence for the Dragon capsule. The only difference was that we weren't going to the International Space Station (ISS). You also do things for crew cohesion, like team building exercises (we decided to hike Mount Rainier together). You also do zero-gravity training to practice how it feels to be weightless, and go into a centrifuge to experience a G-load. You even do fighter jet training to learn about managing time and resources in situations that require quick reflexes and decision making.





## Q WHAT DOES FLOATING IN SPACE FEEL LIKE?

**A** When you finally make it to space, which is only like 10 minutes after lift-off, you realise that your hands are floating while you're strapped in! Then you unbuckle and let yourself free for the first time, and it's kind of like Peter Pan and Wendy, how they float across the room in those childhood stories. You can move anywhere, so freely and so easily. It's a wonderful feeling to be in space, floating. Then you can float over and look out of the window and see the Earth for the first time. You never realise how stunningly beautiful the Earth is against the dark blackness of space until you see it – it just radiates humanity and life.



## Q HOW DID YOU CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENT?

**A** I remember when we came back, we splashed down in the Atlantic and hit the water, and I bobbed back up and felt this 'phoenix rising' moment. I call it my "becoming" moment, because that is the moment where I felt I won the gold medal. That's when my space flight was successful, and I became the first black woman to pilot a spaceship. At that point, I was really able to begin owning that. I knew the world was watching because we were live streaming, so I came out of the capsule standing up and I danced my way off of that spaceship, because it was such a wonderful moment for me, but also historical for other women of colour.



## Q WHAT BOOKS HAVE YOU PUBLISHED?

**A** I have a book of art and poetry, and a space colouring journal for kids. I also have an Earthlight science book. All of these are available on Amazon.



### ! Get this!

Dr. Proctor is also the first African American astronaut to paint in space.



**Q DO YOU HAVE ANY  
ADVICE FOR OUR  
READERS?**

**A** I encourage all of the young readers to think about how they can use their space – the space that makes them, them. They should think about the space that they inhabit; how they can use their space to inspire, not only themselves, but also the people around them, and to follow their passion and do experiments. Be curious and be an explorer. Be someone who's learning something new every single day! You can become a modern Leonardo da Vinci, somebody that combines both art and science, you don't have to choose — you can do both, and you'll discover a whole new beautiful world.



**Dr. Proctor creating art**

**?! Get this!**

Dr. Proctor was joined by Jared Isaacman, Hayley Arceneaux, and Chris Sembroski, for the first all-civilian human spaceflight mission.



**The crew of the SpaceX Inspiration4 mission**



# THE FLOOR is LAVA

Words by Janko Collyer  
Illustrations by Janko Collyer

Get ready to jump, leap, and balance your way to safety because... THE FLOOR IS LAVA! This classic game turns any room into an epic obstacle course where the ground is bubbling with "lava." One wrong step, and sizzle! Do you have what it takes to hop, skip, and tiptoe to the other side without getting "burned"? Let's find out!

**Watch out! The floor is lava!**

## Rules

**Don't touch the ground.**

**Use only what you have around you.**

## What you'll need



PILLOWS



NEWSPAPERS



BOOKS



CLOTHING

## How to play

The main objective simple: avoid touching the floor at all costs because the floor has "turned into lava!" Use your creativity, balance, and agility to travel across a space by stepping only on safe objects – like pillows, chairs, or blankets – without falling into the imaginary lava.

**1**

### Pick Your Playground

Choose a space like the living room, a hallway, or even the backyard. Wherever you play, make sure it's safe – no sharp corners or breakable stuff around!



### ?! Pro Tip

Ask your parents to help you set up the course for safe fun.

## 2 Scatter Your "Islands"

Place pillows, chairs, or blankets around the room. These are your safe zones—you can stand on them without getting burned by the lava! Make some areas easy to reach and others tricky to jump to for an extra challenge.

### ?! Warning!

Even dare devils need a coach – so make sure your parents are present, especially when levelling up your game.

## 4 Repeat!

Keep going until someone makes it to the finish line – or until everyone gets "burned" trying! Reset the course and play again!

## 3 Add Obstacles

Want to make things more interesting? Add boxes, books, or stools that players need to climb over or duck under. Or create rules like, "You have to hop on one foot for the next three jumps!"

## Level Up Your Game

ENOUGH OF THE KIDS STUFF...

BRING ON THE CHALLENGE BY INTRODUCING SOME

# DANGER

TABLE TRAMPOLINE LADDER YOGA BALL

ROOKIE

**DARE DEVIL**

supernova



# Leading Leopards



## How to play

Four leopards have gotten lost on their way while trying to find different things. Help them find their destinations by drawing a path for each leopard to connect it to where it wants to go. But – the lines can't touch or run into each other!

- Mommy leopard is looking for her cubs.
- John the leopard is very thirsty, and needs to get to the dam to drink water.
- Mia the leopard is hot and must get to her favourite shady tree to rest.
- Sammy the leopard is hunting an antelope.



Find the answer on page 3



# Test yourself

How much did you understand about the ancient civilisations?



Read the article, *Meet the Builders of Ancient America*, on page 30-33.

Then, answer the following questions from the text.



1. Match the following words with the correct sentence.

chinampas

a. An ancient capitial city, also known as the 'world's belly button'.

Valeriana

b. Small floating islands built by weaving reeds.

quipu

c. An ancient city discovered in the jungle in 2024.

Cusco

d. Knotted strings used to record what was 'paid' for something.

2. Complete the following sentences.

a. The Aztecs made the world's first chocolate drink using \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Inti, the Incan god of the \_\_\_\_\_, was a protector of the people.

c. The \_\_\_\_\_ created some of the world's first calendars.

d. \_\_\_\_\_ are symbols used to represent words or ideas.

## ! Reading Tip

Reading makes you smarter – it's a fact. Be sure to keep up good reading habits:

- Read anything
- Find a topic that excites you
- Read something difficult sometimes
- Ask someone to recommend a book
- Talk about the things you've read – reading is contagious!



Here's a fun new book to read!



Available now  
**shoponline**  
SHOP.BKUBLISHING.CO.ZA





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# We don't get along

**Alicia** 14 years old

My little brother and I fight all the time, and it's starting to get really annoying. I don't want to be mean to him, but it feels like we're always arguing. I just wish we could get along better, but I don't know how to make that happen. What should I do?

**Keep trying, and don't forget to give each other space when needed!**

It's super normal to have arguments with siblings! Even though you might get along one minute and argue the next, it's all part of learning to live together and share. One way to get along better is to try taking turns and sharing; if you both want the same thing, like the TV remote, set a timer so you each get a fair turn. It also helps to find things you both enjoy, like a favourite game, activity, or show, because focusing on what you both like can make it easier to have fun without arguments. And if things get heated, try to walk away or take a few deep

breaths to cool down before saying something you might regret. Showing small kindnesses can also make a big difference; even simple things like sharing a snack or helping with homework can help both of you feel closer. Finally, if things get tough, don't be afraid to talk to your parents; they can help set fair rules and give advice on how to work things out. Remember, your sibling probably feels frustrated sometimes too, and learning to get along will help you build a strong bond that can last a lifetime!

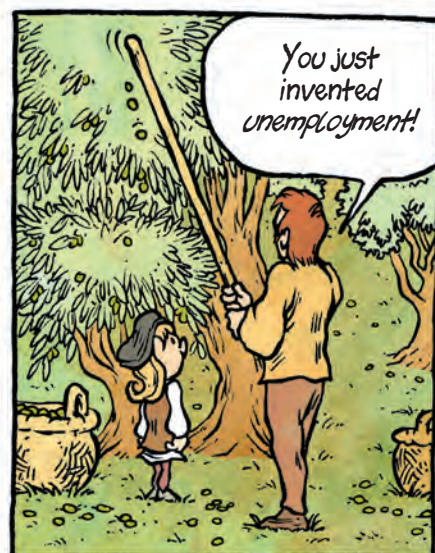
## Have a question for Candice?

Do you have a burning issue on your mind? Need advice? Send your questions to [supernova@bkpublishing.co.za](mailto:supernova@bkpublishing.co.za) and Candice could give you advice next!





# The Olives





WE DIE FOR OUR PLANET

# DOCTOR RIP EXPLAINS



EVERY WEEK,  
**4 ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSERVATIONISTS**  
ARE MURDERED, WORLDWIDE.

ACTUALLY, THE  
NUMBERS ARE  
MUCH HIGHER  
BECAUSE MANY OF  
THE CASES ARE  
NOT REPORTED.

FOR MORE  
THAN A QUARTER  
OF CASES, THE  
MURDERS ARE  
SPONSORED BY  
GOVERNMENT  
FORCES. THESE  
MOSTLY REMAIN  
UNPUNISHED.



THIS PHENOMENON HAPPENS  
ALL OVER THE WORLD, BUT THE  
MOST DANGEROUS COUNTRIES FOR  
ECOLOGISTS ARE THE PHILIPPINES,  
COLOMBIA, INDIA, BRAZIL,  
GUATEMALA, MEXICO, PERU AND  
NICARAGUA.



CONSERVATIONISTS FIGHT TO  
PROTECT THE NATURAL WORLD  
AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION  
OF WATER RESOURCES, MINING  
PROJECTS, DEFORESTATION  
AND NEGATIVE AGRICULTURAL  
PRACTICES.



AMONG THE MOST RECENT CASES:  
HOMERO GÓMEZ GONZALES,  
A MEXICAN ECO-WARRIOR, WORKING  
TO PROTECT THE MONARCH  
BUTTERFLY AGAINST DEFORESTATION,  
WAS ASSASSINATED IN JANUARY  
2020.



