

Questions for discussion

North Korea Tests

1. Discuss the BtN *North Korea Tests* story as a class and record the main points of your discussion.
2. What is the official name of North Korea?
3. Who is the leader of the country?
4. Most North Koreans aren't allowed to leave the country. True or false?
5. What is life like in North Korea? Give some examples.
6. How has North Korea threatened other countries that disagree with them?
7. What are sanctions?
8. Who is imposing the sanctions on North Korea?
9. What impact is it hoped the sanctions will have?
10. What did you learn watching the BtN story?

Check out the [North Korea Tests resource](#) on the Teachers page

Uniform Purchase

1. What was the main point of the BtN *Uniform Purchase* story?
2. Which politician is opposed to the government buying army uniforms from overseas?
3. Which country are the uniforms made in?
 - a. Vietnam
 - b. China
 - c. United States
4. Why did the government choose to buy the uniforms from overseas?
5. Give examples of things the government buys from overseas.
6. What are the benefits of buying products made overseas?
7. What are the advantages of buying products made in Australia?
8. Do you think the government should be buying Australian even if it costs more?
9. Hold a class poll about the issue. What was the result?
10. How has your thinking changed since watching the BtN story?

Vote in the Behind the News [online poll](#)

Hay fever

1. Explain the *Hay fever* story to another student.
2. Hay fever affects one in _____ Australians.
3. What triggers hay fever?
4. Give an example of an allergen.
5. How does a person's body react if they have hay fever?
6. What are the symptoms of hay fever?
7. Why is spring particularly bad for people with hay fever?

8. Why are experts saying it is going to be a bad hay fever season?
9. What can people do to control their hay fever?
10. What do you understand more clearly since watching this story?

Write a message about the story and post it in the comments section on the story page.

Cerebral Palsy Day

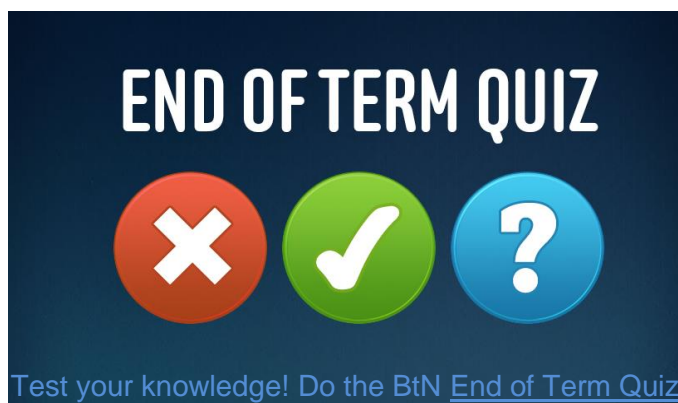
1. Discuss the BN story with a partner.
2. What device does Max use to communicate with people?
3. What is cerebral palsy?
4. How does cerebral palsy affect Max?
5. Explain how Podd works.
6. Which piece of technology has given Max the ability to speak for himself?
7. How does the technology work?
8. What did Max's classmates create for him?
9. How do the games help Max?
10. How has Max's relationships with his classmates improved?

Write a message about the story and post it in the comments section on the story page.

Sea Perch Competition

1. Briefly summarise the *BtN Sea Perch Competition* story.
2. The kids in the BtN story belong to a _____ club.
3. What are the kids in the story making?
4. What are the underwater robots called?
5. Where did they go to recently to compete in the National Sea Perch Challenge?
6. What materials are used to make the robots?
7. Describe the work the kids did to prepare for the competition.
8. What were the two major tasks in the challenge?
9. What have the kids learnt from the program?
10. What was surprising about the story?

Check out the [Sea Perch Competition resource](#) on the Teachers page



Teacher Resource

North Korea

Episode 27
20th September 2016

FOCUS QUESTIONS

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10. What did you learn watching the BtN story?

ACTIVITY

Class Discussion

Before students watch the BtN *North Korea* story, ask them to record what they know about the country. Watch the story and discuss the information raised as a class. What questions do students have (what are the gaps in their knowledge)? The following questions may help guide the discussion:

- Why is North Korea in the news?
- What do you think life is like for people living in North Korea?
- Who is the leader of North Korea and how is the country run?
- What concerns do people have about North Korea?

The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore their knowledge on this topic and consider what they would like to know and learn.

<i>What do I know?</i>	<i>What do I want to know?</i>	<i>What have I learnt?</i>	<i>How will I find out?</i>

KEY LEARNING

Students will investigate North Korea in more detail and create a profile of the country.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Geography – Year 6

The geographical diversity of the [Asia region](#) and the location of its major countries in relation to Australia ([ACHASSK138](#))

Differences in the economic, demographic and social characteristics of countries across the world ([ACHASSK139](#))

HASS – Years 5 & 6

Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges ([ACHASSI122](#)) ([ACHASSI094](#))

Sequence information about people's lives, events, developments and phenomena using a variety of methods including timelines ([ACHASSI097](#)) ([ACHASSI125](#))

Civics and Citizenship – Year 6

The obligations citizens may consider they have beyond their own national borders as active and informed [global citizens](#) ([ACHCK039](#))

Glossary

Create a glossary of words associated with North Korea. Ask students to write what they think each word means then swap definitions with a partner and ask them to add to or change the definition. Check them using a dictionary or another source.

Keywords	My definition	Dictionary definition
Freedom		
Nuclear weapons		
Communist		
Control		
Human Rights		
United Nations		

BtN North Korea Stories

Watch the BtN [North Korea story](#) to get a better understanding of the country then answer the following questions:

1. What dangerous weapons is North Korea preparing to test?
2. What organisation has tried to step in and stop the testing?
3. Who is the current political leader of North Korea?
4. Who controls what North Koreans watch on TV and listen to on the radio?
5. Why do they control the media?
6. Describe how the people of North Korea are being treated by their leader.
7. What are the consequences for a North Korean if they try to leave the country?
8. What did you learn from this story?



Watch the BtN [Korean War story](#) to find out why North and South Korea became divided then answer the following questions:

1. Who was South Korea fighting against?
2. Why did Australia get involved in the Korean War?
3. On which significant day were the kids in Korea?
4. What is the piece of land called where no fighting is allowed?
5. How did this story make you feel?



Profile of North Korea

Students explore the country of North Korea in more depth and create a profile of North Korea and its people. Include the following information:

Areas to Research	North Korea
Geography – physical features of the country, climate, environment, and population. Include a map showing surrounding countries and relationship to Australia	
People – What is life like for people in North Korea?	
Government/politics – Who is the leader of North Korea? How is the country run?	
History – for example, when was Korea divided into North Korea and South Korea? Why was the country divided?	
Inquiry questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How would your life be similar and/or different if you grew up in North Korea? ○ What happens if North Koreans are caught listening to foreign broadcasts? How does this impact on people's freedom of speech? ○ What is the school system like in North Korea? ○ How does the rest of the world view North Korea? 	
References	



USEFUL WEBSITES

Behind the News – Korean War

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4047568.htm>

Behind the News – North Korea

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s3687415.htm>

CBBC Newsround – Newsround’s Guide to North Korea

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/20692214>

CBBC Newsround - Kim Jong-il's son is announced as new leader of North Korea

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/16344949>

Time for Kids – Trouble in North Korea

<http://www.timeforkids.com/news/trouble-north-korea/88146>

BBC News – North Korea Country Profile

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15256929>

Robot Competition

FOCUS QUESTIONS

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4. What are the underwater robots called?
5. Where did they go to recently to compete in the National Sea Perch Challenge?
6. What materials are used to make the robots?
7. Describe the work the kids did to prepare for the competition.
8. What were the two major tasks in the challenge?
9. What have the kids learnt being involved in the program?
10. What was surprising about the story?

ACTIVITY

After watching the BtN *Robot Competition* story, ask students to respond to the following questions:

- What did you SEE in this video?
- What do you THINK about what you saw in this video?
- What does this video make your WONDER?
- What did you LEARN from this story?
- How did this story make you FEEL?

Class Discussion

Hold a class discussion about robots. Find out what the students already know about robots, what they learnt from the story and what questions they have about the topic. Use the following questions to help guide discussion:

- What is a robot?
- What sorts of things can robots do?
- What situations would a robot be necessary? (for example, a dangerous environment)
- What are the components of robots?
- How do they work?
- How are they constructed?

KEY LEARNING

Students will investigate what robots are, how they work and the impact that have on people's lives. They will also learn more about the history of robots and design a robot.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Digital Technologies – Years 3 & 4
Define simple problems, and describe and follow a sequence of steps and decisions (algorithms) needed to solve them ([ACTDIP010](#))

Digital Technologies – Years 5 & 6
Design, modify and follow simple algorithms involving sequences of steps, branching, and iteration (repetition) ([ACTDIP019](#))

Science – Years 5 & 6
Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions ([ACSHE083](#)) ([ACSHE100](#))

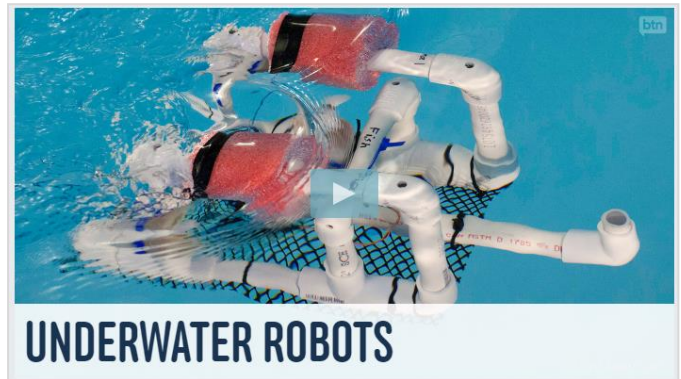


- How do robots impact on our lives?
- What does artificial intelligence mean?
- What is the future of robots?

ACTIVITY

Watch the BtN [Underwater Robots story](#) to find out more about how the students made the 'Sea Perch' then answer the following questions:

1. What have Heath and other members of the robotics club been building?
2. List the materials that were used to make Sea Perch.
3. What does the STEMSEL program teach kids?
4. What did Heath make that won him a trip to a robotics competition in Singapore?
5. What do the kids like about being part of a robotics club?
6. What problems did they have with Sea Perch?
7. Describe the work that goes into making a robot like Sea Perch.
8. What have the kids learnt from the program?



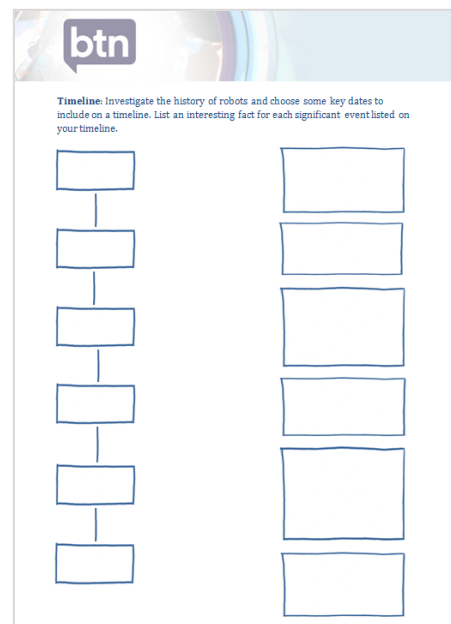
ACTIVITY

History of Robots

Students research the history of robots. [Download this template](#) to make a timeline of key events in the history of robots. List an interesting fact for each significant event on the timeline. Some examples of significant dates are:

- 1495 Leonardo da Vinci designed what may be the first humanoid robot
- 1920 Karel Capek uses the word robot to describe machines that resemble humans
- 1932 The first robot toy was produced in Japan
- 1969 Latest in robotics is used for the moon landing

Ask students which dates on the timeline do they think are especially significant. Why?



Timeline: Investigate the history of robots and choose some key dates to include on a timeline. List an interesting fact for each significant event listed on your timeline.

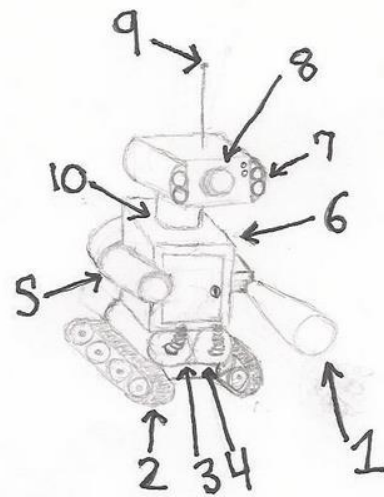
ACTIVITY

Design a Robot

If you could build a robot what kind of robot would you build? What would you make it do? Would it make your breakfast or clean your bedroom? Brainstorm ideas in pairs and then share your ideas as a class.

Students will design a robot that performs a specific task. When thinking about their design, ask them to consider:

- What problem or challenge does the robot solve?
- What are some of the functions your program will carry out?
- Is it a function that a human could perform?
- Does the robot need any special features? If so, what are they?
- What will your robot look like?
- How will your robot function? Consider the following:
 - How will it be controlled?
 - How does it move?
 - How will it detect the environment around it?
 - How will it be powered? (energy source)



Draw a design of your robot and present it to the class. Include a detailed diagram of each component and a description of how it works

If students have access to robot making products, they can design and build a robot that performs a specific task. How are the instructions for the robot written so that it will perform the task?

USEFUL WEBSITES

Sea Perch – What is Sea Perch?

http://www.seaperch.org/what_is

Sea Perch Australia – US Trip Highlights

http://seaperchaustralia.org/author/seaperchaustralia_admin/

Behind the News – Underwater Robots

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4252960.htm>

Behind the News – Robot Girls

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4000844.htm>

STEMSEL Club – What is STEMSEL Club?

<http://stemsel.com/>

BtN: Episode 27 Transcript 20/09/16

Hello, I'm Nathan and this is BtN.

Coming up today:

- North Korea conducts its biggest nuclear weapons test yet. We find out what that might mean for the rest of the world.
- Discover why experts are predicting this spring will be the worst hay fever season in years.
- And join us underwater as an Aussie robotics team travels to the US to put their creations to the test.

You can see all that and more soon. But first let's take a look at some of the big stories that had people talking this week.

This Week in News

Australia's been involved in an air strike in Syria that accidentally killed around 90 Syrian soldiers.

The attack was meant for Islamic State but some Syrian soldiers fighting against them were targeted by mistake. The air strike was led by the US but included several Aussie aircraft.

Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, says he regrets that the wrong people were hit.

PRIME MINISTER, MALCOLM TURNBULL: As soon as the commanders were advised that their Syrian government forces were affected, the operation was discontinued.

BP has released modelling that shows what could happen in the event of an oil spill if the company is allowed to drill in the Great Australian Bight.

It found huge parts of South Australia could be affected including Port Lincoln and Kangaroo Island and the state's capital Adelaide. Conservation groups say it would have a huge impact on marine life including the endangered southern right whale.

But BP says the modelling deliberately shows the worst possible scenario and the projection doesn't include the actions they'd take if a spill actually happened.

Some kids in Melbourne got the chance to try out a very different museum experience recently - a virtual one!

It's all part of a new project Google's put together with the help of museums from all around the world. It gives people who can't visit them in real-life a chance to explore the exhibits using virtual reality. Some even come to life!

GIRL: It was a really fun way of learning about the dinosaurs and it was not just like somebody talking and talking and it was a lot more interactive.

And still on museum news – New York's Guggenheim Museum is giving visitors the chance to experience a fully-functional toilet made of solid gold!

It was created by an Italian artist who wanted to give ordinary people the chance to sit on something a bit special.

A guard will stay by the toilet all the time and thankfully it'll be cleaned every 15 minutes. Still kinda weird though, hey?

North Korea Tests

Reporter: Nic Maher

INTRO: Now we're heading overseas to North Korea. Recently, the small secretive nation conducted its biggest nuclear weapons test to date. Many countries are really worried about what it could mean for their safety. So next we're going to take a closer look at North Korea and find out what could be done to stop its nuclear aspirations.

Imagine living in a country mostly cut off from the outside world. A place where you're told your leader is also a god. And saying you don't like them, is enough to land you in prison, or worse. That's what it's like to live here, in North Korea.

The country's official name is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but, most people say it's run more like a dictatorship ... and this guy is the leader who runs it all, Kim Jong Un. His government controls everything, and ordinary citizens don't get a say. In fact, most North Koreans aren't even allowed to leave the country.

In the past 10 years alone, around 20,000 North Koreans have risked their lives to flee the country. Despite all these problems, the North Koreans can still be seen cheering and praising their leader at big events.

Some reckon it's because they're scared to speak out against the government, for fear of punishment. Others say, it's because many North Koreans simply don't know what life's like on the outside, so they accept how things are.

All radio and TV stations play are local programs that make the government look good and watching foreign TV is against the law. Plus, most citizens have zero access to the internet, and from an early age, they're taught that their leaders are like all-powerful gods.

To keep up that image, the leaders of North Korea will threaten countries that disagree with them. But to really threaten, you need something to threaten with, and there's no bigger threat than a nuclear weapon.

For the past couple of decades, North Korea has been working on building nuclear weapons and has even conducted several tests. Of course, that's all a big no-no when it comes to international law and the United Nations has banned them from doing it. But, despite this, just over a week ago, North Korea went ahead and launched their biggest ever nuclear test.

So, you might be wondering, how's North Korea able to get away with ignoring the rules that are set by the rest of the world? The problem is, you can't exactly send an entire country to prison and nobody wants to go to war with them because the whole point of the anti-nuclear stuff is avoiding conflicts in the first place.

Instead, the United Nations uses 'sanctions'. Sanctions basically limit the amount of trade and aid that other countries can give North Korea. That can have a big impact on the economy of a country and how well it's able to deal with disasters; like the devastating floods that hit North Korea last week. It's hoped sanctions will finally convince North Korea to listen to the rest of the world and stop their nuclear weapons program.

But after years of threats, and now tests, this small country is starting to cause some big headaches.

Quiz 1

Time for our first quiz.

North Korea features the largest what in the world? Is it

- Palace
- Sport Stadium
- or Dam

The answer is Sport Stadium!

Uniform Purchase

Reporter: Matthew Holbrook

INTRO: Next we're going to take a look at a controversial decision made back here in Australia. The Defence Force has announced that its new dress uniforms will be made in China. The decision has angered some people, who say the uniforms should really be made here in Australia.

CUSTOMER: These look the same to me.

SHOPKEEPER: Yep.

CUSTOMER: But this one's double the price?

SHOPKEEPER: Yep.

CUSTOMER: So why would I pay more for the exact same thing?

SHOPKEEPER: Well...

Sometimes there can be a bit more to a price tag than meets the eye. At least, that's the message senator Nick Xenophon wants to get out there.

NICK XENOPHON, SENATOR: It seems that Defence knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing. They don't understand the importance of buying local, getting something made locally.

He's not happy because some new army uniforms are going to be made in China. Last year, the government picked a company called Australian Defence Apparel to make the new dress uniforms. The Defence Minister says they were picked because they offered to make the uniforms for 18% less than anyone else. But it turns out one of the reasons for that cost saving was because they'd be made overseas.

That's not unusual though. Whether it's something small, like these plates in parliament house bought from the Middle East, or steel for huge building projects imported from China, governments often choose to buy overseas for the same reasons you might.

SHOPKEEPER: Okay, so this one is cheap because it was made overseas. It's a good deal!

Picking the overseas option often means it's cheaper. And saving money this way allows you to put that cash towards other things. Overseas purchases can sometimes be more quickly produced, or made using techniques not available here, too. But there are other issues to think about.

SHOPKEEPER: What if I told you this one was made in Australia? And by paying twice as much for it, you're helping somebody who owns a local business employ more workers?

Choosing the local option means the money's more likely to stay in Australia. And some of it will eventually go back to the government in taxes, which is good for the country. Plus, if everyone started buying things from overseas, people here would lose their jobs, and the economy would suffer. We might also lose the knowledge and expertise to make those things again in the future.

CUSTOMER: Yeah, I guess. I mean, it's still a lot of money I could use for something else.

SHOPKEEPER: It's your call, but just remember, they look exactly the same.

That's why some people are calling for the government to change its mind about the army's uniforms. They say the higher price tag might not be quite as steep as it looks when you factor in all of the other benefits. But what do you think? Should our government be buying Australian even if it costs more?

GIRL: It's good that it's cheaper, but they're Australian soldiers, so I think that they should have Australian made uniforms.

GIRL 2: It's cheaper so I think that all round it would probably be slightly better to get them from China.

BOY: I think we should go with China cause it costs less money, so we'll have more money to build new roads and support schools.

BOY 2: You're fighting for our country, and you don't want another country to make your uniforms, so you want Australia to make the uniforms for you.

Poll

And that issue will also be our poll this week. Let us know what you think on our website.

Hay fever Season

Reporter: Amelia Moseley

INTRO: Across much of Australia it's been an unusually wet winter. And experts say that'll now most likely lead to the worst hay fever season for many years. Next we find out what that'll mean for the kids that suffer from it.

It's that glorious time of year again! When the sun's out and the birds are singing.

REPORTER: Okay, if you live in Australia's South-East, you might've noticed things have been a bit, well, wet. I might have to rethink this picnic.

Experts say it's been an unusually rainy few months and they're worried that could actually lead to a whole lot more of this through spring, hay fever!

It's a common allergy that affects around one in five Australians. It's triggered by breathing in something you're allergic to, known as an 'allergen'. They're microscopic particles that come from things like grass, pollen, dust, mould, even pet fur!

Your nose traps those particles in the tiny hairs and mucus inside, so they don't go into your lungs. But, if a person has hay fever, their body thinks some of those particles are dangerous and starts an allergic reaction to get rid of them. Leading to annoying symptoms like a blocked nose, sneezing, itchy, stinging or watery eyes. Even headaches.

STUDENT 1: It's just really annoying cause there's trees everywhere and it's really hard to avoid it.

STUDENT 2: We've got a cat, so she'll walk around my bedroom and when I wake up, I've got cat hair everywhere so that's the first thing that affects me.

STUDENT 3: You just can't see. It's just really bad. You just feel all puffed up and really terrible.

STUDENT 4: Everything about hay fever is just not right. I don't suggest anyone be like: "oh, I wish I had hay fever" cause some of my friends are like, "oh I wish I could stay home from school cause of that". You just don't want that.

You *can* get allergies at any time of the year, no matter where you live. But, spring is usually the worst time for hay fever, because lots of allergen-producing plants start popping up.

That's why experts say all the wet weather over the past few months could make this Spring one of the worst hay fever seasons for ages. They say lots of rain means more grass and plants and therefore, more pollen in the air.

Luckily, there *are* ways to treat hay fever symptoms. Some, more unusual than others!

STUDENT 3: Well, I use two different types of tablets. Sometimes if I forget to have a tablet, I'll sit there and weep!

STUDENT 5: I use nose spray and a nose inhaler.

STUDENT 1: Eye drops, I probably use the most because my eyes are the worst.

STUDENT 2: I usually get eucalyptus and I smell it and it helps me clear my nose!

STUDENT 4: My mum has like a home remedy and she uses pineapples! And that like clears the nose and it sort of stops the itchy eyes, but not really. But then I just take normal tablets and capsules and stuff. Yeah.

Some weather forecasts also give daily pollen counts. So, you can find out how much pollen will be in the air and be prepared. Experts also suggest staying inside during warm, windy days, or when someone's mowing the lawn. And you might have to put little Mittens or Max outside for a while. If you're unsure it's always best to chat to a doctor or pharmacist.

So, when spring has finally, um, sprung, you'll be ready to make the most of it.

Quiz 2

Quiz number 2 now.

How far can a sneeze travel? Is it

- 1m
- 20m
- Or 60m

The answer: 60m!

World Cerebral Palsy Day

Reporter: Nic Maher

INTRO: During the upcoming school holidays World Cerebral Palsy Day will be held. It's a disorder that affects many different kids in many different ways. Max is one of them - but with some help from his very supportive class, Max is finding some new ways of communicating with the world.

This is Max. He loves school and hanging out with his mates.

MAX: I like my classmates. They are fun and caring friends. They understand how difficult the PODD can be.

PODD is this book right here. It's one of the ways that Max communicates with the people around him. Max has trouble speaking because he has cerebral palsy; a condition that affects your movement.

Messages going from the brain to different parts of the body can get a bit jumbled and it can affect people in different ways depending on what part of the brain is having problems. The PODD is filled with pictures and words, and by asking Max questions, his friends can understand what he wants to say.

MAX: I like using the PODD, it's fun and special.

For a long time, PODD's been one of Max's main ways of communicating. But, more recently, a nifty piece of technology called Compass has given Max the ability to speak for himself. It uses a sensor that tracks Max's eye movements, so he can select words on the screen.

MAX: Compass is great and I can communicate independently.

It's not the only cool thing it can do, though. Earlier this year, Max's teacher, and some of his classmates decided to use it to design some games Max can play on his computer.

BEN: Our teacher said that we should make a game for Max and then it kind of just went from there. We all thought of our own ideas and I went with the maze and one of my other friends he went with a car racing game.

They use coding and programs like this to create all of the different parts of the game.

BEN: These games, he smiles a lot when he plays them because he really enjoys being able to play games with the eye gaze instead of just watching someone else play them.

Thanks to the games, Max has gotten a lot closer to some of his classmates and come away with some new friends.

HARRY: When I first met Max I didn't really know how to interact with him, cause I didn't know about the PODD or eye gaze. But then when I started making this, I interacted a lot more with him and now me and Max have a good friendship now.

These guys will all be showing off their games at a big technology competition next week.

BEN: You have to make a game with a reason, and our reason was for Max.

They say, while it'd be cool to win, they're just happy they can share the games they've made with one of their mates.

Welcome Book

Now to the BtN Welcome Book and there is only a few more days left to get your picture in before entries close.

So get out your pencils and paper now just like these kids have.

Once submissions are closed on the 23rd of September we'll go through all of your artworks to choose our favourites before working with a publisher to make them into a book.

Once designed, we'll let you know and put a digital copy up on our website so you can download it and see if your picture made it in.

In the meantime we'll also put as many of your artworks as possible on our website for you to look at and enjoy.

A big thanks to everyone who's got involved so far and we can't wait to show you the finished product later in the year!

Sport

The Paralympics has come to a close with Australia finishing an impressive 5th on the overall medal tally!

Australia picked up its 22nd and final gold medal in the Wheelchair Rugby. The Steelers triumphed by 1 point in double overtime in what's being described as one of the greatest wheelchair rugby matches of all time.

To soccer now, and Australia has jumped up 12 places to number 45 in the FIFA world rankings.

The Socceroos were given a boost after winning both of their opening matches in the World Cup qualifiers.

45th is Australia's highest position since 2012!

Aussie netballers are about to get a serious pay rise!

Last week Netball Australia announced players will get a minimum wage of around 30 thousand dollars a year which is double the amount some players get now.

MARNE FECHNER, NETBALL AUSTRALIA: A deal that will see our national league athletes maintain their position as the highest paid female sportswomen in this country.

The organisation's also going to try to make things easier for players who have kids.

It's hoped the changes will encourage more girls to see netball as a full time career.

And here's something you don't see everyday - the Black Pudding Throwing Championships!

In case you've never had one, black pudding is a kind of sausage made out of pig's blood! But these guys had to use them knock down Yorkshire puddings.

The winner said his experience playing cricket helped him to take out the title.

GAVIN OGDEN: It feels a bit weird, I didn't expect to come out and be a World Champion today, for sure. Fantastic!

Robot Competition

Reporter: Matthew Holbrook

INTRO: Finally today, you might remember last year, we brought you the story of some kids who had created and started racing underwater robots called Sea Perches. Well, those same kids have now just returned from America where they took on the world's best Sea Perch designers in a big comp. Team members Flynn and Heath let BtN come along for the experience.

HEATH: Hi BtN! I'm Heath.

FLYNN: And I'm Flynn, and we build, program and race these. They're small, remotely operated underwater vehicles called Sea Perches. And recently, we got the chance to go to the US and race them against heaps of other teams in a massive competition.

HEATH: But our journey actually started more than a year ago when dad and I first found out about them. We built a Sea Perch ourselves, and started this club to help other kids do the same thing. And on our first day of proper testing, BTN came along.

DAVID: We're testing them in a controlled course and making sure they can move and operate in the way we need them to.

HEATH: The Sea Perch itself is actually just a vehicle made out of poly-pipes, noodle, gutter guard, a variety of different things and it's generally supposed to be made cheap.

FLYNN: A team of two control the Sea Perch, guiding it through obstacles and other tasks. After our first tests, we kept working to improve ours to be faster, more powerful, and easier to control.

HEATH: We then took part in a local competition and won, earning a spot to compete overseas at a much bigger event, the U.S. National Sea Perch Challenge.

FLYNN: That meant we'd be competing against hundreds of other people with a lot of experience and skills. So we knew we had a lot of work to do.

HEATH: My vehicle is about 12 months old and since it's one of the first models, we've been doing much experimentation and modification to it and revision over the 12 months. We've made a depth sensor which can measure the depth and we've got a program which maintains accurately that depth.

FLYNN: The whole club helped us work on them, but only four of us in two teams, got the chance to go over and compete. Heath and I on separate teams.

THOMAS: My name is Thomas, and I am the cable wrangler for Team Vacuum, as cable wrangler I need to adjust how much cable is in the water while the vehicle is moving.

LANCE: It's going to be very interesting to see what the Americans are doing with their vehicles and being able to meet the other teams and ask them how they've made their vehicles.

HEATH: Finally, after months of preparation, it was competition day. There were 2 major tasks. One, an obstacle course with underwater hoops. The other, the orbs challenge, where you had to capture balls and release them into underwater pens.

FLYNN: There were some ups and downs, but in the end we did really well. My team came fifth in our category and Heath's team came equal sixth.

HEATH: Any opportunity he can use to gloat, he will take it and it's pretty annoying.

FLYNN: We made some new friends, and had a great time. But we're not done yet, and our small robotics club is still dreaming big. I really want to get the club to build more of these Sea Perches and really hone what we've been doing and hopefully go back there and come first.

HEATH: You can also take away a lot of useful skills that can be used in everyday life and future job careers.

FLYNN: The trophies also look pretty cool.

Closer

And that's it for today!

Please go to our website for more info on today's show including instructions on how you can get involved in our Welcome Book before entries close on the 23rd of September.

Stay well and bye for now.