



Teacher Resource

Focus Questions

As a class, discuss the stories featured in the episode of BTN Classroom and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following focus questions.

Medicare Explained

1. Who runs Medicare?
2. Medicare is funded by tax. True or false?
3. What year was Australia's first universal healthcare scheme introduced?
4. What is bulk billing?
5. What questions do you have about this story?

Election Rules

1. What is a ballot paper?
2. How often are federal elections held in Australia?
 - a. Every year
 - b. Every 3 years
 - c. Every 4 years
3. What does it mean when the government goes into 'caretaker mode'?
4. What sort of information can be found in an election writ?
5. Why do politicians campaign before an election?

Asteroid YR4

1. How did asteroids form?
2. What two planets can most of the solar system's asteroids be found between?
3. What is the difference between an asteroid, meteoroid and a comet? Create a Venn diagram.
4. What asteroid hit Earth in 1908?
 - a. The Chicxulub event
 - b. The Popigai event
 - c. The Tunguska event
5. It is possible for scientists to redirect asteroids. True or false?

Check out the [teacher](#) resource on the Archives page.

EPISODE 5

4 March 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will view a range of BTN stories and use comprehension skills to respond to a series of focus questions.

CURRICULUM

English – Year 4

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts.

English – Year 5

Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources.

English – Year 6

Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts.

English – Year 7

Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources.

Military Animals

1. What animals did Roman armies use on the battlefield? Give one example.
2. How have pigeons been used to help during war?
3. Military animals are still used today. True or false?
4. How have rats been used in war?
5. What is the role of a military mascot?

Dame Nellie Melba

1. Summarise the BTN story. Share your summary with another student.
2. Nellie Melba was a world famous...
 - a. Ballet dancer
 - b. Opera singer
 - c. Portrait painter
3. Where did Nellie Melba move to chase her dreams?
4. Nellie changed her last name to "Melba" to honour which Australian city?
5. Why was Nellie Melba made a dame in 1918?

Check out the [teacher](#) resource on the Archives page.



Teacher Resource

Asteroid YR4

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

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Activity: See, Think and Wonder?

After watching the BTN Asteroid YR4 story, students will respond to the following questions:

- What did you SEE in this video?
- What did you LEARN from this story?
- What do you WONDER about this story?
- What QUESTIONS do you have about this story?



Activity: Q&A

Are you curious about asteroids? Students will make a list of questions they have about the BTN Asteroids YR4 story. Students will use the internet to find answers to their questions and share their findings with the class.

“How do we spot near earth asteroids?” – Watch this [NASA explainer](#) to find out how.



EPISODE 5

4 March 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will learn about asteroids and how they move in space.

CURRICULUM

Science – Year 5

Scientific understandings, discoveries and inventions are used to solve problems that directly affect peoples' lives.

The Earth is part of a system of planets orbiting around a star (the sun).

Science – Years 5 & 6

Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions.

Science – Year 6

The growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment.

Science – Year 7

Predictable phenomena on Earth, including seasons and eclipses, are caused by the relative positions of the sun, Earth and the moon. Scientific knowledge has changed peoples' understanding of the world and is refined as new evidence becomes available.

Activity: Orbits

Start this activity by asking your students “How do planets and asteroids move in space? What do you think it means for something to orbit?”. Discuss as a whole class or in small groups and then share and record your students’ ideas. Introduce your students to the following concepts in the context of asteroids and orbital paths to help in their understanding of asteroids and how they move through space. Start a class glossary about asteroids.

Trajectory

Orbital plane

Asteroid belt

Velocity

Elliptical path

Revolve

Rotate

Gravitational pull

Explain to students that planets and asteroids follow paths around the sun and introduce the term “orbital plane” - the imaginary flat surface in space in which an asteroid's orbit lies. Students will conduct their own research into how asteroids move in space using one of the following research questions or developing their own question.

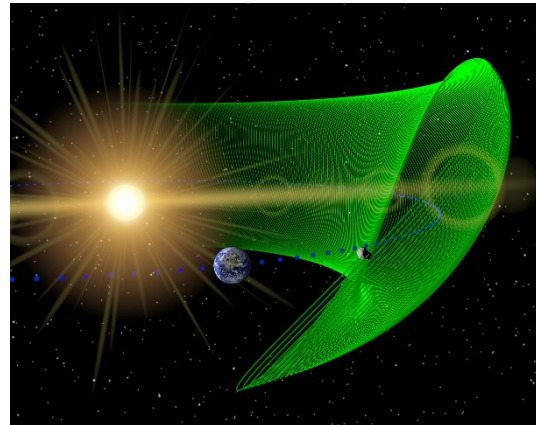
- Where can you find asteroids?
- Which two planets can most asteroids be found between?
- What do asteroids orbit?
- What is the shape of an asteroid’s orbit path?

Students will find a creative way to illustrate the orbital path of asteroids. Below are some examples of spirograph art to represent orbits that asteroids might follow.

Asteroid art



Students can use spirographs to show the movement of asteroids in space. Students can illustrate the elliptical orbits asteroids might follow within an orbital plane.



Trojan Asteroid Shares Orbit with Earth (Artist Animation) (Source: [NASA](#))

Represent the positions of the Sun, Earth, and Moon within the spirograph “orbits”. Use different spirograph shapes to represent different planets’ orbit within the solar system.

Activity: Modelling the orbits of planets

In this [NASA lesson](#), students explore the relationship between the masses of objects and the orbits they follow. They will make predictions and try to model different orbital scenarios using a gravity well model constructed in class.

Before starting this activity introduce and explain the following concepts to your students. Add these words to your class glossary about asteroids.

Gravity

Gravitational force

Mass

Velocity

Gravity well

Space-time

Orbital path

Gravitational pull

NASA Lesson

[Modelling the orbit of planets](#)

Grade levels: 6-12

Duration: 30-60 mins



Place a mass in the centre of the hoop. (Source: [NASA](#))



A small sphere is pushed into orbit around the central mass. (Source: [NASA](#))

Activity: Asteroid Belt

Begin this activity by asking your students “Have you ever wondered why the asteroid belt is between Jupiter and Mars? As a class or in small groups students will then investigate one or more of the following questions to learn more about the asteroid belt and how it formed.

- How did the asteroid belt form?
- When was it formed?
- What is it made of?
- What does it look like?
- What is the largest asteroid in the asteroid belt?
- Why are most asteroids found between Mars and Jupiter?
- What other questions do you have about the asteroid belt?

Students will then create their own visual representation of the asteroid belt.



Asteroid Belt Art Activity (Source: [Brainly Beginnings](#))



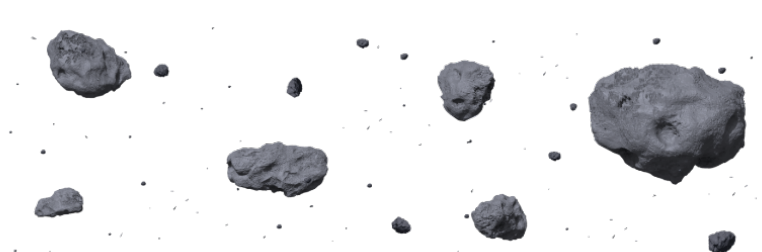
Make a 3D poster of the solar system (bird's eye view, A3 size) which includes the following elements. The sun, planets, asteroid belt, and orbital paths. What materials will you use to represent each feature (for example, foam balls, small rocks)? Add labels and a title to your poster.

Activity: Modelling Asteroids

Class discussion

Begin the lesson by asking the students what they know about asteroids and write their responses on the class whiteboard.

The objective of this activity is to learn about the formation of asteroids, their composition, the location of asteroids and to create asteroid models. As a class look at [images](#) of asteroids. Ask students what they notice about their shape and their surface. Students will brainstorm in small groups and then share with the class.



Hands-on Activity

Use the following to help guide students' in creating their own asteroid. Encourage students to be creative but emphasise that their models should reflect their understanding of asteroids.

Step-by-step activity for students:

- Collect a range of materials that you can use to create your own asteroid model. For example, plasticine or clay, small rocks or pebbles, sand, beads, and aluminium foil.
- Make your asteroid using the materials you have collected. Add details like craters or other surface features.
- Give your asteroid a name! Write a report about your asteroid and include an explanation about why you chose the materials and design for your asteroid. Include the following in your report: origin of name, dimensions, mass, shape, composition, classification, distance from the Sun. Describe any interesting features about your asteroid.
- Present your asteroid model to the class. Present using [Prezi](#) or [Canva](#).
- Hang your asteroid models in the classroom and create your own classroom asteroid belt. Consider adding the planets in the solar system to show where the asteroid belt is positioned in the Solar System.

Refer to this NASA [Classroom Activity](#) on Modelling an Asteroid.

Creative story writing

Once the asteroid is made, have students write a short creative story, which describes the asteroid's journey through space, where and when it originated and any interactions with planets.

Useful Websites

- [Incoming Asteroid](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Asteroid Mining](#) – BTN
- [Australian space scientists play crucial role in monitoring 2024 YR4 asteroid that could hit Earth in 2032](#) – ABC News
- [Asteroids](#) – NASA
- [Asteroid Watch](#) – NASA



Teacher Resource

Dame Nellie Melba

Women's History Month

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. Summarise the BTN story. Share your summary with another student.
2. Nellie Melba was a world famous...
 - a. Ballet dancer
 - b. Opera singer
 - c. Portrait painter
3. Where did Nellie Melba move to chase her dreams?
4. Nellie changed her last name to "Melba" to honour which Australian city?
5. Why was Nellie Melba made a dame in 1918?

Activity: Personal Response

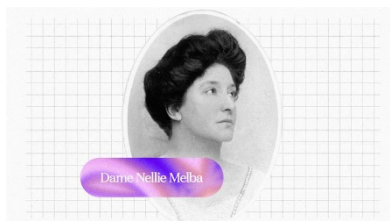
Respond to the BTN Dame Nellie Melba story as a class. Students will complete one or more of the following incomplete sentences:

- Dame Nellie Melba is an important Australian because...
- It was interesting to learn...
- These are five words that I would use to describe Dame Nellie Melba...
- This story made me feel...
- It is important to celebrate Dame Nellie Melba because...

Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN story, hold a class discussion using the following discussion starters.

- What did the BTN story tell you about the life of Dame Nellie Melba?
- Name at least one of her achievements.
- Why do you think Dame Nellie Melba became so famous?
- What questions do you have about Dame Nellie Melba?



EPISODE 5

4 March 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will learn more about the life and work of Dame Nellie Melba.

CURRICULUM

HASS – Year 3 and 4

Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues.

Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations.

HASS – Year 5 and 6

Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges.

Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources.

History – Year 6

The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation.

HASS – Year 7

Construct significant questions and propositions to guide investigations about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges.

Activity: Dame Nellie Melba's life

Students will research and write a biography about Dame Nellie Melba. Before they begin their biographies, discuss what students already know about biographies. What type of information is included in a biography and what do they tell us about a person.

Class Discussion

Use the questions below to get a class discussion started with your students about biographical writing.

- What does a biography tell us about a person?
- Where can you look to find information for your biographical writing? Why is it important to use more than one source of information?
- What makes a biography interesting? For example, key information and facts, a timeline of events, photographs, illustrations and quotes.



Create your Biography

Using the biography worksheet at the end of this activity, students will research and record information about Dame Nellie Melba. Some possible areas of research include:

- When and where was Dame Nellie Melba born? Describe her family life growing up.
- What were some of her achievements? Choose one to explore in more detail.
- What inspired Dame Nellie Melba to become an opera singer?
- What were some challenges that she faced and how did she overcome them?
- What contributions did she make to Australian society?
- What do you admire about her?
- Interesting facts about Dame Nellie Melba.

Further Investigation

- How did Dame Nellie Melba influence Australian culture and the arts beyond her singing career?
- How important do you think it was for an Australian woman to gain international recognition in the early 1900s?

Interview

- Imagine you could sit down and talk to Dame Nellie Melba. What questions would you ask about her life and achievements?
- In pairs, students can role play the interview – one taking on the role of interviewer, the other, as Dame Nellie Melba.

Portrait

- Create a portrait of Dame Nellie Melba. Look at [portraits of Nellie Melba](#) at the National Portrait Gallery for inspiration.
- Explore and experiment with different techniques and mediums to produce a portrait.
- Organise a class exhibition.

Creative Writing

- Write a short story imagining you are at one of Dame Nellie Melba's performances in the late 1800s early 1900s. Describe the performance and how it made you feel. Use descriptive language to capture the power of the performance. [Listen to Nellie Melba perform](#) for inspiration.

Activity: Explore our Banknotes

The \$100 banknote celebrates the contribution made by Dame Nellie Melba. Students can examine the banknote in detail on the [RBA website](#). The following questions can guide students' investigation:

- What do you see? Write down as much detail as you can about what you see.
- Can you find any icons, images, writing or clues about Dame Nellie Melba on the banknote? Record your discoveries.
- Why do you think Dame Nellie Melba is on the \$100 banknote?
- What questions do you have about what you see on the banknote?
- Share your findings with the class.



Students will [explore the next generation of banknotes](#) to discover the components of Australia's banknotes including their representation of Australia's history and culture, and their unique design and security features.

Focus on the \$100 banknote and find out as much as you can about Dame Nellie Melba.



Did you know Australia's banknotes have areas of text unreadable to most human vision? The text is approximately 0.25mm in height and can only be read with the help of a magnifying glass! Learn more about the RBA's [Microprinting](#) process.

[Listen to the microprint excerpt](#) from Dame Nellie Melba's memoir *Melodies and Memories*, in which she declares her connection to her home country

Useful Websites

- [Nellie Melba: In their own words](#) – National Portrait Gallery
- [Dame Nellie Melba](#) – Australian Dictionary of Biography
- [Dame Nellie Melba](#) – Reserve Bank of Australia
- [Nellie Melba Museum](#)

BIOGRAPHY

Name

Born

Family

btn



Teacher Resource

BTN Transcript: Episode 5- 4/3/2025

Yama, I'm Jack and you're watching BTN. Here's what's coming up. We learn about the when where how and why of Aussie elections, get the low down on this asteroid and find out more about animals in war.

Medicare Explained

Reporter: Wren Gillett

INTRO: But first today we're going to the doctor! Recently both sides of politics promised to work towards making most doctor visits free by putting billions of dollars into Medicare. So what is Medicare? Wren found out.

NAT KELLY: Alright, what's happened here?

WREN GILLETT: Dancing accident. I ah, hurt my arm. I think it's broken.

NAT: Oooo, yep, looks expensive. Hmmmmmm

WREN: Expensive?

NAT: Well you'll need an X-ray — and those machines are worth a mint. And then you'll have to pay the technicians time over there.

AIDEN, TECHNICIAN: Hello.

Plus there's the nurses and the receptionist and ah, let me guess you want some pain killers as well do you?

WREN: Oh that'd be great actually yeah.

Yeah, treating people who are sick or injured can be really expensive. Although in Australia, it's not something you necessarily have to think too much about when you go to hospital. And that's because of something called Medicare.

WREN: Medicare?

NAT: Yeah, Medicare is a system run by the government that ahhh, pays for people's medical treatment.

WREN: Oh! Do I have it?

NAT: Yeah, every Australian is covered by it!

WREN Oh! Who pays for it then?

NAT: Well you do.

WREN: Me?

NAT: And me.

You see, we all kinda pay for it. Medicare is funded by tax, in fact, it takes up a fair chunk of Australia's budget every year. But that wasn't always the case. For a long time in Australia, most people relied on private health insurance. You'd pay a company money, and they'd cover the costs if ya got sick. While the government did have different systems to help people who needed it, they were complicated, and people without private health insurance could be up for some big bills. So, in the 70s, the government set about changing that.

GOUGH WHITLAM, AUSTRALIA'S 23RD PRIME MINISTER: We would want to have a single public health insurance fund.

That was the Prime Minister at the time, Gough Whitlam, who introduced Australia's first universal healthcare scheme in 1975.

MEDIBANK AD: Medibank, the new Australian Health Insurance Program is a healthy change.

But it was controversial, and faced opposition from some doctors, private health insurance companies, and the opposition, which said it was too expensive, discouraged competition, and put too much control in the hands of the government.

Medibank was scrapped in 1981, before being brought back in 1984, as Medicare.

BOB HAWKE, AUSTRALIA'S 23RD PRIME MINISTER: Every Australian, from new born babe to Prime Minister can share in the cheapest, simplest and fairest health insurance scheme Australia's ever had.

While private health insurance companies still exist, Medicare covers a lot of essential medical treatments. For example, going to hospital with a broken arm. It also covers some or all of your trip to the doctor — depending on whether they bulk bill. Bulk billing is when doctors and other health workers only charge what they get back from Medicare, which means for the patient it's free. But over the years, the number of doctors who bulk bill has been dropping.

Doctors say that's because Medicare doesn't pay them enough to run their business.

Some people reckon that's a big problem, because if going to the doctor is expensive, fewer people will go, and that could lead to more serious medical problems. It's why last week, the Government announced a big increase in the Medicare payments that go to doctors.

ANTHONY ALBENESE, AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER: By 2030, we want 9 out of every 10 visits to the GP to be bulk billed.

Then, the Opposition leader said he'll do something very similar if he's elected.

PETER DUTTON, LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY: A coalition government is committed to 9 billion dollars' worth of investment into our general practise network.

That's the most money that's been spent on Medicare in decades, although some say it still won't be enough to guarantee that doctor visits are free. Still, many are hoping it will have a big impact on hospitals, doctors and the health of our country.

WREN: I'm just so relieved I don't have to pay, I don't know what I would have done.

NAT: yeah well look, I hate to break it to you but this is still gonna hurt.

News Quiz

Can you name the world leader who had a very tense meeting at the Whitehouse with the US President and Vice President?

US President Trump: Your country is in big trouble.

Ukraine President Zelenskyy: Can I answer?

US President Trump: Wait a minute. No, no. No, you've done a lot of talking.

It's Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He was invited to the US to talk about a possible deal to end the war in Ukraine, but things didn't go well.

US President Trump: You have to be thankful. You don't have the cards.

Ukraine President Zelenskyy: I'm thankful.

US President Trump: You're buried there. Your people are dying.

Afterward many world leaders expressed support for Zelenskyy, who then travelled to London for an emergency meeting with European leaders.

Can you name the cyclone that's heading towards Queensland and New South Wales? Is it Alfred, Anthony or Allen? It's Alfred and authorities are warning that it could cause a lot of damage.

DAVID CRISAFULLI, QUEENSLAND PREMIER: A flood watch has been put in place for areas from the Mary River, right through to the border and beyond.

It's actually the first time New South Wales has been put on cyclone alert since 1990.

The streets of Sydney lit up on Saturday for the famous Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

FESTIVAL GOERS: Happy Mardi Gras!!

Do you know when the first Sydney Mardi Gras was held? Was it 1958, 1978 or 1998?

PROTESTER: Two, four, six, eight, gay is just as good as straight!

It was 1978. The first Mardi Gras was part celebration and part protest against the discrimination. But since then it's become one of the biggest and most famous events of its kind in the world.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER: We've come a long way, but there's still further to go, and we need to make sure that every Australian should feel safe.

Speaking of famous celebrations, do you know the nickname of these little gold statues that were handed out in Hollywood on Monday?

ZOE SALDAÑA, ACTRESS: My whole family is here. I am floored.

They're Oscars, otherwise known as Academy Awards. This year's Oscar for best picture went to a film called Anora, while best actors were Adrian Brody and Mickey Madison.

MIKEY MADISON, ACTRESS: Wow! This is very surreal.

Election Rules

Reporter: Nat Kelly

INTRO: As you might have noticed, Australia's politicians have been out and about more than usual and making some bigger-than-usual promises, which is usually a pretty good sign there's an election coming up. So, when is it coming? And what happens next? Nat found out.

NAT KELLY, REPORTER: Anthony Albanese and Peter Dutton. They're about to go head to head to decide who gets to run the country for the next 3 years. But to do that, they won't be engaging in competitive martial arts. It's actually up to us, the Australian people, to vote for them at a federal election. It's a big day when everyone in the country who's over 18 and enrolled to vote gets to have a say in who they want to be in charge, by filling out these ballot papers and then popping them into these big boxes behind me to be counted. In Australia, we don't actually vote for the Prime Minister. We vote for somebody to represent our local area, or electorate, in the lower house, and the leader of the party with the most people in the lower house ends up becoming our PM. We also vote for senators to represent our state or territory, with half of the senate seats coming up for grabs every 3 years.

Now the big question everyone is asking is: when will this election actually happen? Well, we can't give you an exact date, because that's up to this guy. But, he does have a few rules that he has to follow. In Australia, elections happen every 3 years, and with the last election taking place in 2022, the Prime Minister has to pick a date before his 3 years in power are up. But he can't leave it too long, because a fair bit needs to happen before then. There has to be a minimum of 33 days between the PM calling the election, and people actually voting.

Once he's got his date in mind, the PM will give the governor-general a ring and let her know. Then, it's her job to tell parliament to wrap things up, and everyone in the House of Representatives is dissolved, meaning no more work. At that point, the government goes into "Caretaker mode". This is a time when no new big policy decisions are made. And things like entering into big contracts and important discussions with other countries don't usually happen. But these aren't hard and fast rules, they're just what usually happens, and previous governments have agreed to follow them.

The next thing the governor-general has to do within the next 10 days is sign an important legal document known as an Election Writ. Which has a bunch of important details on it like, the date of the election, the date the roll closes, and when candidates need to submit their nominations by. The writs also order the Australian Electoral Commission, or AEC, to begin the big job of running the election. The AEC has a big, long list of everyone in Australia who's enrolled to vote. All 17.9 million of them. And after the Writs are issued, Aussies only have 7 days to make sure they're on the roll and their details are up to date.

Now comes one of the most hectic parts of any election, for the politicians at least: campaigning. Politicians start to pop up all over the place, on huge billboards, TV and radio ads, even on your feeds. It also starts to feel like we see the PM and opposition leader on the news every single day. Usually at events that are planned by politicians, where they can talk about whatever they want, and journalists get to ask them questions. In fact, some journos even get to ride on board the pollie's buses. And as you can imagine, all manner of odd things are caught on camera during the campaign.

MAN: That wasn't a dare, Prime Minister.

NAT: Then 3 days before the election, everything goes quiet for the pre-election media blackout. At least on mainstream media. On social media, you can bet you'll still be seeing a lot of these guys. And finally, the voting. Where 18-odd million Aussies who are on the roll, rock up to schools, churches and halls with their kids, and their dogs to cast their vote. And while they're at it, they can usually pick up one of these delicious looking sausages. Mmm. I'm kind of hungry now.

Quiz

When was Australia's first federal election held? It was in 1901, the same year that Australia became a federation.

Asteroid YR4

Reporter: Wren Gillett

INTRO: Now to an asteroid that been causing a bit of a fuss lately. Its name is 2024 YR4 and when it was discovered a few months ago scientists said there was a very small chance it could collide with Earth in 2032. Then that very small chance got bigger and then smaller again. So errr, what's going on? Here's Nat.

NAT KELLY, REPORTER: Oh, come on in. Quickly, quickly! You don't want to be out there. Don't you know that there's an asteroid coming? It's this one, over here. Asteroid 2024 YR4, and it could smash into Earth in 2032.

NEWS SOUNDBITE: An asteroid is right now hurtling toward earth.

NEWS SOUNDBITE: A record high chance of impact.

NEWS SOUNDBITE: A city killer.

NEWS SOUNDBITE: It's a beautiful rock. and its gonna hurt.

NAT: What are the chances of that actually happening? Well, first it was virtually zero. And then it was 1.2%! Which soon jumped up to 3.1%, the highest NASA has ever recorded for a space object of its size.

But what's an asteroid, I hear you ask? Let me show you. Well, our solar system is a messy place. There aren't just planets out there orbiting the sun, there are also chunks of rock, ice, and dust: the leftover bits from the formation of our solar system billions of years ago. We call the little chunks meteoroids, the big icy chunks comets, and the big rocky chunks, asteroids. Most asteroids rather conveniently live in a place between Mars and Jupiter known as the asteroid belt, but some can make their way a little closer to earth, where they can cause problems. Just ask the dinosaurs.

"Oh, what a lovely day it is today. "The sun looks extra bright, don't you think?"

That's what scientists think happened to them 66 million years ago. And it wasn't the last asteroid to hit earth. Most of them, we didn't even notice because they burned up in our atmosphere. But others, we did.

In 1908, a huge explosion happened in the skies of Tunguska in Russia. The shockwave left a trail of destruction, including kilometres of flattened trees. In 2013, something similar happened when an asteroid the size of a house exploded over Chelyabinsk in Russia. It smashed windows, damaged buildings and injured more than a thousand people. But YR4, is a bit bigger, at 40-90 meters in diameter, about the size of jumbo jet, similar to the Tunguska asteroid.

DAVID COWARD, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA: This is classified as a "city-destroyer" which means that it would destroy any large city on earth.

NAT: So if that crashed into us, that wouldn't be good. It's why scientists around the world are working hard to keep us safe from rogue space rocks, like YR4. Tracking them, measuring them, even redirecting them. In 2022, NASA's DART mission successfully crashed a spacecraft into an asteroid, changing its direction. Many hope a similar technique could be used one day if we were faced with a situation where a hypothetical asteroid was going to crash into us.

AIDEN: Nat, what are you doing in here?

NAT: Uh nothing.

AIDEN: You're hiding from the asteroid aren't you?

NAT: Maybe.

AIDEN: You did hear that NASA and the European Space Agency have significantly lowered the chance of an asteroid hitting earth to less than 0.01 per cent?

NAT: They did?

AIDEN: Yeah.

NAT: So it's probably not even going to hit earth now?

AIDEN: Probably not.

NAT: well. Want some beans?

AIDEN: Sure.

War Animals

Reporter: Aiden McNamara

INTRO: Last week a pair of very special dogs were given awards at the Australian War Memorial. They're both retired service dogs that served in the Australian military and, as Aiden found out, animals have a long history of helping humans in conflicts.

AIDEN MCNAMARA, REPORTER: This is Manic. He's a Belgian German Shepard — and a big deal in the Australian military.

The Defence Force got Manic as a puppy, and he spent six years working alongside soldiers, including some time in the Middle East.

Last week Manic and his canine comrade Aslan became the first recipients of the Australian Animal Distinguished Service Award.

NATALIE HAWKINS, CRONULLA RSL: These dogs both are both combat assault dogs trained with the second commando regiment, they have served too. So it's a very special day for our bravery and dedication.

There's nothing new about animals in the military. For as long as humans have been involved in conflict, there's been animals alongside them. Hauling gear, attacking enemies, and protecting their humans — lions, camels and even elephants are some of the many creatures that have been called to enlist. Horses have been carrying people into battle for thousands of years, and in more modern wars, they've played a really important role.

NEWSREADER: Animal transport is an important means of getting things up the rock.

In 1916 camels carried Australian troops through the deserts of Egypt and Palestine

WWI BROADCASTER: Very few of the Australians detailed for the Corp knew anything about camels. They learnt quickly, however.

Donkeys were also used to carry weapons and supplies. And sometimes wounded soldiers — like the famous donkey of John Simpson — who became a legend for his heroism on the beaches of Gallipoli.

WWI BROADCASTER: The poignant story of Simpson, bringing out the wounded on his donkey.

But armies like a good mix of talls and smalls. And the humble pigeon has also played a big role in many conflicts. They have excellent sense of direction and have been used to deliver messages on the battlefield for centuries. In 1907 there was even an inventor who tried pigeon photography — hoping to get a literal bird's eye view of the battlefield. Although it didn't really take off, pigeons did a lot in the first and second world wars. In fact the first animals to win the Dickin Award — which is the UK's highest military honour for animals — were pigeons who helped save the crew of a sinking plane by flying 200km to a military base.

Cats have also had a long history in the military — catching rats on ships and in trenches. Then of course there are dogs. They've sent urgent messages, delivered items like first aid kits, and sniffed out land mines.

They've also been there to lift morale and make people smile. In fact, all sorts of pets have acted as military mascots, whose main job is to keep soldiers' company.

Animals are still a really important part of the armed services. Whether it's helping soldiers on the battlefield or helping them in their life after conflict. And it's why many say it's important to recognise the contribution of animals, which don't choose to serve but still save lives.

This new award isn't just for military animals, and its creators are hoping it grows each year to include different species doing different jobs. So that we humans have another chance to say thank you to the animals that serve Australia.

Sport

For the second year, the National Rugby League season kicked off in Las Vegas. In front of a crowd of more than 45,000, The Canberra Raiders started their season off right, smashing the New Zealand Warriors 30-8.

COMMENTATOR: Raiders have three!

It was then the Australian Jillaroos' turn to impress the US crowd. They took on England and won by a whopping 90-4. The clash made history as the first ever women's game of any sport to be played at the stadium.

Over to some more history making. The Young Socceroos have clinched their first-ever AFC under-20 Asian Cup win. It was quite a dramatic final against Saudi Arabia, with the scores locked at 1-1. The game ended with a nail-biting penalty shoot-out, where the Aussies came out on top.

SEBASTIAN ESPOSITO, CAPTAIN: Words don't describe the feeling - first Australian team in youth football to win Asian Cup.

And finally, some Aussies have won gold on the slopes. Cameron Bolton and Josie Baff nabbed Australia's first-ever World Cup gold medal in the Mixed Team Snowboard Cross in Turkiye.

JOSIE BAFF: He gave me the perfect amount of lead that I needed. Ah, yeah, it worked out really well for us today.

While Laura Peel picked up her fourth World Cup win of the season in Kazakhstan, winning gold in the latest leg of the Aerial Skiing competition.

Women's History Month: Dame Nellie Melba

Rookie Reporter: Zara

INTRO: March is Women's History Month and to celebrate, over the next few weeks we'll be telling you the stories of some Australian women who helped to change history. This week our rookie reporter Zara has looked into the amazing life of Dame Nellie Melba.

This is the voice of one of the most famous opera singers of all time, Dame Nellie Melba. She was born Helen Mitchell in Richmond, Melbourne, in 1861, but her family called her Nellie. Her dad was a businessman named David Mitchell, and her mum Isabella was a talented musician who passed her skills on to her daughter. Nellie would sing, hum and whistle everywhere she went, and when she was six, she convinced her parents to let her sing at a school fundraiser.

As she grew, Nellie knew what she wanted to be — a singer. But when her baby sister and mother died suddenly, her father moved the family to Mackay in Queensland, away from her singing teacher. Nellie eventually got married and had a son, but she wasn't happy, and later, she decided to move to Europe to chase her dreams.

As an amateur from Australia, she found it hard to find a singing teacher, but Nellie kept trying, until one day, she walked into the school of the great opera teacher, Mathilde Marchesi. She recognised Nellie's talent and worked on helping her become a star. Nellie changed her last name to honour the city where she grew up — Melbourne.

Nellie Melba's debut was in Brussels, where she played Gilda in Rigoletto. She let her dark hair shine in braids, instead of wearing the blonde wig Gilda's usually wore. Before long, Nellie Melba became a household name. She sang for kings, queens, princes and princesses, and on her first tour of Australia, thousands of people came to see the country's first international celebrity.

When World War 1 broke out, Nellie raised thousands of pounds for wounded soldiers and their families, earning her the title of Dame. In 1920, she became the first celebrity to perform on the radio.

Despite her wealth and celebrity, Nellie never forgot where she came from, and in 1922 she organised a series of low-cost concerts in country towns so that everyone could get a taste of the opera. Nellie kept performing until the last year of her life, which she spent at home in Australia.

Today she's still remembered and celebrated as one of the greats, who put Australia on the map and inspired generations to let their voices be heard.

Closer

Well, that's all we've got for you. But we'll be back next week with more. And in the meantime, you can jump on our website to check out more stories, quizzes, and resources for your teachers. Oh, and Newsbreak will be here every weeknight. Have an awesome week, and I'll see you next time. Bye!