



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.

Flood Clean-up

1. Discuss the BTN Flood Clean-up story as a class and record the main point of the discussion.
2. What impact have the floods had on people like Blake?
3. Which politician visited a flood-affected area recently?
4. How are people helping out with the clean-up?
5. How did this story make you feel?

The Senate

1. The senate is also known at the _____ house.
2. What is debated and voted on in the senate?
3. Who elects the senate?
4. How old is the newly elected senator Charlotte Walker?
5. What do you understand more clearly since watching the BTN story?

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

Racism Report

1. In pairs, discuss the BTN Racism Report story. What were the main points discussed?
2. What is racism? Come up with a definition.
3. What did a recent report find about racism since the Voice Referendum?
4. Katie says that Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and Sorry Day are important because...
5. What do you think can be done to fight racism?

Antarctic Tourism

1. Where is Antarctica? Locate on a map.
2. Why do you think Antarctica has become a popular tourism destination?

EPISODE 15

3 June 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.

3. What makes Antarctica unique?
4. What are some of the concerns people have about the impact of tourism on Antarctica.
5. Would you like to visit Antarctica? Give reasons for your answer.

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

Semicolon Decline

1. What was the main point of the BTN story?
2. What is a semicolon? Do you ever use them?
3. A recent study found that semicolons appear _____% less often than twenty years ago.
4. Why do you think fewer people use semicolons these days?
5. Name three facts you learnt watching the story.



Teacher Resource

The Senate

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. The Senate is also known at the _____ house.
2. What is debated and voted on in the Senate?
3. Who elects the Senate?
4. How old is the newly elected senator Charlotte Walker?
5. What do you understand more clearly since watching the BTN story?

Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN The Senate story, discuss with students what they learnt about senators and the Senate. Use the following questions to guide discussion.

- Who are senators?
- What is the Senate?
- Why do we have senators?
- Who can be a senator?
- How is the Senate different or similar to the House of Representatives?
- What questions do you have about the story?



Activity: Glossary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Senate story. Here are some words to get them started.

Senate

Bill

Upper house

Caucus

Senator

Session

EPISODE 15

3 June 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will learn about what a senator does and the role of the Senate in Australian parliament.

CURRICULUM

Civics and Citizenship – Year 5

The key features of the electoral process in Australia.

The roles and responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia's democracy.

HASS – Year 5

The key values and features of Australia's democracy, including elections, and the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives.

Civics and Citizenship – Year 6

The responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia's democracy.

Civics and Citizenship – Year 7

Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia's democracy.

Develop a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems.

Activity: Houses

Parliament House is where decisions are made in Australia, but it's actually not just one house, it's two.

Australia's parliament is made up of the Lower House and the Upper House, otherwise known as House of Representatives and the Senate.

Watch

As a class, watch [BTN's Houses](#) explainer to learn more about houses in Australian Parliament. Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following discussion questions.



BTN Election Lingo – [Houses](#)

Discussion questions

1. How many houses are there in Australian Parliament?
2. What is another name for the Senate?
3. What is another name for the House of Representatives?
4. Approximately how many politicians are in the House of Representatives?
5. How many senators are in the Senate?
6. What do senators do?

Class Activity

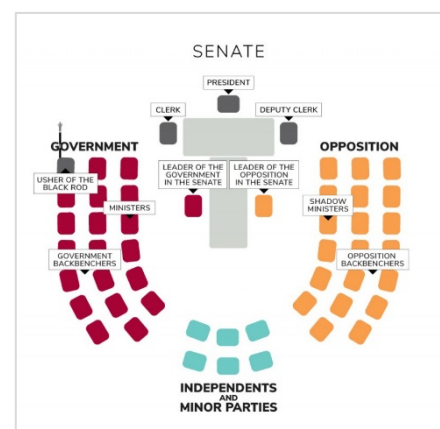
Before starting this activity, investigate the following in small groups or as a class:

- How many seats are in the Senate? Look at the current [composition of the Senate](#) (Source: PEO). Look at the [seating plan of the Senate](#) (Source: Parliament of Australia)
- How is a law passed in Australian Parliament?

Role-play the Parliament: Senate

Turn your class into a Parliament using this PEO [Make a Law: Senate toolkit](#).

Discover how bills – proposed laws – are introduced, debated and voted on in the Senate by turning your class into a Parliament and doing it yourselves!



[Make a Law: Senate toolkit](#)
(Source: PEO)

Activity: Quiz

1. The Senate is also known as...

A. The Lower House

B. The Middle House

C. The Upper House

2. What colour is traditionally associated with the Senate?

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

3. Who do senators represent?

A. Australian states and territories

B. Governor-General

C. Prime Minister

4. Who elects senators to the Senate?

A. Prime Minister

B. People of Australia

C. The King

5. How many senators are in the Senate?

A. 16

B. 56

C. 76

6. Where is the Senate located?

A. Australian Parliament House

B. Parliament Houses in each state

C. House of Representatives

7. What shape is the Australian Senate Chamber?

A. C-shape

B. L-shape

C. U-shape

8. What is the role of a senator?

A. Represent their state or territory

B. Debate and vote on bills

C. Examine issues in committees

D. All of the above

9. The Prime Minister sits in the Senate.

A. True

B. False

10. To become a law a bill must be passed by the Senate.

A. True

B. False

Quiz Answers:

1C, 2C, 3A, 4B, 5C, 6A, 7C, 8D, 9B, 10A

Useful Websites

- [Labor candidate who turned 21 on election night likely to become senator](#) – ABC News
- [Senators: fact sheet](#) – PEO
- [Senate: fact sheet](#) – PEO
- [Senators and Members](#) – Parliament of Australia



Teacher Resource

Antarctic Tourism

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. Where is Antarctica? Locate on a map.
2. Why do you think Antarctica has become a popular tourism destination?
3. What makes Antarctica unique?
4. What are some of the concerns people have about the impact of tourism on Antarctica.
5. Would you like to visit Antarctica? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity: Comprehension

After watching the BTN Antarctic Tourism story students can answer one or more of the following comprehension questions, for example:

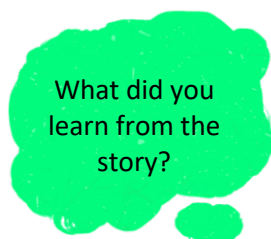
- What are some keywords from the BTN story?
- What did you learn from the story? Write a summary.
- What is the purpose of this news story?

Activity: Class Discussion

Discuss the information raised in the BTN story. Ask students to record what they learnt about Antarctica. What questions do students have?

Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- What do you know about Antarctica? Discuss in pairs.
- What make Antarctica special?
- Why do people want to visit Antarctica? Make a list.
- What could happen if too many people visit Antarctica?
- Would you like to visit Antarctica? Why or why not?



EPISODE 15

3 June 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will learn more about what makes Antarctica unique and create a profile of an Antarctic animal.

CURRICULUM

Science – Year 5

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

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 physical conditions and their environment.

Activity: Key words

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Antarctic Tourism story. Here are some words to get them started.



Activity: Antarctic Research

Discuss the information raised in the BTN Antarctic Tourism story. What questions were raised in the discussion and what are the gaps in students' knowledge? The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore their knowledge on this topic.

What do I know ?	What do I want to know?	What have I learnt ?	How will I find out?

Students will develop their own question/s to research or choose one or more of the questions below.

- Why is Antarctica becoming more popular as a tourist destination?
- What are the environmental risks associated with increased tourism in Antarctica?
- Should tourism in Antarctica be encouraged, reduced or banned? Why?
- Investigate ways tourism in Antarctica could be sustainable.
- What are the pros and cons of tourism in Antarctica?
- How can Antarctica be protected from tourism-related damage?
- What is the Antarctic Treaty?

Activity: Antarctic Species Profile

Students will research an [Antarctic animal](#) in detail and create a profile and then share their findings with the class. Here are some suggestions:

- Weddell seal
- Sea lion
- Squid
- Adelie penguin
- Emperor penguin
- Krill
- Blue whale



[Krill](#)



[Emperor penguin](#)

Students can use the profile worksheet at the end of this activity to organise and present their information.

- Name (common and scientific name)
- Biological illustration or photo
- Classification (class, family, genus)
- Description (size, colour, physical features)
- Habitat
- Diet
- Behaviours
- Adaptations
- Threats and conservation status

Activity: Antarctica Q & A

In this [BTN video](#), a group of experts answer questions that kids had about Antarctica and the people and animals that live there. Respond to the following questions:

- What did you learn watching this video?
- What information was surprising?
- What question would you ask an expert about Antarctica?



Activity: Choose a project

Students will choose one of the following activities to work on and then present their findings to the class.

Summary

Summarise the Antarctic Tourism story in three sentences. Share your summary with another student. How did your summaries differ?

Travel brochure

Design a brochure for an eco-friendly Antarctic tour. Where will the tourists visit? What activities will they be involved in? What makes the tour sustainable?

Did you know?

Using the information in the BTN story and your own research, create a *Did You Know* fact sheet about Antarctica. Publish using [Canva](#).

Australia's connection to Antarctica

Research Australia's connection to Antarctica. Create a timeline showing major expeditions and discoveries made by Australians in Antarctica.

Useful Websites

- [Antarctic tourist numbers could reach almost half a million by 2033, forecast shows](#) – ABC News
- [Antarctica Special](#) – BTN
- [Antarctic Ecosystems](#) – Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition

ANIMAL PROFILE

Scientific
Name

APPEARANCE

Common Name

ADAPTATIONS

Unique Features
or Interesting Facts

HABITAT

THREATS



Teacher Resource

BTN Transcript: Episode 15- 3/6/2025

Yama. I'm Jack Evans and you're watching BTN. Here's what's coming up. We're going to get the lowdown on Australia's new Senate. Learn about the great semi-colon debate and find out why more tourists are heading to Antarctica.

Flood Clean-up

Reporter: Wren Gillett

INTRO: But first, a huge clean-up is underway in New South Wales communities that were hit by devastating floods recently. Wren found out what's going on and why floodwater is so damaging.

BLAKE: I'm still on the Hastings River. We're still in major flood. The debris has slowed down, but the things I've been seeing is really devastating. I've been seeing dead cows, hay bales, all that type of stuff. All the big logs have already gone. It's really heartbreaking to see dead cows and that.

For the last two weeks, Blake has been recording what he's seen around his hometown, Port Macquarie in New South Wales.

BLAKE: Major floods. Just in comparison, where I'm standing is the 2021 flood. This is where it got up to, let me take you down to where it is right now. Right here.

Yep, floods aren't new to this part of this world. But the recent disaster that hit the Hunter regions and the mid-north coast was devastating.

BLAKE: Hey, guys. Blake here. I'm at Oxford Beach. Um, all the devastation with all the driftwood. We just had a chopper circling. We've even got a boat over there. Bye, guys.

Floodwater doesn't just make things wet, it's full of everything it picks up along the way, including dirt, sewage and chemicals. And it causes mould to grow, meaning a lot of things can't be salvaged even when they dry out.

BLAKE: So, we had to put some fridges away, like chuck fridges away because they all got broken and stuff. We've lost heaps of piles of my kayaks. Just basic stuff we've lost, but still a lot.

And it's not just homes that have been affected. The floods have hit business, and farms.

SAM, FARMER: No matter what we could have done, no matter how well we prepared, no one could have prepared for this.

This land is flat, which means there's nowhere for the water to flow naturally. And with the soil already soaked, it sits around and kills grass.

JAMES, FARMER: Everything's covered in silt and a lot of the pasture we've sown is all dead, so we're gonna have no food at all.

Experts say the damage from these floods will be huge. Just repairing the roads alone is expected to cost

around 2.5 billion dollars. Some people will be relying on insurance to help them rebuild. But as events like this become more frequent, insurance is becoming more expensive and not everyone can get it.

Last week the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, came to Taree to talk to locals.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, AUSTRALIAN PM: We are activating the Australian government disaster recovery payment, in nine local government areas.

Right now, everyone is working together to clean up the damage. 70 members of the Australian Defence force have come to help out, along with more than 2,000 SES volunteers from around the country.

BLAKE: I'm moving a lot of mud. Cleaning up, getting new furniture in. So now we've done all that and the volunteers have helped. So, now we're back up and running.

Many people aren't exactly sure what the next few weeks, months or even years of their life will look like, but locals, like Blake, are trying to stay positive.

BLAKE: There's nothing we could do about it, but right now, we're on the other side, which is a better thing.

News Quiz

SUSSAN LEY, LIBERAL PARTY LEADER: Today David and I have reached agreement, formally, to reform the coalition.

Which two political parties got back together last week? Labor and the Greens, Labor and the Liberal Party, or the Liberal and National Parties? It was the Liberal and National parties. The National Party recently announced it was ending its decades-long partnership with the Liberals over some policy differences but now it seems, they've patched things up.

SUSSAN LEY: I want to thank you, David, for the respectful and productive way that you and I have engaged throughout this process. And I know that we will be a great partnership going forward.

Speaking of breakups, Elon Musk has left his role as advisor to the US President after criticising a bill known as what? One Big Beautiful Bill, the Lovely Liberty Law or the Terrific Trickle-down Treaty?

DONALD TRUMP: It's very big, it's the big, beautiful bill.

Actually, it's now the One Big Beautiful Bill Act since it passed the lower house. If it passes the Senate, it'll increase the US government's debt, which is the opposite of what Elon Musk was trying to achieve with the DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency.

ELON MUSK: In terms of political spending, I'm going to do a lot less in the future.

The Senate

Reporter: Jack Evans

INTRO: Australia's election might feel like ages ago now but believe it or not the counting is still going on for the senate. And last week we finally got a good look at what the upper house will look like. So, what is the upper house, anyway? Let's find out.

SIDEKICK: Ooo Oooo Your Warlord-ness, it appears that we are running low on gas.

WARLORD: Oh yeah, well try telling that to Mickey.

MICKY: (Giggles)

SIDEKICK: Oh, this is serious.

WARLORD: Alright fine, as Warlord of these Rusted Realms I declare a fuel embargo on the Eastern Wastelands.

SIDEKICK: That's a pretty good plan.

WARLORD: Actually, on second thought, why don't we just destroy the Eastern Wastelands all together.

JACK EVANS, REPORTER: If post-apocalyptic action films have taught us anything, it's that power without checks can turn leaders into tyrants. Luckily here in Australia our democracy includes important safety measures to make sure that doesn't happen, like the Senate.

SIDEKICK: I'm just gonna have to run that idea past the Senate.

WARLORD: The what?

SIDEKICK: The Senate.

WARLORD: The Senate? Oh, I've Never heard of it. The Senate?

The Senate or Upper House is one of the two parts of our government. The other is the House of Representatives or Lower house. Most laws start down here where they're debated and voted on. But before they're allowed to become laws they have to go through the Senate, which has its own debate and vote.

SIDEKICK: It's kinda like a speed bump in the road to making new laws, so, they don't fang it.

WARLORD: What? That's a terrible idea.

SIDEKICK: Oh, I thought it was quite reasonable.

A lot of democracies have Senates including the UK, the US, France, Italy and Germany. And they date all the way back to Ancient Rome, where the senate was made up of elite members of society to make sure the democratically elected politicians didn't do anything too wild. In fact, the word Senate comes from the Latin word Senex which means old man. But here in Australia our Senators have always been elected by the public.

SIDEKICK: Uh, my Warlord-ness.

WARLORD: What is it?

SIDEKICK: The Senate riders have spoken. They're not totally down with the whole destroying the Eastern Wastelands.

WARLORD: Oh those cursed lawmakers. Who rides for them?

While I can't speak for the wastelands Senate, here in Australia we have 76 Senators, 12 from each state and 2 from each territory. State Senators stay in their seats for 6 years, but they don't all start at the same time. Every three years half of them are up for re-election along with the territory Senators. And that's exactly what's just happened.

The votes for the Senate don't get counted until after the lower house is finished, so it's taken a little while, but last week we finally got to meet our new Aussie Senate. There were a few changes, Labor won 16 seats including the youngest senator in history Charlotte Walker who turned 21 on the night of the election.

CHARLOTTE WALKER, SENATOR: Having a young person actually there in caucus meetings and in Parliament is sort of going to bring a different perspective.

Meanwhile the coalition won 13 seats, which means things are a lot more even up here than they are in the lower house and neither major party has a majority. Meanwhile the Greens won 6 seats bringing their total to 11 and the rest of the Senate is made up by minor parties and Independents who will all be working together to keep the country and our government in line.

SIDEKICK: Perhaps we go back to a gas embargo and not destroy the Eastern Wastelands?

WARLORD: Alright, alright, perhaps I got a little carried away.

Racism Report

Reporter: Tatenda Chibika

INTRO: Last week we spoke to some First Nations kids for Reconciliation Week and one thing that they told us is that racism is still a pretty common experience for Indigenous Aussies. It is why experts say we need to learn about Australia's history so we can try to make things better in the future.

STUDENT: When you're in a shop, they follow you around and judge you like you're going to steal.

STUDENT: I used to get bullied a lot at my old school for being dark skinned and my culture.

STUDENT: People at school makes jokes about it, but sometimes the jokes are just way too inappropriate where you're not really, where you don't really know what to say.

STUDENT: you could have a good personality. You could have like riches fames, but you'll still be called something bad or racist behind your back.

Unfortunately, racism is something that a lot of First Nations people are familiar with, and it's been part of Australia's history since colonisation.

After Captain Cook landed at Botany Bay, it was declared terra nullius, which means 'land belonging to no one'. Colonisation brought disease, forced removal from homes, a loss of language, culture and freedom for many First Nations people.

For decades, people were separated based on their race. Children were taken from their families, and Indigenous people were denied the same rights and opportunities as other Australians.

But many fought for change. In 1962, Indigenous people were guaranteed voting rights and five years later, Australians voted to remove sections of the constitution that discriminated against indigenous people. Since then, there have been more milestones and moves made to address some of the wrongs done in the past.

KEVIN RUDD, FORMER PRIME MINISTER: We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

Racism is now against the law in Australia, but it still happens. And some say the recent voice to parliament made things worse for some First Nations people.

A project called Call it Out has been letting people log their experiences of racism and of the 453 people who made reports one in five specifically mentioned the voice.

KATIE KISS, AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: Since the referendum it has increased exponentially, and I've heard that from our people all over the country.

Katie says to move forward, all Australians need to come together to acknowledge the bad things that happened in the past and work towards a better future.

KATIE KISS: Reconciliation week, NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day, they all provide opportunities for our young people, our children, but also our communities to gain a bit more understanding about what's happened in this country. Don't be a bystander to racism. Call it out, hold them accountable to it. Challenge their ideology and their thinking around that. And don't let your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander friends have to stand up for themselves.

STUDENT: We should talk more about how racism could affect people and how they affect people from different background.

STUDENT: Makes them recognise how it's affecting the people that they're being racist to and how it makes them feel because it made it makes them feel kind of left out different and excluded.

STUDENT: We're all people, like we're all the same, just might be slightly different.

KATIE KISS: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the oldest 2 living cultures on the planet. This is something that all Australians should actually be proud of. Why do we want to dumb that down to numb it down, to stop it, to not recognise that?

STUDENT: I'm Aboriginal and I'm very proud of my culture.

If you're upset by that story or anything else you see in the news, make sure you talk to someone about that. You can call Kids Helpline on this number. We've also got some resources on our website with tips about dealing with upsetting news.

Antarctic Tourism

Reporter: Tatenda Chibika

INTRO: Where are you going for your next holiday? How about Antarctica? Yeah, it's a pretty extreme place to hang out for fun but more and more people are doing it, which has some experts a bit worried about how that could impact the environment. Here's Tatenda.

Want a holiday in the coolest place on earth? Literally. There's so much to see, snow, ice or more sno-. Oh, look, there's a penguin. Lay in the 24-hour sun or come in winter and enjoy the nightlife, all day. There's snow place like Antarctica.

TATENDA CHIBIKA, REPORTER: While it might not seem like the obvious tourist destination, Antarctica's

pretty hot right now.

TIKTOK: I'm on a boat to Antarctica, i didn't know you could do that either.

TIK-TOK: If you're planning a trip to Antarctica, here's what you need to know.

TIK-TOK: The day we have dreamed of is finally here, we've made it to Antarctica.

DOUGLAS MAWSON: Full sovereignty of this territory, which we have discovered and explored.

It wasn't that long ago that only the bravest explorers and scientists set foot on the driest, coldest, and windiest continent on earth.

Australia set up a research station there in 1954 and a couple of years later, Chile and Argentina started carrying hundreds of fare-paying passengers to Antarctica's Islands.

In the 70s, airlines started offering sightseeing flights and nowadays, you can either fly over the top or arrive by boat. And while there are no hotels, you can camp on the ice or stay on the ship.

All up, 125,000 people paid a visit last year and researchers predict those numbers could quadruple in the next decade. But they say that could be a problem.

DR VALERIA SENIGAGLIA, MARINE SCIENTIST: I doubt it will be sustainable with that amount of people in a very, especially in a very limited space like the Antarctic Peninsula.

You see, Antarctica isn't like other tourist destinations. No one lives there permanently which means it's a uniquely untouched environment. It also means there's not a lot of infrastructure in place like roads, sewage systems or waste disposal and experts say having hundreds of thousands of people visiting each year could cause some damage.

DR VALERIA SENIGAGLIA: Think about disturbing a colony of nesting Adélie penguin. But also the carbon emissions for tourists that need to fly.

At the moment there are guidelines in place for tourism operators to try to limit their impact on the environment. But they are only guidelines, and some say stricter rules are needed.

DR VALERIA SENIGAGLIA: Cap the visitors to a certain number. Other option is to establish certification, so certifying that a certain operator is conducting his tourism business in a sustainable way.

But it's not straightforward. 29 countries have decision-making powers under the Antarctic treaty and they all have to agree for a new rule to pass.

DR VALERIA SENIGAGLIA: Some of these again have been already proposed and they have been accepted, but not what is called double rectified so we're still waiting for the Antarctic Treaty system to implement it.

Tourism management is one of the topics on the agenda for this year's treaty meeting and some like Doctor Senigaglia hope it leads to a plan to keep Antarctica as beautiful as it is today.

Quiz

Who led the first expedition to reach the South Pole? Was it Douglas Mawson, Robert Scott or Roald Amundsen? It was Amundsen. He arrived at the South Pole on December 14, 1911. Scott's team arrived a

month later but died on the return journey.

Sport

Aussie Oscar Piastri has taken his fifth win of the season at the Spanish Grand Prix. He started in pole position and stayed in the lead until the very end.

ANNOUNCER: Piastri is gone, and it's Verstappen who's moving in Lando Norris for second place.

But the main talk of the race was this little incident.

ANNOUNCER: Oh, contact. Max Verstappen into the side of George Russell.

Max Verstappen copped a 10-second penalty for running into Mercedes driver George Russell, dropping the Red Bull driver from fifth to 10th place. Ouch.

Meanwhile in Adelaide, the Australian Steelers have snagged the silver medal in the Wheelchair Rugby World Challenge. They went up against The Netherlands who took the lead in the second half and secured the trophy 64 to 60.

ANNOUNCER: Team Netherlands. The gold medallists for the inaugural Santos Wheelchair World Rugby Challenge.

And 21-year-old Aussie Sprinter Lachlan Kennedy has broken the 10 second barrier for a 100-metre sprint. He clocked in at 9.98 seconds at the World Athletics Continental Tour Gold meet in Nairobi, Kenya. He's only the second Aussie to legally record a time under ten seconds.

LACHLAN KENNEDY: I was pretty stoked as you can tell by my reaction. Seeing the nine flash up. It's my first time going nine so and I've been trying to do that for a while, so I was pretty stoked with that.

His next race will be in the Czech Republic in June.

Semicolon Decline

Reporter: Wren Gillett

INTRO: Finally, today, to a debate over this thing, it's a semicolon, and if you've never used it before, you're not alone. A recent study found it's not nearly as popular as it once was. Let's find out more.

SEMICOLON: Hi. I'm a semicolon. But if you don't know me, well, that's okay. Lots of people don't.

NOAH: A what?

WREN GILLETT, REPORTER: A semicolon.

NOAH: No.

FRANKIE: No, never heard of it.

BERLEEN: Um...

REID: I can't think of it.

SEMICOLON: That's fine, that's totally fine. I'm a punctuation mark, and I actually go back a long way. I was born in Venice, in 1494. A time when writers were very experimental. Like this guy, Aldus Manutius.

ALDUS MANUTIUS: These thoughts I have written down are similar but need to be separated. A comma? No. Too casual. A full stop? No. Too final. Wait. I've got it.

And just like that, or well, something like that, Aldus combined two of your favourite punctuation marks to create me. The semicolon. Semicolons link independent clauses; they create a pause stronger than a comma but weaker than a full stop.

Eventually I made my way into the English language and a lot of people loved me and the way I could create complex sentences with many ideas.

JANE AUSTEN: Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice "semicolon" that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character "semicolon"...

SEMICOLON: But not everyone was such a fan as Jane Austen there. Some authors preferred their sentences simple and direct. Others downright hated me.

RADIO ANNOUNCER: Here is the last news bulletin for today.

Then there was radio and television.

ACTOR: Now then, you lost what?

ACTOR: My doggy that plays music.

ANDREEA CALUDE, LINGUIST: The language that was used became more informal and more accessible because TV was for everybody.

SEMICOLON: I mean, I get it, language changes, right? And sometimes some of us get left behind. And it's not just me. My friend Pilcrow here? He used to mark the beginning of paragraphs, but now they're hardly seen. And oh my gosh, Interrobang. They were a combination of a question mark and an exclamation point, but I guess we don't need them anymore either. And now some say I'm on my way out too.

A recent study found I appear in books 50% less often than I did just twenty years ago. And get this, one in two students in Britain say they don't even know how I work. Some say it's because of texts and emails which are casual and quick.

SEMICOLON: But not everyone is ready to give up on us. Some people think punctuation marks, like me, are really important.

ANDREEA CALUDE: I am one of those people who loves language. I'm a language pedant. I will use a semicolon and, in a world, that's shying away from them, I still know how to use them. So, I'm going to just use them because I like them.

ARCHIE: It makes your story flow better, and it can give you better marks I guess because teachers love that stuff.

ROBERA: I think punctuation definitely needs to get more uptight and people definitely need to start caring more about it.

SEMICOLON: I'll leave you with this. You know me now. You know what I can do. And if you ever have two related thoughts that you want to join in a sophisticated way, well, you know where to find me.

Closer

Well that's it for today but we'll be back next week with more news, and in the meantime, you can keep up to date with Newsbreak every weeknight, or you can jump online to check out more stories and specials and resources for your teachers. Have a great week. I'll see you next time. Bye.