



World News



MEXICO

Schools given six months to ban junk food

Schools across Mexico have six months to ban junk food at break times, otherwise they could be hit with big fines. A third of Mexico's children are said to be overweight. They eat more junk food than any other children in Latin America. Unhealthy snacks like crisps, pork scratchings and coated peanuts are available in 98% of schools in Mexico and sugary drinks are available in 95% of them. Schools that fail to take away these unhealthy treats will face fines of between £420 and £4,200. These fines could be doubled for any school that's caught serving junk food or sugary drinks for a second time. The country's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, said that schools should take action by having water fountains and serving healthier foods. She added that an example of a healthy snack is bean tacos, which would be "much better than a bag of crisps".



In a recent survey, junk food like pork rinds (pork scratchings) was available in 98% of Mexico's schools

Getty

GLOSSARY

- **Mexico** – a large country in the southern part of North America, with the United States to the north and Central America to the south
- **Latin America** – the region including Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean, where the main languages spoken are Spanish and Portuguese
- **pork scratchings** – a snack made from pieces of pork skin that are salted and deep-fried to make them crispy
- **Claudia Sheinbaum** – the first female president of Mexico, who was elected in June this year

1. Which of these sentences is false?

- ☐ Children in Mexico could be fined for eating junk food.
- ☐ A third of children in Mexico are said to be overweight.
- ☐ Children in Mexico eat more junk food than any other children in Latin America.

2a. Find two examples of unhealthy snacks that are mentioned in the story.

2b. Can you think of any other examples of unhealthy snacks?

3. What percentage of schools in Mexico **don't** sell junk food?

- ☐ 1%
- ☐ 5%
- ☐ 2%

4. How much would schools be fined for serving junk food and sugary drinks for a **second** time?
[Hint: it's double the first fine!]

- ☐ less than £420
- ☐ between £420 and £4,200
- ☐ between £840 and £8,400

5. How does Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, want schools to take action?

6. Claudia Sheinbaum suggests having bean tacos instead of crisps. Come up with three other ideas for healthy options that children could have at break time instead of junk food.

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**Any two of these:
crisps, pork scratchings, coated peanuts**

2b. Can you think of any other examples of unhealthy snacks?

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5. How does Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, want schools to take action?

By having water fountains and serving healthier foods.

6. Claudia Sheinbaum suggests having bean tacos instead of crisps. Come up with three other ideas for healthy options that children could have at break time instead of junk food.



Technology News

Cats may be word whizzes, says study

A new study suggests that cats can learn words faster than 14-month-old human babies! Researchers in Japan tested 31 cats using cartoon animations and voice recordings. The cats showed signs of confusion when the images were shown with the wrong words, suggesting that cats can link words to images. Researcher Saho Takagi was surprised by the results, saying: "Cats pay attention to what we say in everyday life and try to understand us, much more than we realise. They can eavesdrop on our conversations!"



GLOSSARY

- **eavesdrop** – secretly listen to something said in private
- **millisecond** – one thousandth of a second



Speedy reading!

Researchers at New York University have found that our brains are much quicker at understanding language than previously thought. Humans can read three-word messages (for example in text messages or social media posts) in just 150 milliseconds, which is about the speed of a blink! The team measured brain activity while people read three-word messages and discovered that our brains process these just as quickly as we recognise pictures (so, in a blink!). Experts say the research could help to improve the design of things like road signs and posters.

Look at both stories.

1. Which of these hasn't been discovered by researchers this week?

- ☐ Cats can learn words faster than 14-month-old human babies.
- ☐ Human babies blink faster than adult cats.
- ☐ Humans read three-word messages in the speed of a blink.

Look at the story 'Cats may be word whizzes'.

2. Which two types of technology were used to test the cats?

3a. What made the cats confused?

3b. What does this suggest?

- ☐ Cats are confused by voice recordings.
- ☐ Cats don't like computer animations.
- ☐ Cats can link words to images.

Look at the story 'Speedy reading'.

4. Find two things that human brains can process in a blink.

5a. Write a three-word message that could be used on a road sign or poster. (Draw a design if you'd like to!).

5b. Write a nice three-word message that you'd like to send to a friend or family member.

Look at both stories.

6. Which of these stories do you find the most surprising? Explain your reasons.

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cartoon animations and voice recordings

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three-word messages and pictures

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Animal News



CAMBODIA



The fish is a large river predator

'Ghost fish' back from the dead

Halloween might be over, but how about one more ghost story? The giant salmon carp was nicknamed the 'ghost fish' because it was thought to be extinct as it hadn't been seen since 2005. However, since 2020, three giant salmon carp have been spotted in the Mekong River in Cambodia, and researchers are thrilled. These rare fish have yellow patches around the eyes, a hooked jaw and a long body. They can grow up to 1.2m long. One local expert, Chheana Chhut, said: "The giant salmon carp is like a symbol of the Mekong region." There are now calls to do more to protect the river's wildlife.

Wildlife thrives in Cambodia's mountains

SCIENTISTS have made an exciting discovery in Cambodia's Central Cardamom Mountains, which has been hiding a thriving hub of nature!

Using special hidden cameras, the scientists spotted 108 different animal species, including 23 that are at risk of extinction. The cameras took 55,000 videos and 22,000 pictures of elephants, clouded leopards, bears, wild dogs called dholes, and more.

The mountains are facing threats from illegal tree-cutting, poaching and overfishing. The report says that it's vital to protect this area, as it's home to many animals that are in danger of disappearing forever.



An Asian elephant captured on a hidden camera

GLOSSARY

- **Mekong River** – one of the longest rivers in the world, which flows through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam
- **giant salmon carp** – a large freshwater fish that is found in small numbers in the Mekong River
- **Central Cardamom Mountains** – a mountain range in the middle of the Cardamom Mountains in southwest Cambodia
- **clouded leopard** – a medium-sized wildcat, with cloud-like spots and a golden-brown coat, mostly found in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia
- **dhole** – a medium-sized wild dog with a reddish-brown to sandy-coloured coat, bushy tail and long legs, which is found in various countries in Asia

Look at both stories.

1. Find the names of the two places in Cambodia where animal discoveries have been made.

Look at the story 'Cambodia: 'Ghost fish' back from the dead'.

2. Why was the giant salmon carp nicknamed the 'ghost fish'?

3. For how many years were there no sightings at all of the giant salmon carp?

4a. Fill in the features of the giant salmon carp that each of these adjectives describes.

yellow: _____

hooked : _____

long: _____

4b. Think of two more adjectives that could describe the giant salmon carp or its features (either from information in the story or looking at the photo).

Look at the story 'Wildlife thrives in Cambodia's mountains'.

5a. Unscramble the names of these animals that were found to be living in Cambodia's mountains.

sheeplant: _____

decludo arpodsels : _____

saber: _____

oldshe: _____

5b. How were these animals spotted by scientists?

6. Write a short letter to world leaders explaining the issues affecting this area and why it is so important to protect it.

Look at both stories.

1. Find the names of the two places in Cambodia where animal discoveries have been made.

The Mekong River and the Central Cardamom Mountains

Look at the story 'Cambodia: 'Ghost fish' back from the dead'.

2. Why was the giant salmon carp nicknamed the 'ghost fish'?

Because it was thought to be extinct.

3. For how many years were there no sightings at all of the giant salmon carp?

15

4a. Fill in the features of the giant salmon carp that each of these adjectives describes.

yellow: **patches (around the eyes)**

hooked : **jaw**

long: **body**

4b. Think of two more adjectives that could describe the giant salmon carp or its features (either from information in the story or looking at the photo).

Look at the story 'Wildlife thrives in Cambodia's mountains'.

5a. Unscramble the names of these animals that were found to be living in Cambodia's mountains.

sheeplant: **elephants**

decludo arpodsel : **clouded leopards**

saber: **bears**

oldshe: **dholes**

5b. How were these animals spotted by scientists?

By using special hidden cameras

6. Write a short letter to world leaders explaining the issues affecting this area and why it is so important to protect it.