THE POWER OF PLAY

Studies show there are big benefits to recess. States are passing laws to protect it.
UP IN FLAMES Notre-Dame cathedral, in Paris, France, burns on April 15. The spire and much of the building’s roof were destroyed.

WASHINGTON DC The first image of a black hole was taken on April 10. The project was created by a network of eight telescopes on four continents and is known as the Event Horizon Telescope.

“The world got a glimpse of one of the greatest mysteries of our universe on April 10. That’s when the first image of a black hole was shown to the public,” says Shep Doeleman. He led the effort to create the image. The black hole is at the center of the Messier 87 galaxy. It’s located some 55 million light-years from Earth.

The image shows gas, dust, and stars swirling around the black hole before disappearing into it. It’s called the “event horizon.” The image does not truly show the black hole. That’s because not even light can escape its pull. Black holes are like vacuums. They suck in everything that gets too close.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS The first image ever created of a black hole was revealed on April 10.

94 years and 172 days was JIMMY CARTER’S AGE as of March 22. That’s when he set a new record for longest-living United States president in history.

“We as a species are capable of doing some pretty incredible things if we put our minds and resources to it,” said astronaut SCOTT KELLY. On April 11, researchers published the results of a study about him and his twin, Mark. Knowing how Scott changed during his 340 days in space—comparing to Mark, who stayed on Earth—will help NASA prepare for long space missions.

NOTRE-DAME BURNS

By Shay Maunz

Notre-Dame cathedral, in Paris, France, was ravaged by fire on April 15. The building’s spire and most of its wooden roof were destroyed. But the cathedral remained standing when the blaze was put out and its famous bell towers and much of its inside were spared.

Construction on Notre-Dame began in the 12th century. It is a Roman Catholic church. It is also an architectural treasure, a French landmark, and a tourist attraction. Some 13 million people visit Notre-Dame each year.

“It’s the very soul of Paris, but it’s not just for French people,” said Barbara Drake Boehm. She’s with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York. “For all humanity, it’s one of the great monuments to the best of civilization.”

Authorities believe the fire was an accident. Some 500 firefighters battled the blaze. About a hundred of them worked to save as many art and religious objects as possible.

The rescued pieces include a crown of thorns believed to have been worn by Jesus. Notre-Dame’s famous stained-glass windows and pipe organ also survived.

French president Emmanuel Macron promised to rebuild. Donors have pledged nearly $1 billion for restoration.

17 feet is the length of the new record holder for LARGEST PYTHON ever caught in Big Cypress National Preserve in the Florida Everglades. The female reptile weighed 140 pounds and contained 73 developing eggs.

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MY DATA DEEP DIVE

How many times a day do you have recess, and for how long?

When does recess happen? (For example, before or after lunch.)

Where does recess usually take place? What effect, if any, does weather have on the location?

Whom do you spend time with during recess?

What do you like most about recess?

How would you improve recess if you could?

Try It! Want to change your state’s recess laws, or encourage lawmakers to create them? Write to your state’s elected officials. You can find contact information at usa.gov/elected-officials.

GET MORE AT TIME4KIDS.COM
8 QUESTIONS FOR ELLEN OH

Ellen Oh is a writer. In 2014, she cofounded We Need Diverse Books (WNDB). The group promotes books featuring characters from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. She spoke with TFK Kid Reporter Josh Lee.

1. Why do we need diversity in books?
Books are often our introduction to people and cultures different from our own. In this way, they teach us about empathy. That’s how to combat bigotry and hate.

2. When you were a kid, did you feel that you couldn’t relate to characters in books?
I didn’t find many characters who looked like me or shared my background. But I did relate to them in some ways. In A Wrinkle in Time [by Madeleine L’Engle], there’s a smart, nerdy book girl who’s a lot like me. But something was missing. The first time I saw myself in a book was life-transforming.

3. What was the life-changing book?
It was The Joy Luck Club, by Amy Tan. I saw a family that was like mine, talking about the immigrant experience. For a long time, I felt like an outsider. People would ask me, “Where are you from?” They thought I couldn’t be American because I didn’t look like them. Reading Tan’s book was the first time I felt like I belonged.

4. How did that influence your writing?
When I got older, there were more books being published that had characters like me. But there wasn’t a hero. There was no Katniss [of The Hunger Games] for Asians. I decided that if I couldn’t find those books, I would write my own.

5. What does WNDB do to promote diversity?
We give books to schools all over the country. We also have the Walter Award. It’s a celebration of the most outstanding diverse books.

6. Have you seen more diversity in books since you started WNDB?
Yes. There was a myth in publishing for a long time that books by and about people of color don’t sell. But look at books by Jason Reynolds, Nicola Yoon, Jacqueline Woodson, Kwame Alexander—there’s a market for all of them. This proves that people are hungry for these books.

7. Do you think a lack of diversity in books can discourage writers?
Absolutely. Seeing writers of color empowers young people.

8. What’s your advice for aspiring writers?
Read a lot of books. That will open up your world. Second piece of advice: Write. Don’t worry if it’s terrible. You can always revise. Just get those words on paper.

GET SMART

Smart-speaker use is growing. So are concerns about privacy.

If you walked by James Fasulo’s bedroom, in Queens, New York, you might hear the 8-year-old talking. You could think he was chatting with his 4-year-old sister, Anna. But James would probably be talking to his smart speaker. It’s an Echo Dot. “I use it daily,” he told TIME for Kids.

James often asks his Dot to tell jokes. He also asks it to play music. And his sister? “She asks for songs from Frozen,” he says.

In December 2017, there were about 67 million smart speakers in homes in the United States. A year later, the number was nearly 119 million. That’s according to a study by National Public Radio and Edison Research. “Families are interested in trying these products,” says Caroline Knorr of Common Sense Media. But with more kids using smart speakers, privacy worries are growing.

WHO’S THERE?
Smart speakers are devices such as Google Home and Amazon’s Echo. They give users access to a voice-activated digital assistant. Common Sense Media did a survey about smart speakers. They talked to more than 1,000 parents with kids ages 2 to 8.

The results were announced in March. Nearly half of the parents said their kids use the speakers. Half of those kids use them daily. Some parents report having turned off a smart speaker’s microphone. Why? About one-third of them say they did it because they didn’t trust the device. “A smart speaker might behave like a human in some ways,” says Florian Schaub. He is a professor. He works at the University of Michigan School of Information. “But that’s really a company collecting data about you. Everything you say to a smart speaker is recorded by these companies.”

The recordings are used to help companies personalize service and ads, Schaub says. If users don’t like this, he suggests muting the speaker when it’s not in use and setting privacy controls.

—By Allison Singer

A2 Power Words

bigotry noun: prejudice
diverse adjective: made up of things or people that are different from one another

READ ON: Students in Santa Paula, California, hold up Schomburg, a 2018 Walter Award winner.

TECHNOLOGY

THAT’S MY JAM According to a new survey by Common Sense Media, lots of kids are using smart speakers. Their most common request is for the devices to play music.
UglyDolls is a new animated musical film about a crew of quirky dolls. It was inspired by the popular toy line of the same name.

In the movie, the dolls live in Uglyville, a place where flaws are celebrated. But Moxy, a confident and curious pink doll, wants to learn about life outside her hometown. She and her friends leave Uglyville in search of adventure.

They discover a town called Perfection. It’s a flawless place that is home to conventionally beautiful dolls. Its ruler is Lou. He will do anything to get the UglyDolls to leave his town.

Singer KELLY CLARKSON (pictured) stars as the voice of Moxy. She told TFK Kid Reporter Minoo Jang that she was moved by the film’s message of self-acceptance. She hopes it helps kids see beauty in imperfection. “We’re under construction, all of us,” Clarkson says. “No one’s perfect, and that’s okay. Everybody counts, and everybody’s somebody. And that matters.” UglyDolls arrives in theaters May 3.

LIVING LEGENDS

I Am Hermes! opens on Mount Olympus, the cloud-covered home of the Greek gods. Hermes, the son of Zeus and Nymph Maia, has just been born. It’s not long before he says his first word: “Gimme!” That same day, the mischievous young god tricks a turtle out of its shell, invents the world’s first instrument, and steals a herd of enchanted cows from Apollo, god of poetry.

Greek mythology is a collection of stories. They were first told by the ancient Greeks around 2,700 years ago. Their myths helped them understand the world around them. I Am Hermes! is a graphic novel. It retells some of those stories. Author MORDICA GERSTEIN (pictured) told TFK that myths about Hermes and other Greek gods can even help us understand the world today. “These gods are still part of our lives and culture,” he says. —By Kio Herrera