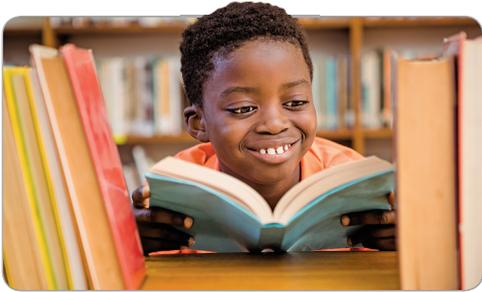




Part of the River Frome turned blue.

River turns bright blue

On 10 August, the Environment Agency (EA) said it was carrying out tests on part of the River Frome, in Somerset, after it turned bright blue. It is not yet clear what made the river change colour, but the EA suspects it may have been caused by pollution. It said that there have been no reports of dead wildlife in the river. The EA is carrying out an investigation to work out what happened.



Children's writers on top

Seven of the 10 most popular writers at the UK's libraries last year were children's authors, according to a new survey. The most borrowed author was James Patterson, who writes books for adults and children, but the next five all write for younger readers. They were Daisy Meadows (a name shared by four writers of the *Rainbow Magic* series), Adam Blade, Roald Dahl, Julia Donaldson and Francesca Simon. David Walliams and Roderick Hunt also featured in the top 10.



No coppers made last year

No new 1p or 2p coins were made in the UK last year. It was the first time in decades that the Royal Mint, which creates the UK's coins, decided not to make them. It said there were enough in circulation already, and decided not to make £2 pieces for the same reason. In 2018, the Government's financial department, the Treasury, found that six in 10 pennies are only used once in a transaction, then stashed away or lost. One in 12 are thrown straight in the bin.



Delays are announced at King's Cross station, in London.

One million affected by huge power cut in England and Wales

The UK Government has launched an investigation after almost one million people across England and Wales unexpectedly lost their electricity supply on 9 August. It was the biggest power cut for more than 10 years.

The power cut hit London and the south-east between 4.53pm and 5.21pm, and people in the Midlands, south-west England and Wales were left without electricity until after 6pm. The power cut caused chaos on the roads when traffic lights stopped working and there were delays and cancellations on at least 14 rail networks, affecting workers heading home. Train passengers were trapped on board services across the country for up to nine hours.

The power cut happened because two major power generators connected to the National Grid system suddenly shut down. The National Grid is the system that operates electricity and gas supplies across England, Scotland and Wales. It manages how much power is available in each

area, to make sure all parts of Britain have access to enough electricity and gas.

The power cut also affected patients in hospitals. A back-up generator at Ipswich hospital, which should have started supplying emergency power to some wards, failed to work as a result of the power cut. The local National Health Service organisation said patients were kept safe and cared for during the 15-minute period in which there was no electricity. Newcastle Airport also lost its power supply for a short time.

Reports suggest there have been three other events in the last few months that almost caused a power failure, raising concerns that something similar could happen again. The National Grid has said it will work with power companies to prevent power cuts.

The Government has set up an investigation into why the power cut happened, and an organisation that oversees energy in the UK, Ofgem, has demanded an urgent report on the situation.

LET THERE BE LIGHT
Before the National Grid was launched in the 1930s, electricity was very expensive. Powering five light bulbs for a day cost a week's wages for the average person.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Escaped ostrich on the run in China"
news.sky.com



Life without electricity

Read the article and then try the following activities...



Hold a debate

Power cuts like the one mentioned in the article show just how much we rely on electricity. To save power and broaden our minds, everyone should be made to spend at least two hours a day with all electrical appliances switched off, except for essentials like lights and fridges.

What do you think?

- Is it fair to tell people what to do?
- Is the climate emergency so important that we can't leave it up to individual choice?

Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

1 Write an acrostic poem about being stuck at a railway station during a power cut. Each line should start with a different letter from the words TRAIN, DELAYED or POWER CUT.

or

2 Write a set of between five and seven instructions about what you think you could do to prepare for a power cut where you live.

Investigate

We all rely on electricity but are we too dependent on it? Keep a mini-diary of how you spend a typical evening after school, including timings if you can. List every different thing you do, then draw a little lightbulb next to each one that needs electricity (including those that run on batteries because they will eventually run out of charge). Share your findings with your class. Are you surprised?