



## KIND COMEDIAN

The comedian John Bishop has donated 100 laptops to his former high school in Runcorn, Cheshire.



Many children don't have a laptop at home.

## Sport survey



A survey by Sport England has found that young people were less active during the 2019/20 academic year than in the previous one. Sport England says the decrease was caused by lockdown. Teenage boys were most affected, but girls became more active as they found alternative forms of exercise. However, children were more active overall than in 2017/18.

# Laptops for struggling students

Governments across the UK have promised laptops for disadvantaged students who are finding it difficult to learn from home.

## What's the problem?

Schools are currently closed across the UK in an effort to stop the spread of Covid-19 (the disease caused by the new coronavirus). Only children of key workers and those who are vulnerable are allowed to be taught in schools. Most pupils are instead attending classes online, but not everyone has access to a computer or a strong internet connection. According to new research, up to 1.78 million young people in the UK do not have a desktop, laptop or tablet. Pupils without laptops in England have been told that they

can go into school. However, teachers have warned that this could lead to hundreds of students being back in classrooms, and the virus spreading further.

## What is the Government doing to help?

On 12 January, it was announced that 300,000 extra laptops and tablets would be made available for disadvantaged students in England. This is on top of 700,000 devices that the UK Government says have already been delivered to schools. However, many teachers have reported difficulties in getting laptops, and say that some of the devices don't work. The Welsh government has said it will provide an extra 35,000 laptops to students, while the government of Northern Ireland says it is buying up to 10,000 extra

devices. In Scotland, local authorities have been given £45 million by the government to spend on hiring new teachers and buying more digital devices.

## How have people responded?

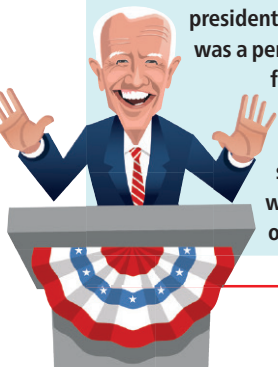
Many charities and businesses are donating old or unused laptops to schools. Public figures are supporting schools and asking the government to do more. England rugby player Maro Itoje has launched a campaign to get free laptops to every child who needs one. Itoje told *The Times* newspaper, "There is a digital divide that could have a big impact on the next generation." After the pandemic, Itoje wants the government in England to improve laptop access at schools. "In future, everyone needs a laptop," he says.



## WORD OF THE WEEK

### INAUGURATE

This week sees the inauguration, or formal admission to office, of Joe Biden as US president. In ancient Rome, an augur was a person who observed the flight of birds for omens about what to do in important matters. If the signs were good, a person would be "inaugurated" into office in a special ceremony.

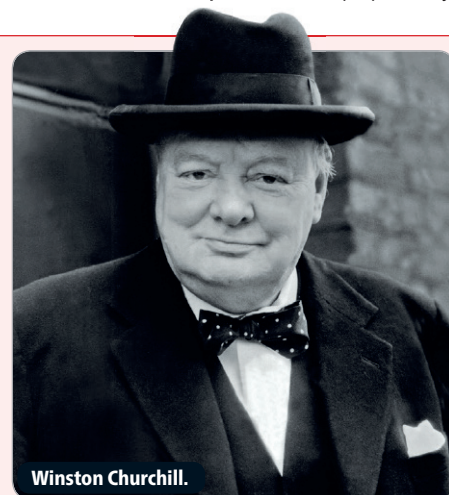


## THE WEEK IN HISTORY

### 24 January 1965

#### Former PM Winston Churchill dies

On 24 January 1965, Winston Churchill died at his home in London. Churchill was prime minister twice, from 1940 to 1945, and from 1951 to 1955. Churchill is credited with playing an important role in securing victory in the Second World War (1939–1945) for Great Britain and the Allies, which included France, the US and the Soviet Union (a former group of eastern European countries led by Russia). His funeral on 30 January at St Paul's Cathedral in London was broadcast live on the BBC.



Winston Churchill.

# Laptops for struggling students

Once you have read the article,  
try any of the following activities...



## Hold a debate

Lockdown has shown us just how useful computers are when it comes to learning. Of course, they are no substitute for in-class lessons with a qualified teacher, but they do offer great opportunities for supporting our learning. Therefore, shouldn't they be given free to each and every pupil? Surely it would make life a lot less complicated with things like homework. Also, it would ensure that new generations are better prepared for the world of work than ever before. Or is it silly to spend so much money on this, especially when many families already have all the technology they need? And what about when technology moves on and everything has to be replaced or upgraded? What do you think?

## Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

**1** Imagine you are someone from the ancient world who has just invented writing on paper or something similar, such as papyrus. Remember, up until this point, the only communication would have been through word of mouth or by carving on heavy stone or clay tablets. Write a persuasive advertisement, promoting your amazing new invention.

or

**2** How we write on things like text messaging applications is very different from how we would write more formally. For example, people often use emojis or abbreviations, such as 'ur' for your or 'btw' for by the way. Write a paragraph about a famous figure from history, first as if it were part of a report in a textbook and then translate it into a text as if you were messaging a good friend.

## Investigate

If you have access to both pencil and paper and an electronic device for writing, such as a word processor on a computer, time your writing speed. Find a section of text that is 100 words long and copy it out, first using one method, then the other. On which one were you faster? How many mistakes did you make? How easy was it to read what you had written, especially when using pencil and paper?