NEWS LESSON

Who Says a Rock Concert Has an Age Limit?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What makes a crowd feel exciting rather than overwhelming?
2. Would you try something new at 99 if everyone was watching?
3. Which age rule would you happily ignore?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**coordinated**	☐	A	not taking action, letting things happen to you
2	**spectacle**	☐	B	planned so that everyone involved works together
3	**archive**	☐	C	a collection of records kept for later
4	**decline**	☐	D	repeating the same words together in rhythm
5	**dependence**	☐	E	a gradual fall in strength or quality
6	**ambitions**	☐	F	the state of needing other people to manage
7	**chanting**	☐	G	a very impressive show or sight
8	**passive**	☐	H	strong wishes to achieve something

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

At a Brantley Gilbert concert in Texas in May 2026, 99-year-old Pauline Kana was passed over the crowd on a stretcher. Guinness World Records recognised her as the oldest person to crowd-surf.

1 At a Brantley Gilbert concert in Bellville, Texas, the crowd passed a specially prepared stretcher towards the stage. On it was 99-year-old Pauline Kana. At first she held the edges; then she began waving. The May 2026 moment was carefully arranged, and she appeared to be enjoying every second.

2 Guinness World Records subsequently recognised Pauline as the oldest person to crowd-surf, recording her age as ninety-nine years and 274 days. The attempt was coordinated rather than spontaneous, with the musician introducing the occasion and spectators supporting the stretcher. That distinction matters: it was a planned public event, not an invitation for older people to attempt unsafe stunts.

3 The adventure grew out of a remarkable creative partnership with her grandson, Ross Smith. Years earlier, Ross had filmed Pauline playing basketball with him, capturing a moment when she successfully blocked his shot. The clip caught on, and their humorous videos gradually attracted millions of followers. Rather than portraying Pauline as a passive grandmother watching younger people have adventures, the pair built their content around her mischievous personality and willingness to join in. Their age difference became a source of comedy, not a reason to keep them apart.

4 When Ross came up with the idea of a Guinness title, Pauline was apparently delighted to give it a try. On the day, she wore a T-shirt celebrating the pleasures of growing older and took her place on the stretcher. The crowd began chanting as she travelled over their heads; what could easily have become a nerve-racking experience turned into something resembling a triumphant parade. At the front, she joined Ross on stage and celebrated. Later, a recording showed her proudly displaying the certificate confirming her place in the record books.

5 Behind the entertaining spectacle sits a more serious question about the way society talks about ageing. Later life is frequently described in terms of decline, dependence and things that can no longer be done. Those realities matter, but they do not account for the whole person. Curiosity, humour and the desire to experience something new do not vanish on a particular birthday. Pauline's story is not proof that age imposes no limits, but a reminder that those limits need not decide somebody's ambitions or enjoyment of life.

6 By the time Pauline reflected on the adventure in October 2026, she had celebrated her hundredth birthday. Yet the real story reaches beyond the record itself. Ross and Pauline have spent years making each other laugh, taking on unfamiliar challenges and creating an archive of shared experiences. Their partnership turns a familiar family relationship into an ongoing collaboration, one in which both generations seem to benefit. The lasting image is not simply a grandmother being lifted through a crowd. It is a woman refusing to let other people's expectations decide when the fun should stop.

Sources: Guinness World Records. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The basketball clip came before the idea of a Guinness title. T F NG
2. Pauline was already a hundred years old when she crowd-surfed. T F NG
3. Pauline wore her T-shirt because Ross asked her to. T F NG
4. The writer suggests that ageing is often described in negative terms. T F NG
5. The writer believes the difficulties of ageing should be ignored. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

exceeds	imposes	linger	ongoing	portraying	spontaneous	subsequently	vanish

1. The wedding speech seemed _____ , but the groom had in fact rehearsed it for weeks.
2. She trained as a nurse and _____ became head of a large hospital.
3. Many films avoid _____ older characters as helpless or unhappy.
4. Some species of butterfly could _____ completely if their habitat is destroyed.
5. The new law _____ strict limits on how much water each household can use.
6. The _____ dispute between the two neighbours has lasted for years.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. The _____ of the signature was checked by an expert. (AUTHENTIC)
2. Her _____ to try new things surprised everyone. (WILLING)
3. Older drivers often face unfair _____ about their abilities. (ASSUME)
4. The festival has made the small town _____ famous. (INTERNATIONAL)
5. It would be _____ to ignore the safety risks of crowd-surfing. (RESPONSIBLE)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. At C1, many collocations are formal verb and noun pairs: strike a balance, pose a risk. Check the noun first, then choose the verb that fits formal writing.

awareness	balance	challenge	forge	pose	spark	wield

1. Campaigners hope the documentary will _____ outdated stereotypes about old age.
2. The council must strike a _____ between safety and freedom.
3. The announcement is likely to _____ fierce debate among voters.
4. Such a stunt would _____ a serious risk to untrained participants.
5. The charity runs a campaign to raise _____ of loneliness among older people.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What makes people say someone is "too old" for a good time?
2. Would the story be as interesting without the woman's age?
3. What would you want younger people to understand about growing older?

9 Role-play: a special day out for Gran

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the grandchild

You want to take your grandmother, who is eighty-five, to a live concert. She has said she would love to go. Explain your plan and answer your parent's worries.

Student B · the parent

You love your mother, but you are worried that a noisy concert will be too tiring. Ask at least two questions. You can say yes, no, or yes with a condition.

Useful phrases

I'd like to take Gran to a live concert.
She's really excited about it.
I'm worried it'll be too tiring for her.
Let's ask her what she wants.
How about we book seats near the exit?
I'm sure she'll be fine if we plan it carefully.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the parent agree, and what condition made the plan safe?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 G · 3 C · 4 E · 5 F · 6 H · 7 D · 8 A

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 spontaneous · 2 subsequently · 3 portraying · 4 vanish · 5 imposes · 6 ongoing

6 Word forms

1 authenticity · 2 willingness · 3 assumptions · 4 internationally · 5 irresponsible

7 Language focus

1 challenge · 2 balance · 3 spark · 4 pose · 5 awareness

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