

NEWS LESSON

A 99-Year-Old Above the Crowd

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	**stretcher**	☐	A	the people who watch or listen at an event
2	**audience**	☐	B	the way two people feel and act towards each other
3	**grandson**	☐	C	a dangerous or unusual thing that someone does to get attention
4	**stage**	☐	D	a long, flat bed used to carry a person
5	**stunt**	☐	E	the raised floor where performers stand
6	**attitude**	☐	F	the son of your son or daughter
7	**relationship**	☐	G	the way you think and feel about something
8	**supported**	☐	H	held up or helped so that something does not fall

3 Read

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

Pauline Kana was passed over the heads of a Texas audience, and into the record books.

1 At a concert in Texas, people looked up and saw something extraordinary. High above their heads was a woman of ninety-nine. She was lying on a special stretcher while the crowd gently passed her towards the stage. People cheered, music played and she began waving her arms. Her name was Pauline Kana, and she was about to become the oldest person ever to crowd-surf.

2 The record took place in May 2026 at a concert by American singer Brantley Gilbert. Pauline was ninety-nine years and 274 days old. Her grandson, Ross Smith, had helped organise the adventure. The audience knew what was happening, and Pauline was safely supported as she moved above several rows of fans. When she reached the front, she stood up and enjoyed the moment on stage.

3 For Pauline, doing unusual things was nothing new. Years earlier, Ross had filmed his grandmother playing basketball with him. The funny video caught people's attention online. They carried on making videos together, and millions of people began following their adventures. Pauline tried activities that many younger people would think twice about. She enjoyed making others laugh and showing that growing older did not have to mean giving up on fun.

4 Ross came up with the idea of breaking a world record. Pauline was happy to give it a go, although crowd-surfing is not normally associated with people approaching their hundredth birthday. She wore a cheerful T-shirt and was carefully placed on the stretcher. At first she held on tightly. Then, as the crowd moved her along, she relaxed and started to enjoy herself.

5 She earned an official Guinness World Records title. In October 2026, now aged one hundred, Pauline described her experience in the Guardian. The story was not just about doing something funny at a concert. It was also about a close relationship between a grandmother and her grandson, who had found an unusual way to spend time together and share their sense of humour.

6 Of course, nobody should try a dangerous stunt simply to prove that age does not matter. Pauline's attempt was planned, supported and organised for a record. But her attitude offers something worth thinking about. People often stop trying new things because they believe they are too old. Pauline decided to turn that idea on its head. She did not wait for a perfect age to have an adventure. At ninety-nine, she went for it.

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. Pauline's grandson helped to organise the adventure. T F NG
2. Pauline stayed lying down until the end of the concert. T F NG
3. Ross also tried crowd-surfing at the concert. T F NG
4. Pauline enjoyed the ride from the very first second. T F NG
5. Ross and Pauline made videos together before the record attempt. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

cheered	dangerous	gently	official	ordinary	relaxed	tightly

1. The crowd _____ loudly when the team scored the winning goal.
2. She held the rope _____ , with both hands, so it could not slip.
3. Crossing a busy road without looking is very _____ .
4. After a long walk, she sat down and felt calm and _____ .
5. Only the _____ results are published once the judges have checked them.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Pauline _____ a cheerful T-shirt at the concert. (WEAR)
2. When she reached the front, she _____ up. (STAND)
3. Millions of people _____ following their adventures. (BEGIN)
4. The funny video _____ people's attention online. (CATCH)
5. At first she _____ the sides of the stretcher. (HOLD)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A collocation is a pair of words that often go together. Learn the pair as one piece: break a record, pay attention.

attention	break	do	earn	have	humour	pass

1. Many athletes train for years to _____ a world record.
2. Pauline did not wait for a perfect age to _____ an adventure.
3. Many people _____ their living as street musicians.
4. Please pay _____ when the teacher is speaking.
5. My grandfather has a wonderful sense of _____ .

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 cheered · 2 tightly · 3 dangerous · 4 relaxed · 5 official

6 Verb forms

1 wore · 2 stood · 3 began · 4 caught · 5 held

7 Language focus

1 break · 2 have · 3 earn · 4 attention · 5 humour

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