NEWS LESSON

A World Record at a Rock Concert, Aged 99



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 a light bed used to carry a person
2	**spectators**	☐	B something difficult that you do successfully
3	**enormous**	☐	C people who watch an event
4	**lively**	☐	D extremely large
5	**curious**	☐	E a strong wish for something
6	**appetite**	☐	F groups of family members of different ages, such as grandparents and grandchildren
7	**achievement**	☐	G full of energy and fun
8	**generations**	☐	H eager to learn or find out about things

3 Read

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

Pauline Kana was ninety-nine years and 274 days old. Her grandson planned the attempt, as he has planned their adventures for years.

1 The crowd at a country-rock concert in Texas had already come for an exciting evening. Then the singer announced an unusual guest: a ninety-nine-year-old grandmother who was about to attempt a world record. Moments later, Pauline Kana was lifted above the audience on a specially prepared stretcher. As dozens of hands passed her towards the stage, she loosened her grip and started waving. The cheering grew louder. By the time she reached the front, Pauline had achieved something no other person her age had officially done.

2 The record-breaking moment took place in May 2026 at a Brantley Gilbert concert in Bellville, Texas. According to Guinness World Records, Pauline was ninety-nine years and 274 days old. She became the oldest person to crowd-surf, travelling over several rows of spectators before reaching the stage. It was carefully arranged with the organisers and the audience, rather than an elderly concertgoer suddenly deciding to jump into a crowd. Nevertheless, the sight of her floating above the fans was unforgettable.

3 The person behind the adventure was her grandson, Ross Smith. Their unusual partnership began years earlier when Ross filmed Pauline blocking one of his basketball shots. The video caught on, and the pair went on to build an enormous social media following. Their clips celebrate Pauline's lively personality and their ability to make each other laugh. Instead of treating their age difference as a barrier, they have turned it into the heart of their relationship.

4 When Ross suggested trying to set a Guinness record, Pauline was keen to give it a go. At the concert, she initially held tightly to the sides of the stretcher. Once she realised how carefully the crowd was supporting her, she became more confident and began enjoying the ride. Afterwards, she appeared on stage with Ross. Guinness later confirmed the achievement, providing a permanent record of an afternoon that might otherwise have seemed impossible.

5 The story touches on an uncomfortable assumption about old age. We tend to imagine that people become less curious, less adventurous and less willing to take risks as the years pass. Yet physical limits do not automatically remove somebody's sense of humour or appetite for new experiences. Pauline's example does not mean everyone should take up extreme activities. It simply challenges the expectation that later life must always be quiet and predictable.

6 By October 2026, Pauline had turned one hundred and was still sharing stories about her adventures. The most appealing part of the record may be the relationship that made it possible. Ross did not merely encourage his grandmother from a distance; he joined in, planned the attempt and celebrated beside her. What began with a silly basketball video developed into years of shared memories. Pauline's journey above a concert crowd was spectacular, but the connection between two generations was perhaps the real achievement.

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. Ross and Pauline's partnership began before the record attempt. T F NG
2. Pauline felt confident from the moment she was lifted. T F NG
3. Pauline practised being passed over a crowd before the concert. T F NG
4. The writer thinks the story challenges an idea about later life. T F NG
5. The writer says that everyone should try extreme activities. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

assumption **barrier** **confident** **initially** **permanent** **reluctant** **temporary** **unforgettable**

1. Seeing the northern lights for the first time was truly _____ .
2. The course was _____ difficult, but it got easier after a few weeks.
3. Language can be a _____ when you move to a new country.
4. It is a false _____ that you have to be young to learn a language.
5. The museum's _____ collection will stay on show for good.
6. After a few lessons, she felt more _____ that she could speak in public.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time she reached the front, Pauline _____ over several rows of fans. (TRAVEL)
2. The attempt _____ carefully with the organisers and the audience. (ARRANGE)
3. Ross suggested _____ to set a Guinness record. (TRY)
4. Since then, the pair _____ a large social media following. (BUILD)
5. As the crowd passed her along, Pauline _____ her grip and started waving. (LOOSEN)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Collocations are word partners that sound natural together. Try the pair in your head: you build an audience and share memories, but you do not make memories shared.

build	earn	extreme	gain	make	personality	share

1. Over many years, the chef managed to _____ a restaurant that everyone in town loved.
2. At the party, the old friends began to _____ memories of their school days.
3. A funny story can _____ even a tired person laugh.
4. She has a warm _____ and makes friends easily.
5. Skydiving and bungee jumping are _____ sports.

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 unforgettable · 2 initially · 3 barrier · 4 assumption · 5 permanent · 6 confident

6 Verb forms

1 had travelled · 2 was arranged · 3 trying · 4 have built · 5 loosened

7 Language focus

1 build · 2 share · 3 make · 4 personality · 5 extreme

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