

# www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

**The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **World's oldest person dies aged 115**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

13th September, 2009

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

The oldest person in the world has died in her sleep at the age of 115. Ms. Gertrude Baines from the USA had held the title for most of this year. She became the world's oldest person in January, following the death of Portuguese Maria de Jesus. She also died at the ripe old age of 115. Ms. Baines was born in Georgia in 1894. She grew up in the southern American state during the time of terrible racial discrimination against black people. She saw many changes in her life, including the civil rights movement that brought greater equality. She got married when she was very young and had a child when she was just fifteen. Gertrude received a Guinness World Records certificate on her 115th birthday.

Ms. Baines had such a long life because of her healthy lifestyle. The AFP news agency reported what she said to her doctor Charles Witt: "She told me that she owes her longevity to the Lord; that she never did drink, she never did smoke and she never did fool around." Dr. Witt said Gertrude had been "in excellent shape" just two days before her death. "She was mentally alert. She smiled frequently," he said. Ms Baines became famous in 2008 for voting for President Obama in the U.S. election. It was only the second time she had voted. The first was for John F. Kennedy in the 1960s. She lived to see 21 different American presidents. She told reporters she chose Mr. Obama "because he's for the coloured people".

# WARM-UPS

**1. OLD AGE:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about old age. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*old people / living to be 100 / racial discrimination / civil rights / changes / certificates / healthy lifestyle / longevity / smoking / fooling around / mentally alert / presidents*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. CHANGES:** If you lived to be 100, what changes would you see? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share your ideas. Change and share again.

Changes	Now	When (if) we're 100
English language		
McDonalds		
Water		
Computers		
Space		
Countries		

**4. RIPE OLD AGE:** Students A **strongly** believe it would be great to live to the ripe old age of 100; Students B **strongly** believe 100 is too old. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. DECADES:** What do people typically do in each of these decades? Did / Do / Will you do these things? Talk about this with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

- teenage years
- your 20s
- your 30s
- your 40s
- your 50s
- your 60s
- your 70s
- your 80s

**6. AGE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'age'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. The oldest person in the world died when she fell out of bed.       | T / F |
| b. She held the oldest person in the world title for less than a year. | T / F |
| c. The lady was born in the ex-Soviet republic of Georgia.             | T / F |
| d. The Guinness World Records group honored her when she turned 115.   | T / F |
| e. She believes God was responsible for her long life.                 | T / F |
| f. The lady said having many boyfriends made her life longer.          | T / F |
| g. She lived through 21 U.S. elections but only voted twice.           | T / F |
| h. She voted for Barack Obama because of his colourful character.      | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. held      | a. got        |
| 2. following | b. old age    |
| 3. terrible  | c. physician  |
| 4. equality  | d. selected   |
| 5. received  | e. had        |
| 6. doctor    | f. aware      |
| 7. longevity | g. very bad   |
| 8. alert     | h. well-known |
| 9. famous    | i. after      |
| 10. chose    | j. fairness   |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. died in                                | a. discrimination      |
| 2. for most                               | b. shape               |
| 3. the ripe old                           | c. of this year        |
| 4. terrible racial                        | d. lifestyle           |
| 5. the civil rights movement that brought | e. time she had voted  |
| 6. her healthy                            | f. her sleep           |
| 7. she owes her longevity                 | g. American presidents |
| 8. in excellent                           | h. age of 115          |
| 9. only the second                        | i. to the Lord         |
| 10. She lived to see 21 different         | j. greater equality    |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The oldest person in the world has died in her \_\_\_\_\_ at the age of 115. Ms. Gertrude Baines from the USA had held the \_\_\_\_\_ for most of this year. She became the world's oldest person in January, following the death of Portuguese Maria de Jesus. She also died at the \_\_\_\_\_ old age of 115. Ms. Baines was born in Georgia in 1894. She grew up in the southern American state \_\_\_\_\_ the time of terrible \_\_\_\_\_ discrimination against black people. She saw many changes in her life, including the civil \_\_\_\_\_ movement that brought greater equality. She got married when she was very young and had a child when she was \_\_\_\_\_ fifteen. Gertrude received a Guinness World Records \_\_\_\_\_ on her 115th birthday.

*racial*  
*title*  
*just*  
*during*  
*sleep*  
*certificate*  
*ripe*  
*rights*

Ms. Baines had such a long life because of her \_\_\_\_\_ lifestyle. The AFP news agency \_\_\_\_\_ what she said to her doctor Charles Witt: "She told me that she \_\_\_\_\_ her longevity to the Lord; that she never did drink, she never did smoke and she never did \_\_\_\_\_ around." Dr. Witt said Gertrude had been "in excellent \_\_\_\_\_" just two days before her death. "She was mentally alert. She smiled \_\_\_\_\_," he said. Ms Baines became famous in 2008 for voting for President Obama in the U.S. election. It was only the \_\_\_\_\_ time she had voted. The first was for John F. Kennedy in the 1960s. She lived to see 21 different American presidents. She told reporters she \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Obama "because he's for the coloured people".

*shape*  
*fool*  
*reported*  
*second*  
*chose*  
*healthy*  
*frequently*  
*owes*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

The oldest person in the world has \_\_\_\_\_ at the age of 115. Ms. Gertrude Baines from the USA \_\_\_\_\_ for most of this year. She became the world's oldest person in January, following the death of Portuguese Maria de Jesus. She also died \_\_\_\_\_ age of 115. Ms. Baines was born in Georgia in 1894. She grew up in the southern American state \_\_\_\_\_ of terrible racial discrimination against black people. She saw many changes in her life, \_\_\_\_\_ rights movement that brought greater equality. She got married when she was very young and had a child \_\_\_\_\_ fifteen. Gertrude received a Guinness World Records certificate on her 115th birthday.

Ms. Baines had \_\_\_\_\_ because of her healthy lifestyle. The AFP news agency reported what she said to her doctor Charles Witt: "She told me \_\_\_\_\_ longevity to the Lord; that she never did drink, she never did smoke and she never \_\_\_\_\_." Dr. Witt said Gertrude had been "in excellent shape" just two days before her death. "She \_\_\_\_\_. She smiled frequently," he said. Ms Baines became famous in 2008 for voting for President Obama in the U.S. election. It was only the second \_\_\_\_\_. The first was for John F. Kennedy in the 1960s. She lived to see 21 different American presidents. She told reporters she chose Mr. Obama "\_\_\_\_\_ coloured people".

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'old' and 'age'.

<b>old</b>	<b>age</b>
------------	------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sleep</li><li>• title</li><li>• ripe</li><li>• state</li><li>• rights</li><li>• fifteen</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• healthy</li><li>• owes</li><li>• fool</li><li>• alert</li><li>• second</li><li>• different</li></ul>
---	--

# STUDENT OLD AGE SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

Write five GOOD questions about old age in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



## OLD AGE DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'old age'?
- c) Would you like to live to be 115?
- d) How do you think Gertrude felt about being the world's oldest person?
- e) Should a country do something special to celebrate its oldest person?
- f) What can we learn from people who are so old?
- g) What do you think it would be like to live through and remember an entire century?
- h) What do you think Gertrude made of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
- i) What do you think her most memorable moments might have been?
- j) What Guinness World Records certificate would you like to receive?

*World's oldest person dies aged 115 – 13th September, 2009*  
More free lessons at [www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com)

---

## OLD AGE DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Will your lifestyle make you have a long life?
- c) What are the secrets to living a long time?
- d) Do you think people are happier in their teens or in their nineties?
- e) Are you in excellent shape?
- f) Why do you think Gertrude only voted twice in her life?
- g) What do you think you'll do in your old age?
- h) What do you think are the difficulties of being really old?
- i) How long do you think people will live 100 years from now?
- j) What questions would you like to have asked Gertrude?

*World's oldest person dies aged 115 – 13th September, 2009*  
More free lessons at [www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com) - Copyright Sean Banville 2009

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest\\_person.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090913-oldest_person.html)

The oldest person in the world has (1) \_\_\_\_\_ in her sleep at the age of 115. Ms. Gertrude Baines from the USA had held the title for most of this year. She became the world's oldest person in January, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the death of Portuguese Maria de Jesus. She also died at the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ old age of 115. Ms. Baines was born in Georgia in 1894. She grew up in the southern American state during the time of terrible (4) \_\_\_\_\_ discrimination against black people. She saw many changes in her life, including the civil rights movement that brought greater (5) \_\_\_\_\_. She got married when she was very young and had a child when she was just fifteen. Gertrude received a Guinness World Records certificate (6) \_\_\_\_\_ her 115th birthday.

Ms. Baines had such a long life (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of her healthy lifestyle. The AFP news agency reported what she said to her doctor Charles Witt: "She told me that she owes her (8) \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord; that she never did drink, she never did smoke and she never did (9) \_\_\_\_\_ around." Dr. Witt said Gertrude had been "in excellent shape" just two days before her death. "She was (10) \_\_\_\_\_ alert. She smiled frequently," he said. Ms Baines became famous in 2008 for voting for President Obama in the U.S. election. It was only the second time she (11) \_\_\_\_\_ voted. The first was for John F. Kennedy in the 1960s. She lived to see 21 (12) \_\_\_\_\_ American presidents. She told reporters she chose Mr. Obama "because he's for the coloured people".

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |               |              |               |                |
|-----|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) dead      | (b) death    | (c) dies      | (d) died       |
| 2.  | (a) following | (b) follows  | (c) followed  | (d) follower   |
| 3.  | (a) rip       | (b) ripen    | (c) ripe      | (d) ripped     |
| 4.  | (a) racists   | (b) racial   | (c) racially  | (d) racism     |
| 5.  | (a) equals    | (b) equality | (c) equal     | (d) equally    |
| 6.  | (a) in        | (b) at       | (c) on        | (d) by         |
| 7.  | (a) because   | (b) due      | (c) so        | (d) reason     |
| 8.  | (a) length    | (b) long     | (c) longing   | (d) longevity  |
| 9.  | (a) idiot     | (b) stupid   | (c) silly     | (d) fool       |
| 10. | (a) mental    | (b) mentally | (c) mentality | (d) mental age |
| 11. | (a) had       | (b) have     | (c) having    | (d) has        |
| 12. | (a) differ    | (b) differs  | (c) different | (d) difference |

World's oldest person dies aged 115 – 13th September, 2009

More free lessons at [www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com) - Copyright Sean Banville 2009



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about old age. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. OLD AGE:** Make a poster about old age. What are the good and bad things? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. WORLD'S OLDEST:** Write a magazine article about being the oldest person in the world. Include imaginary interviews with that person and a 5-year-old.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a 100-year-old person. Ask him/her three questions about old age. Give him/her three pieces of advice on how he/she can help the world. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. T      f. F      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. held      | a. had        |
| 2. following | b. after      |
| 3. terrible  | c. very bad   |
| 4. equality  | d. fairness   |
| 5. received  | e. got        |
| 6. doctor    | f. physician  |
| 7. longevity | g. old age    |
| 8. alert     | h. aware      |
| 9. famous    | i. well-known |
| 10. chose    | j. selected   |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. died in                                | a. her sleep           |
| 2. for most                               | b. of this year        |
| 3. the ripe old                           | c. age of 115          |
| 4. terrible racial                        | d. discrimination      |
| 5. the civil rights movement that brought | e. greater equality    |
| 6. her healthy                            | f. lifestyle           |
| 7. she owes her longevity                 | g. to the Lord         |
| 8. in excellent                           | h. shape               |
| 9. only the second                        | i. time she had voted  |
| 10. She lived to see 21 different         | j. American presidents |

## GAP FILL:

### World's oldest person dies aged 115

The oldest person in the world has died in her **sleep** at the age of 115. Ms. Gertrude Baines from the USA had held the **title** for most of this year. She became the world's oldest person in January, following the death of Portuguese Maria de Jesus. She also died at the **ripe** old age of 115. Ms. Baines was born in Georgia in 1894. She grew up in the southern American state **during** the time of terrible **racial** discrimination against black people. She saw many changes in her life, including the civil **rights** movement that brought greater equality. She got married when she was very young and had a child when she was **just** fifteen. Gertrude received a Guinness World Records **certificate** on her 115th birthday.

Ms. Baines had such a long life because of her **healthy** lifestyle. The AFP news agency **reported** what she said to her doctor Charles Witt: "She told me that she **owes** her longevity to the Lord; that she never did drink, she never did smoke and she never did **fool** around." Dr. Witt said Gertrude had been "in excellent **shape**" just two days before her death. "She was mentally alert. She smiled **frequently**," he said. Ms Baines became famous in 2008 for voting for President Obama in the U.S. election. It was only the **second** time she had voted. The first was for John F. Kennedy in the 1960s. She lived to see 21 different American presidents. She told reporters she **chose** Mr. Obama "because he's for the coloured people".

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - a    3 - c    4 - b    5 - b    6 - c    7 - a    8 - d    9 - d    10 - b    11 - a    12 - c