

My daughter and I missed out on tickets to Taylor Swift – but I'm not sorry

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

- a. These artists are among the 30 bestselling female singers of all time, but who is the most successful of the six and the least successful? Put them in order from 1 to 6.

Adele

Ariana Grande

Pink

Rihanna

Shakira

Taylor Swift

2 Key words

- a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

bedridden

catheter

diehard

eagerly

elated

etched

flashback

inadvertently

overwhelmed

revel in

seminal

solace

stratospheric

wing woman

1. If you do something _____, you do not do it deliberately, and you do not realise what you are doing.
2. A(n) _____ fan is an extremely loyal fan.
3. A(n) _____ (or man) is someone who helps or protects someone close to them.
4. If you _____ something, you enjoy it very much.
5. A(n) _____ is a very clear memory of something that happened in the past.
6. _____ success is at a very high level indeed.
7. A(n) _____ book or album is new and different and influences other literature or music that comes after it.
8. If you are _____, you are unable to get out of bed because you are too weak or ill.

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9. A(n) _____ is a thin tube put into your body to remove a liquid such as urine.
10. If you are _____, your emotions are affected in a very powerful way.
11. If you are _____, you are extremely happy and excited.
12. If something is _____ on your mind or in your memory, you can remember it very clearly.
13. _____ is something that makes you feel better when you are sad or upset.
14. If you do something _____, you do it with great enthusiasm.

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Our shared memories – the concerts, favourite songs, matching outfits – will last forever

Bridget Robertson

19 February, 2024

- 1 It is 10.51 am on Sunday morning and I have just a few minutes to try to secure Taylor Swift Eras tickets for her last show in Melbourne. I am watching the clock count down on the Ticketek Marketplace website, refreshing the browser every few seconds. Next to the last date for the Melbourne leg of the tour, two greyed-out words state “none available”.
- 2 Ticketek allows 10 minutes before the website times out. I have discovered it is more like 15 minutes and, in that time, you are desperately hoping someone out there is selling tickets at the precise moment you want to buy them. It is a narrow window and, so far, I am out of luck.
- 3 Taylor Swift came into my life inadvertently through my daughter. She was a diehard Swiftie from the age of 10. As the only super fan in her friendship group, I became her wingwoman and had no choice but to get on board. Taylor became not just a constant in both of our lives but the thing that brought us together during my daughter’s teenage years. There was the 1989 concert with matching outfits and the Reputation tour, where we somehow managed to get seats seven rows from the front. I will never forget the moment when Taylor liked one of my daughter’s Instagram posts. The whole family revelled in that achievement for days.
- 4 This week, as I have tried to get tickets, I have had many flashbacks to those Swiftie years. The obsession really took hold when the album *1989* was released. My daughter was 11 and just about to start high school. As a music-loving family, *1989* was an album we all enjoyed listening to; even my indie-music-loving partner loved it. *1989* was a groundbreaking record for Taylor, launching her into a stratospheric pop career. It was also a seminal album for me and my family beyond the music.
- 5 Not long after the release of *1989*, I was diagnosed with cervical cancer and had to undergo major surgery. After spending two days in the ICU and being bedridden for another three, I was instructed to get up and get moving. I vividly remember wheeling my catheter bag and vital signs monitor down the hallway of the hospital, listening to Taylor’s ‘Out of the Woods’ on repeat. The line “20 stitches in a hospital room” resonated on a deep level.
- 6 At the time, I was in the “in-between” stage that a lot of cancer patients find themselves in, where you don’t know what lies ahead. Thankfully, the surgery went well, and the margins were good. A few weeks after the surgery, I was told that I was one of the lucky ones. Three months later, I was sitting on a white plastic chair at AAMI Park, seeing Taylor in concert at the 1989 tour. I distinctly remember feeling overwhelmed with gratitude at how fortunate I was to be doing this with my daughter. We were both elated and it is an evening that is forever etched in my memory.
- 7 My daughter is now 20. She moved out of home six months ago and is working hard to save money to travel. She is a clever and confident young woman who knows herself and is also incredibly kind and thoughtful. As a parent, I would love to take the credit but I know that it was not all me. I am certain that I have Taylor Swift to thank for being a great role model and a solace to her when she needed it most.
- 8 Over the last couple of years, my daughter’s Swift obsession seemed to have lessened as she became an adult. I asked her recently if I could get tickets to the Eras concert; would she want to go? Her response was, “Of course. Once a Swiftie, always a Swiftie!”
- 9 It is now 20 minutes after 12pm on Sunday afternoon. The concert starts in six hours, and I have missed the 12pm deadline for resale. But I am not sorry. This week, as I have tried to get tickets, I have had many flashbacks to those Swiftie years. When the concert starts, I will be reminiscing about all those times spent with my daughter, making outfits and decorating signs, listening to Taylor in the car on the way home from school, and eagerly waiting for new songs to drop. I will be thinking about all the young

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girls attending the concert with their parents. Many of them will be seeing Taylor for the first time, and I will be quietly ecstatic that they are making memories that will last a lifetime.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. Why did the author refresh the browser every few seconds?
2. How long do you have before the ticket sales website times out?
3. What brought the author and her daughter together during the latter's teenage years?
4. What 'achievement' did the whole family enjoy for many days?
5. Why was *1989* a seminal album for the author and her family 'beyond the music'?
6. In what sense was the author 'one of the lucky ones'?
7. What is etched in the author's memory?
8. Why would the author like to thank Taylor Swift?
9. Why has her daughter's obsession with Taylor Swift lessened?
10. What will the author be doing when the concert starts?

4 Key language

a. Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the noun phrases in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- | A | B |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 1. have | the credit for something |
| 2. refresh | a deadline |
| 3. launch | flashbacks |
| 4. undergo | a web browser |
| 5. take | surgery |
| 6. miss | his/her career |

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b. Use some of the phrases from task A to complete the sentences. You may have to change the form of the words.

1. This album really _____ as a solo artist.
2. When I was younger, I had to _____ for a broken shoulder.
3. My boss _____ for the new product idea the whole team had developed together.
4. She couldn't participate in the competition because she _____ to submit her application.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "Once a Swiftie, always a Swiftie!"
- "You often need luck rather than talent to become a superstar."
- "Songs remind us of people and places."

6 In your own words

- a. Use an internet search engine to find information about the most successful singers (male or female) or groups of 2023 in terms of worldwide sales or streams. Find out when they released their first album, where they come from, and how many albums they have sold to date.
- b. Report your findings to the class.