

Kindergarten, 1st grade

Have you ever pretended to play an instrument?

How would you play the piano?



How would you play the drums?

How would you play the guitar?



When you pretend to play the guitar, it's called "air guitar." You listen to the music and move your hands. You do the best you can. You try to make it look real.

There is a contest to see who can play the best air guitar. People come from far away to play and to watch the performers. It is a fun and silly show.

Would you like to go to the contest? How could you be a good performer? How could you be a good audience member?

2nd grade, 3rd grade

*Read the story and answer the questions.*

### **Who is the best air guitar player in the world?**

Who can play the best on a guitar no one can see? 37 air guitarists from 12 countries got on stage to find out.

The 20th Air Guitar World Contest was in Finland. It started as a joke with other silly summer games.



Air guitar is when you pretend to play an invisible guitar. You listen to the music and move your hands like you are playing the guitar. You do the best you can. You try to make it look real.

Zac Monro is the winner from England. He said he likes to watch the other people play. On stage, he is called, "The Magnet."

Sabrina Schramm is the winner from Germany. Her nickname is, "Lady Liberty." She said she was nervous because she really wanted to win.

The mayor in Finland likes the contest. He said it is a fun and silly show for people to come see. People come from all over the world to watch and to compete. The mayor said they want to keep it going as long as they can.

1. What country is the air guitar contest in?
2. Who is the winner from England?
3. Would you like to be in the air guitar contest? Why or why not?

4th grade, 5th grade

## **Who is the world's best on air guitar?**

By Matti Huuhtanen

Who can play the wildest on an instrument that no one can see? A record 30 air guitarists from a dozen countries jammed on a stage in northern Finland to answer just that question.

The 20th Air Guitar World Championships included 30 "dark horses", or competitors, hoping to advance to the final. They joined seven national champions who automatically qualified.

The competition was started as a joke by musician from Oulo. It added to the small Nordic nation's reputation as an inventor of offbeat summer events. There's also the "mosquito slapping" and "wife carrying" competitions. Air guitar has gradually spread worldwide. National events are held annually in several countries.

The 2002 champion, London architect Zac Munro, returned after a break of 13 years. He sought to rekindle that "special flame that breaks the mundane." But he admitted he no longer felt a need to win. "It's a great crowd and it's just good to be here among all these people who enjoy doing this crazy thing," said Munro. The air guitarist goes by the stage name "The Magnet." All the same, he said, he'd like to be in the final "instead of just watching."

Germany's national champion is Sabrina "Lady Liberty" Schramm from Munich. She made the final. But she was still nervous. She wrung her hands as she declared she "yearns to win." She caught the competition bug when she finished ninth in Oulu in 2014.

"I was brought up on rock music. I just love it," she said. "When I saw a local air guitar competition in my home town, I thought that's the most crazy thing you can do. So I just had to do it."

Schramm faced tough competition from Nanami "Seven Seas" Nagura from Japan, who won last year at the age of 18. The current U.S. champion is New Yorker Matt "Airistotle" Burns.

Oulu's mayor was enthusiastic. He described the event as "creative craziness." It has become part of the image of Finland's northernmost city.

Oulu is a high-tech hub. It provided a large workforce for Nokia before it sold its ailing smartphone division to Microsoft. "It plays a vital role in our dynamic society and our ecosystem. It's a city of young people with an average age of 37, which needs this kind of innovative thinking," Matti Pennanen said. "We want to keep it going for as long as possible."

### Air Guitar Article Questions

1. How many air guitarists competed in the 20th world championship?
2. How was the competition started?
3. How did Sabrina Schramm get interested in air guitar competition?
4. What is the host city for the competition? Does the city like having it there?
5. What do you think about the competition? Is it a waste of time? Why or why not?