

LEARN, LAUGH AND LIVE!



**The University
of the Third Age**



Meet people, learn new skills and have fun!

If you are no longer in full-time employment or raising a family, a new world of opportunity awaits at your local U3A. Let me explain.

At a typical U3A our members take part in activity groups doing everything from art to zoology, with walking, photography and Scrabble and pretty much everything else in between.

There is a U3A near you, perhaps meeting in a local school hall or community centre. In this booklet we describe some of the activities you may find there.

They range from learning based on traditional subjects, studying local history and the environment, creative pursuits, games and various kinds of physical exercise.

Above all, the U3A exists to help you make friends, develop your interests and enjoy yourself.

Come and learn with us and have fun at the University of the Third Age!

Pam Jones
Chairman, The Third Age Trust



What is U3A?

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a nationwide organisation based on local groups providing opportunities for retired and semi-retired people to come together and develop their interests.

We're not a university in the traditional sense. We don't study for qualifications. We just enjoy taking part and meeting people.

What do we mean by the third age? It's the time after you've finished working or raising a family, following your first age of childhood dependence and your second age of full-time work or parental responsibility. This is when you can pursue your interests at leisure and really make the most of life.

It's all voluntary — members share their knowledge and experience with others in interest groups, running informal activity sessions covering a wide range of subjects and activities.

There are learning opportunities, outdoor pursuits, social events and outings on offer at a typical U3A, including anything from bridge to gardening to theatre trips.

We have over 1,000 U3As throughout the UK with more than 380,000 members, and we're growing fast!

"With U3A I really began learning, and I've been able to pass on what I've learned to others"



THINKING

Most U3As have academic interest groups where members learn about history or maths, while others study chemistry or modern languages.

Some take up subjects they haven't touched since their schooldays. Many turn to interests they have always wanted to pursue but have never had the opportunity.

Learning a new subject or brushing up on your existing knowledge can rekindle your curiosity and give you a new lease of life.

There are no entrance qualifications, set curriculum or examinations, and study groups are convened by members who volunteer to pass on their valuable knowledge to others. There is a well-stocked resource centre at our national office to support anyone willing to convene a group.

So if you want to study Arabic, philosophy or science, or if you have useful knowledge to pass on, now's your chance!



LOOKING

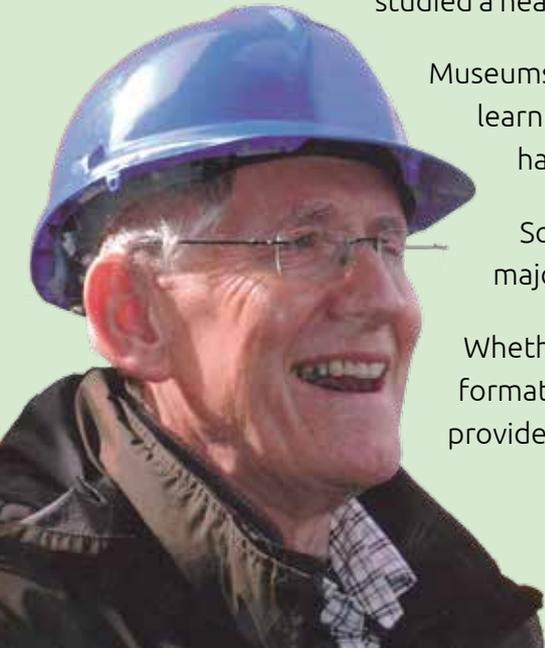
Many people are interested in their local area where they may have lived for many years. The U3A gives them the chance to find out more about it.

This could include investigating local history or geographical features. One U3A group studied a nearby estuary, while another looked at the history of shopping in their town!

Museums, libraries and historical societies are always happy to help with shared learning projects involving either the whole U3A group or individuals who may have a particular interest.

Sometimes members from neighbouring U3As join forces to investigate a major topic.

Whether you want to study the origins of your town, find out about local rock formations, or simply want to know more about a street name, the U3A can provide the opportunity to do so.



"As a U3A member, time passes so quickly you can't be bored"





"U3A gave me a chance to expand my interests and learn in a very convivial atmosphere"

MAKING

Being creative is important to U3A members. Some make music, others paint and draw. Drama is popular as well as sculpture and woodcarving.

Creative writing is a favourite and a wide range of handicrafts are practised. Knitting and needlework often provide items for local hospitals and charities and members enjoy passing on these skills to young people.

Performing for other members or the community is a well-supported U3A activity, including everything from playing music to reading poetry and producing plays.

Creating something worthwhile is satisfying and gives you a sense of achievement. And if you can provide others with a work of art to appreciate, a useful item or an enjoyable performance, everyone gains.



PLAYING

It's not all hard work being a U3A member. There is plenty of time for games, which are just as useful as academic studies for keeping you active and alert.

Bridge is very popular. Scrabble, chess and mah jong are favourites among the board games, and there are groups for draughts, Monopoly and Rummikub. There may even be a snakes and ladders group somewhere.

All these games can be played in people's homes and everyone can enjoy them. The host or hostess is often someone who can't easily travel to meetings.

Games are great for U3A members because they are very social activities — you can chat with your fellow players, develop new friendships and feel that sense of comradeship that comes with a shared experience.

Like all U3A activities, you are welcome to suggest a new group to do something you particularly enjoy and think others will want to take part in.



"I could not imagine my life without the fun and friendship I've had with U3A"



"With the confidence I gained by joining U3A I decided to attempt a lifetime's dream: sailing on a tall ship as part of the crew"



DOING

Physical activity is important to stay fit and active — but it's much more fun with other people who share common interests.

Indoors and outdoors, U3A members get involved in all sorts of sports, games and exercises. They know that keeping fit will help them enjoy life more.

There are many U3A walking groups who like to explore the countryside at a leisurely pace. Bowls and boules, ballroom dancing, swimming and skittles are also popular.

Sports and other physical pursuits also provide opportunities for competitions which can be organised among neighbouring U3A groups or with local enthusiasts.



What makes U3A different?

The University of the Third Age is an informal, co-operative organisation. We draw on the strengths and enthusiasms of all our members who share their knowledge and skills with one another.

- There is no curriculum
- There are no entrance qualifications
- There are no examinations or certificates
- There is no U3A campus

Find out more

There is a U3A near you. Visit our website to find out, or contact the National Office.

 020 8466 6139

 info@u3a.org.uk

 www.u3a.org.uk

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*"I believe in U3A's
life-transforming
capacity"*



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