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Spanish Groups u3a

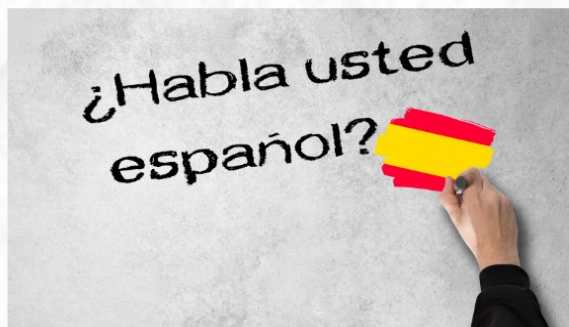
Welcome to September!

September is often a new beginning when new u3a members join our Spanish groups. It is also a time when existing members face a new challenge.

With this in mind, it's a good opportunity to share what we've been up to on our travels over the summer. If you've travelled to a Spanish-speaking country, you may have returned with a memory or two to share with your group. You may have prepared a report on your travels. Both are excellent methods for sharing experiences and expanding cultural knowledge together in your groups. With the arrival of September we welcome a new year full of opportunities to continue enjoying and learning the wonderful Spanish language.

I hope you enjoyed a relaxing summer and return to our newsletter with enthusiasm. This month, I've put together a mix of activities that will cover a range of Spanish activity along with some ideas for you to try with your groups during the autumn. Don't forget, if you have any news to share through this newsletter, please email me at the email address mentioning your group. Together we create a supportive environment where we all learn and grow. I wish you a happy start to the autumn season!

Best wishes
Sandra Dean, Spanish Subject Adviser



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**A Festival of Learning
and Fun and a Summer
School**

The u3a's First National Gathering

The u3a movement hosted its first-ever national festival this year! Held in the historic city of York from July 18th to 20th, the u3a Festival '24 promised to be a vibrant celebration of learning, activity, and fun.

I'd already offered to run several sessions sharing my love of games to help with Spanish and I had a full group on the first morning. I also met up with several members of the national AI team from West Midlands, Suffolk and the south. We met many members who were fascinated and curious about the world of AI and I was able to tell them all about how AI is enhancing language learning in some of the u3a groups that I have the privilege of working with.

Back home by late Saturday afternoon I was looking forward to a brief rest before setting out again for more Spanish at the Yorkshire and Humber Summer School during the following week.



sandrawwu3a@gmail.com

YAHR Summer School

Yorkshire and Humber Region once again played host to a brilliant summer school over three days in late July. In the comfort of the picturesque Hawkhills in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and close to the Howardian Hills, delegates were immersed in a diverse range of subjects, from the intricacies of the English language to the vastness of cosmology. The opportunity to explore new interests and connect with like-minded individuals created a truly enriching atmosphere.

I once again joined the Spanish group ably led by Hazel Ward (Swanland u3a). This year the theme was Holiday Spanish and a group of delegates met on the first day all keen to enjoy the experience and improve our Spanish into the bargain.

The two days raced by and we spent the final morning sharing elements of what each group had been doing over the previous few days. Our Spanish group put on a short performance drafted by Janet Erridge (Rotherham u3a) which seemed to take its inspiration from a Fawlty Towers sketch except to find it was set in the Hotel Gran via, somewhere in a Spanish location.



Members of the Basic Holiday Spanish Group demonstrating a little Spanish flair

Some Ideas to Try in September

Remember that we all get very busy over the summer and it's a time to catch up with family or to take a break from our regular groups. Be realistic as some of us may not have spent much time concentrating on our language work.



Getting festive at YAHR Summer School

Beginners Groups

Start with basic greetings: Common phrases, and simple vocabulary. Use word matching games of vocabulary that you want to rehearse.

Focus on the sounds of the Spanish language: Use songs or poems to help with pronunciation and rhythm. Go over the alphabet and the sounds of Iberian and Latin Spanish selecting the most appropriate for your group. Welcome in new members by giving them support with this to get them off to a flying start.

Role-Playing: Create scenarios like ordering food in a restaurant or asking for directions. This helps members practice conversational Spanish in a fun and practical way.

Online Resources: Share useful websites and YouTube channels for learning Spanish. Encourage members to explore these resources between meetings.

Conversation Partners: Pair up members to practice speaking Spanish with each other. This can be done during meetings or away from the group.

More Advanced Groups (Intermediate Plus)

Cultural Presentations: Have members prepare and present on different aspects of Spanish-speaking cultures, such as current affairs, history, art, or festivals.

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Some Ideas to Try in September

Role-Playing Complex Scenarios: Create more complex role-playing scenarios, such as business meetings or travel emergencies, to practice advanced conversational skills.

Creative Writing: Encourage members to write short stories, essays, or poems in Spanish. Share and discuss these writings in the group.

Visits to Spanish Cultural Events: Attend Spanish cultural events, exhibitions, or festivals together. This can provide real-world language practice and cultural exposure.

Conversation Cafés: Organize informal meet-ups at cafés where members can chat in Spanish. This relaxed setting can encourage spontaneous conversation. Whatever you choose to try remember to have fun.



A study in Language

What is a Romance Language?

It's a group of languages that emerged from Vulgar Latin, the common spoken Latin of the Roman Empire. Some of the most widely spoken include Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian. Others include Catalan, Occitan and Galician.

What's the Most Widely spoken Language amongst u3a members' groups?

French has always been a favourite however Spanish has continued to increase in popularity. It's difficult to know the exact number of groups across the entire u3a network as there is no definitive list. Groups form and dissolve regularly making it challenging for the u3a to be accurate. Some groups have been in existence for many years while other u3as offer language short courses which begin and end frequently.

What Languages Are Offered by the u3a?

The range of languages covered extends beyond the traditional European languages to include less commonly studied ones such as Japanese, Mandarin, Arabic and Russian. German which is not a romance language has always been popular in the past but is becoming less so nowadays.

How to Find a Language Group Near You?

If you're interested in joining a language group the best approach is to:

Check your local u3a: Most u3a groups have online lists about existing groups or can help you to start one.

Contact your local u3a coordinator: they will be able to provide further information on how to locate your local group.

Can't Find a Group? Try IGO

Interest Groups Online (IGO) is an online u3a community that gives access to groups, talks and courses for an additional £12 per year. IGO currently has groups for:-

French, German, Latin, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish and Welsh. While it might not be your preferred method of learning a language as you don't get any face-to-face opportunity to practice, it can help in the short-term if your local group is full or you can't get to a group in your area. To find out more visit the u3a website or email interestgroupsonline@u3a.org.uk

Need More Ideas?

Subject advisers have plenty of ideas to try in their area. They'll always be willing to share tips on new things to try in your groups. They will be able to give you ideas on how to start a group or how to try something new.

Spanish Subject Advice

You can contact me at :-
sandrawwu3a@gmail.com

or visit my Spanish Subject Adviser page at
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learn/subjectadvice/spanish>

