

\A GENERAL GUIDE TO BOOKS AND MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

U3a Resource Centre

Language learning materials can be borrowed from the u3a Resource Centre (020 8315 0199) for inspection. They only stock courses with CD's, DVD's or videos, not books alone. They will send you their languages catalogue and it is also online on the National Website. Go to u3a.org.uk then Resources.

Useful bookshops

You can get access to a vast range of language learning books and other materials from a couple of specialised bookshops in London. They have a catalogue of language learning materials for ages over 11 and adults. This is on line or they will post one to you. They will also post items to you or you could then order them through Amazon which may be cheaper. Their catalogues are well annotated as to content, learning style and level.

1. The European Bookshop, 5 Warwick Street, London, W1B 5LU Tel: 020 7734.5259 email: mrg@esb.co.uk Their complete range is online at www.europeanbookshop.com. Their list contains details of courses with CD's, for self-study and classroom use at all levels, study books about civilisation and films with accompanying activities, graded readers, books with parallel text and dictionaries.

You may be able to get inspection copies by mentioning the University of the Third Age. Speak to the Marketing department on 01242 245252.

2. Grant and Cutler is the department of Foyles Bookshop which deals with all languages. 113-119 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0EB Tel: 020.7440.3248 grantandcutler@foyles.co.uk www.grantandcutler.com They also do a fully comprehensive catalogue of language learning materials and will send you one. It is also online. They also do a special New Fiction catalogue.

Finding the level of your group

Books and other teaching materials are often marked with a level, such as A1, B2, C2, etc. This refers to the language levels as described by the Common European Framework of Reference. This has a description of what you should know and be able to do in a language at each level and will help you select materials. This is a separate document which can be viewed on this site (European Language Levels) or can be sent to you by post. Contact the Languages Adviser and send your postal address..

Learning approach

Many books or materials these days are based on a functional approach. This means learning to use the language to do various things, like introducing yourself or asking for information, or through ideas like "booking accommodation". There is an emphasis on learning "chunks" and phrases through listening and repetition. (Marked F in our lists) For those who like a more structured, grammatical approach there are still some course books based on a step-by-step knowledge of grammar and learning vocabulary, (Marked G) as well as straight-forward grammar books.

Further details of the materials below will be found on leaflets for individual languages

Course Books

These are complete courses which groups can work through from beginning to end. They cover all four language skills (Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening) with activities for groups and pairs and give you all the materials you might need. They usually have an accompanying CD, and sometimes a separate workbook for homework and a teachers' guide. This kind of whole package can be expensive but parts can be bought separately.

Graded Readers

These are books in which the vocabulary used has been limited to a certain level, eg. 600 words, 1200 words, 2000 words etc. Some are specially written and some are short versions of classics. Some have accompanying CD, activities and exercises

Parallel Texts

There are also books in which the text is printed in English on one side of the page and the foreign language in the other. Classics are often printed in this way.

Magazines

There are some excellent specialised language magazines, some of which come with a CD of native speakers reading the text. Some of them come out six times a year with topical subjects. They are expensive (eg. £99 a year) but there is a vast amount of material in them which would last well over a year and the cost could be shared out. Some contain comprehension exercises. Details are on the leaflets dealing with individual language materials (eg. German, Italian, French)

On line

There is a vast amount of learning material on line now, ranging from self study courses (which could be used by groups who have no official teacher) to authentic materials from TV channels abroad and specialised ones like "The News in Slow French/Italian/Spanish" Subscription prices vary.

Authentic Materials

It is a good idea to insist that any member of the group travelling to countries where the language you are studying is spoken brings back leaflets, booklets, magazines or even a collection of public notices they have seen. These can provide the basis for some amusing and useful sessions.

