u3a
Learn, laugh, live

London Region of U3As

Online Talks
Jan-Mar 2025
17.30-18.30 (Log on from 17.00)

on Zoom

To register please click on the links for the talks that you are interested in below
One application only per person per talk.
After registration you will automatically receive a Booking Confirmation email.
Please retain this as a reminder of your booking details.

Two days before the event you will be sent an email with the Zoom joining instructions.
NB: If you think you have not received either the booking confirmation or Zoom meeting link,
please check your spam/junk folder before emailing the contact below.
Further information: Bookings.lru3a@gmail.com

January **Monday 6th** 17.30-18.30 Log on from 17.00	Catherine Stevenson: **Leonardo da Vinci: would he have made a good u3a member?** This presentation will explore Leonardo's incredible range of skills and talents, from his innovative designs for machines to his groundbreaking studies of human anatomy. We'll delve into his remarkable artistic techniques and examine how he shared his knowledge with others through his writings and lectures. However, what makes Leonardo truly remarkable is his commitment to lifelong learning, always seeking to improve and expand his knowledge. This presentation will ask you, 'Would Leonardo da Vinci have been a good u3a member?' We'll also consider what we can learn from his approach to learning, creativity and curiosity. Catherine's passion for art history, history and the humanities began in her childhood. Actively involved in the u3a, she served as the chair of Newcastle u3a for six years and currently leads two groups as well as two IGO groups alongside three informal networks. Her presentation experience spans all levels of u3a as well as other organizations. She is renowned for her animated presentations. Catherine is a volunteer for Tyne and Wear Museums, serving as a tour guide mainly at Newcastle's Laing Art Gallery. "Ars longa, vita brevis." "Art is long, life is short." To book for this please **Register here**

February **Monday 3rd** 17.30-18.30 Log on from 17.00	Alan Freeland: **Our human instinct for language** Language is perhaps our most important invention. It gives us the best of times and the worst of times. In this talk we focus on verbal communication and look at how and why language arose, how languages are similar and different, and how and why they change. We will learn why we say mice infestation but not rats infestation, what the Intestines Affairs Ministry does, what children think our cutlery should be called, how we learnt to talk about time, and how 'evidentials' could improve our social media. Alan had a long career in IT and is now an active member of Farnham u3a, running the AI group and giving talks for the History and Art History groups. Previously he ran for three years a Silk Roads group and for a year a group called The Art and Science of Communication where this talk comes from. To book for this please **Register here**
March **Monday 3rd** Log on from 17.00 *17.30-18.45* *Q&A/discussions* *follow to 19.00*	**IQ² Cultural Debate: 'Brave New World' vs 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'** This is a new venture for the London Region Events Team! Liz Day and Vivek Nanda will use a recorded debate staged in 2018 by Intelligence Squared, to consider the mood of our time as reflected in two great 20th century novels – 'Brave New World' by Aldous Huxley and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' by George Orwell. The books, written in 1931 and 1949 respectively, portray the troubles of their period, but which looks most relevant to our 21st century world? In the Chair is Jonathan Freedland, political columnist at 'The Guardian' and presenter of Radio 4's contemporary history series 'The Long View'. The debate is presented very engagingly with cogent arguments from two eminent advocates and illustrated by excellent dramatised extracts from the novels. Advocating for 'Brave New World' is Will Self (novelist, critic, broadcaster, political commentator). Advocating for '1984' is Adam Gopnik (author, writer for the New Yorker, lecturer, and broadcaster). The 'expert witnesses' are distinguished actors – Tuppence Middleton, George Blagdon, Orlando Seal, and Simon Callow. Both novels are described as 'dystopian' (opposite of utopian). **1984** issues a stark warning about the loss of freedom and democracy by claustrophobic state authoritarianism. Words from the novel such as Big Brother, Thought Police, Newspeak, Doublethink etc. have entered today's vocabulary. In **Brave New World** the state uses science and technology (especially drugs) to control the population, and children are conditioned out of their emotions and individuality. The objective is to create a mindless sense of happiness and stability. *If you've not read these novels, or need a refresher, you may wish to prepare by reading a summary of each on the Internet or by reading the books themselves.* *At the end of the debate,* you will be asked to vote in a *simple online poll* to indicate which novel you feel better captures our present world and offers the keener warning about where we may be heading. After hearing the poll results, you may wish to stay online (max 30 mins) for a discussion to hear the scores that were given by participants in the IQ² recording. The recording will also be uploaded to the Talks Archive of London Region website. To book for this talk please **Register here**