THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

The Wednesday afternoon lecture is the main event of the week for members of the University of the Third Age, or 'U3A' as they call it. But every day there are classes going on all over town, ranging from Chinese to computers. Founded only three years ago, the new university now has more than 700 members. It was the first of its kind in Britain, but the idea caught on quickly and Third Age universities have started up all over the country.

Although Shakespeare mentioned the Seven Ages of Man, the new university makes do with four. The Third Age comes when the First Age of childhood and the Second Age of earning a living and bringing up a family are over. Beginning in the fifties, it may well last as long as 30 years. The belief and the hope is that an active Third Age can postpone the Fourth Age of weakness and death, squeezing that into the shortest period possible.

Students pay £10 for six months' membership of the university and for this they can go to as many, or as few, classes as they wish. There are also regular social and sporting events. One of the reasons why so much activity is possible and costs so little is that the teachers give their time free and seem to enjoy it just as much.

The new university is a cooperative venture and everyone can contribute something, by teaching or learning, by delivering the newsletter or making the coffee. The university belongs to its students and they choose the classes. Many classes started because two or three people discovered a mutual interest, found someone to take the lead and it has grown from there.

The University of the Third Age is fiercely independent and has no ties with any other educational institutions. Organising their own university answers part of their need for intellectual stimulation. But in France, where the movement began, they take the opposite view. There the new universities are run in, and by, the established institutions.
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE GROUP

Class: _______________  Name: ____________________

PART I - LISTENING SECTION

A. Fill in the blanks while you are listening to the text the first and the second time.

1. U3A is an abbreviation for ________________.

2. U3A has more than ________________ members.

3. According to U3A, there are four ages of man.
   The first Age: ________________
   The Second Age: earning a living and ________________
   The Third Age: begins in the ________________ and lasts ________________ years.
   The Fourth Age: the age of ________________ and ________________.

B. Mark the statements True (T) or False (F) while listening to the text the first and the second time.

   T  F  1. U3A was founded five years ago.
   T  F  2. Shakespeare had discussed the Seven Ages of Man.
   T  F  3. The membership fee for U3A is £10 a year.
   T  F  4. Teachers don't get any money for teaching at the U3A.
   T  F  5. Although there are regular social events at the U3A, sporting events are never held.
   T  F  6. The students are not allowed to choose their classes at the U3A.
   T  F  7. The movement to establish universities for the elderly first began in England.