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Hobbyists may be identified under three sub-categories: casual leisure which is intrinsically rewarding, short-lived, pleasurable activity requiring little or no preparation, serious leisure which is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer that is substantial, rewarding and results in a sense of accomplishment, and finally project-based leisure which is a short-term, often one-off, project that is rewarding.

A large proportion of hobbies are mainly solitary in nature. However, individual pursuit of a hobby often includes club memberships, organized sharing of products and regular communication between participants. For many hobbies there is an important role in being in touch with fellow hobbyists. Some hobbies are of communal nature, like choral singing and volunteering.

Collecting is an ancient hobby, with the list of coin collectors showing Caesar Augustus as one. Sometimes collectors have turned their hobby into a business, becoming commercial dealers that trade in the items being collected.

An alternative to collecting physical objects is collecting records of events of a particular kind. Examples include train spotting, bird-watching, aircraft spotting, and any other form of systematic recording a particular phenomenon. The recording form can be written, photographic, online, etc.

Tinkering is "dabbling" with the making process, often applied to the hobby of tinkering with car repairs, and various kinds of restoration: of furniture, antique cars, etc. It also applies to household tinkering: repairing a wall, laying a pathway, etc. Examples of Making and Tinkering hobbies include Scale modeling, model engineering, 3D printing, dressmaking, and cooking.

At the turn of the Industrial Age and through the 1920s, some families could afford things such as electric trains, wind-up toys (typically boats or cars) and the increasingly valuable tin toy soldiers. Scale modeling as we know it today became popular shortly after World War II. Before 1946, children as well as adults were content in carving and shaping wooden replicas from block wood kits, often depicting enemy aircraft to help with identification in case of an invasion;

With the advent of modern plastics, the amount of skill required to get the basic shape accurately shown for any given subject was lessened, making it easier for people of all ages to begin assembling replicas in varying scales. Superheroes, aero planes, boats, cars, tanks, artillery, and even figures of soldiers became quite popular subjects to build, paint and display. Although almost any subject can be found in almost any scale, there are common scales for such miniatures which remain constant today.

Model engineering refers to building functioning machinery in metal, such as internal combustion motors and

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live steam models or locomotives. This is a demanding hobby that requires a multitude of large and expensive machine tools, such as lathes and mills. This hobby originated in the United Kingdom in the late 19th century, later spreading and flourishing in the mid-20th century. Due to the expense and space required, it is becoming rare.

3D Printing is a relatively new technology and already a major hobby as the cost of printers has fallen sharply. It is a good example of how hobbyists quickly engage with new technologies, communicate with one another and become producers related to their former hobby. 3D modeling is the process of making mathematical representations of three dimensional items and is an aspect of 3D printing.

Dressmaking has been a major hobby up until the late 20th century, in order to make cheap clothes, but also as a creative design and craft challenge. It has been reduced by the low cost of manufactured clothes.

Cooking is for some people an interest, a hobby, a challenge and a source of significant satisfaction. For many other people it is a job, a chore, a duty, like cleaning. In the early 21st century the importance of cooking as a hobby was demonstrated by the high popularity of competitive television cooking programs.

Outdoor pursuits are the group of activities which occur outdoors. These hobbies include gardening, hill walking, hiking, backpacking, cycling, canoeing, climbing, caving, fishing, hunting, target shooting (informal or formal), wildlife viewing (as birdwatching) and engaging in watersports and snowsports.

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Web: <https://sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

