

Film Copyright and Performance Advice

Most U3As run film study groups in one of two ways:

1. The group meets in a room in a private home, or a hall, where a film is shown and discussed.
2. The members of the group visit a local cinema either as a group or individually to watch a pre-agreed film. The group then meets later in a private room or hall for discussion.

Equipment

If showing a film you will need appropriate equipment for the size of the group. A large TV with DVD/video player may be sufficient or a digital projector can be used with a laptop or DVD player connection to show the film on a large screen. You might require amplifiers or speakers and black out facilities if using a hall.

Obtaining Films

Members may have their own copies which they are willing to lend. Films can be rented from a shop, library or an online service such as Lovefilm.Com

The Resource Centre in the U3A National office has a selection of material on the history of film, filmmaking techniques and the work of various directors.

Ideas for programmes

There are any number of themes for programmes but popular ideas in U3A groups are:

- The work of an individual director
- Genre- romances, musicals, film noir, westerns, science fiction etc.
- Films from various countries or studios e.G. Ealing comedies
- Films from novels, with scope for a combined book and film group.
- Foreign language films
- Star pairings – Tracy & Hepburn, Hope & Crosby

Licensing

Copyright is an important issue and needs to be considered before starting a group.

1. If the group is an educational study group with only members of the U3A taking part then there is an exemption under Copyright Law known as 'Fair dealing' which says that 'performance or lending for educational purposes' are permitted.
2. If your U3A wants to show films for entertainment, for example if there is no cinema in the area, or if members would like to bring non-member friends to screenings then this would NOT be covered by the educational exemption and your U3A would probably need to buy licences. There are two – MPLC (Motion Picture Licensing Company, e-mail WWW.mplcuk.Com) and PVSL (Public Video Screening Licence, e-mail WWW.filmbank.co.UK). Your U3A would probably need to purchase both as each company covers different film studios and acts on their behalf.

For help and advice on licensing matters please contact [Resource Centre](#)

Payment

No charge should ever be made by any U3A for viewing films (whether you are licensed or not) it should be made quite clear that any monies requested from group members are to cover hall hire or refreshments only. Under no circumstances are you allowed to make any profit from showing films.

Advertising – a word of warning

The titles of films you are viewing in an educational study group should be circulated only within the group. Such titles should not be included in something like a newsletter which might end up in the public domain which could include a doctor's surgery or a local library.

Sources of information

- A film listing book such as 'The Radio Times Guide to Films' or a Halliwell's guide is invaluable, usually giving a short critique of virtually every worthwhile film and listing a director's or actor's films.
- David Thomson's books 'Have You Seen....?' (A personal introduction to about 1000 films) (pub. Allen Lane) and 'The New Biographical Dictionary of Film', (pub. Little, Brown).
- (Auto)biographies of directors and actors.
- General film history books such as 'The Cinema Book' (a B.F.I. Publication, ISBN no. 0-85170-144-2, edited by Pam Cook and 'A Short History of the Movies' by Gerald Mast & Bruce F. Kawin, published by Allyn & Bacon, ISBN no. 0-205-29685-8. Again, keep an eye on charity shops.
- Websites such as the Internet Movie Database (WWW.imdb.Com) or just Google the name of the film or director.