

STUDENT TOOLKIT

Film Student Archival Footage Checklist

A classroom-safe checklist for planning, licensing, and editing archival footage in short films, thesis projects, and capstone docs.

AUDIENCE

Film Students

READ TIME

6 min

CATEGORY

Education

01 Pre-Production Checklist

- Define your story years and locations before sourcing footage.
- List 8 to 12 must-have scenes that support your thesis argument.
- Set a max archival budget and reserve contingency for last-minute licenses.
- Create a shared sheet with columns for source, rights, and editorial notes.
- Align instructor, producer, and editor on acceptable visual quality ranges.

02 Research Checklist

- Search by year + place first, then refine by activity and visual mood.
- Capture source URLs and clip IDs at the time of discovery.
- Save alternates for each key scene in case rights or cost changes.
- Flag uncertain dates, uniforms, signage, and landmarks for verification.
- Prioritize clips with clear people/actions over generic establishing shots.

03 Licensing Checklist

- Confirm license scope: festival, broadcast, streaming, social, classroom.
- Document attribution requirements and keep records with project files.
- Check music/audio rights if a clip includes synchronized historical audio.
- Store receipts and terms in one rights folder for final delivery review.
- Keep a backup option for every licensed sequence.

04 Post-Production Checklist

- Normalize exposure and grain only enough to match your cut, not erase history.
- Track every archival clip in a timeline usage log with in/out timecode.

- Verify continuity between archival and interview/B-roll transitions.
- Run one legal + one historical pass before export lock.
- Archive your final rights report alongside project masters.

Helpful Starting Points

Start discovery in the Archive Index, then browse Curated Collections for pre-grouped themes and periods.

Archive Index — stockfilm.com/all-collections

Curated Collections — stockfilm.com/curated

Request Footage — stockfilm.com/request-footage

Browse the Full Archive

stockfilm.com — Authentic 8mm & Super 8 Archival Footage