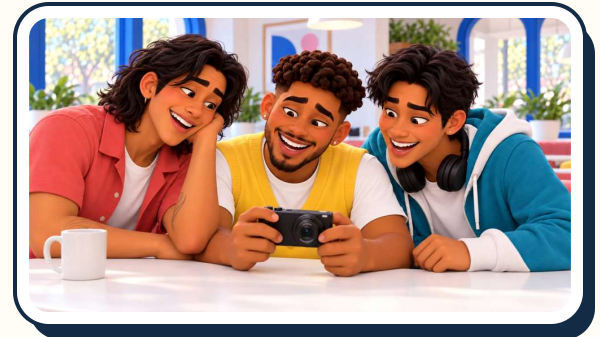


Case 14: Does giving credit let the crew use the song?

Mateo wants to post the crew's film tonight and credit the song's artist, but Caio wants to check the license first.

On your own Read What happened and underline the two pieces of the film that the crew did not make. About 5 minutes.



Caio, Mateo and Rafa laugh as they look at photos on a small digital camera.

Your role: You're the one who fills in the rights log before the film goes up. **New skill:** Check permission, not just credit.

What happened

It is Friday night, and Caio, 24, is editing the crew's festival film. The film is a short recap made from crew footage and interviews. At 9:40 p.m., he saves a rough cut. For 20 seconds, a released song plays under the setup montage. Caio pitched the song up slightly, and the song sets the mood for the whole scene.

The cut borrows one more piece. From 1:40 to 1:46, it shows a six-second clip downloaded from a TikTok post. That post used Stitch, TikTok's remix tool. The crew did not make the song or the clip.

At 10:02 p.m., Mateo texts the crew chat: "We'll credit them in the caption. Post tonight?" He wants the film online tonight. Caio asks what the credit gets them, and Mateo does not have an answer. Caio wants to check the license before they post.

Your question: Does a credit give the crew permission to use the song, and what should they do before they post?

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example, then write your first guess in the box. About 8 minutes.

Attribution Attribution is naming the person who made a work, such as a song, a photo or a video.

En español: atribución

In this case: Mateo's plan, "We'll credit them in the caption," would name the artist. It answers who made the song, not whether the crew may use it.

License A license is permission from a rights holder to use a work under specific terms.

En español: licencia

In this case: The rights log says "permission unknown" for both borrowed pieces. A license from each owner would fill in that column.

Fair use Fair use is a part of U.S. copyright law that allows some uses without permission, judged case by case with four factors.

En español: uso justo

In this case: The crew would weigh the four factors for 20 seconds of a released song used as background mood. No number of seconds settles it.

Who is involved



Caio

Editing the crew's festival film

"Twenty seconds of that song carries the whole montage. That's exactly why I can't just borrow it and hope."



Mateo

Wanted the film online tonight

"I really texted 'we'll credit them, post tonight?' Then Caio asked what the credit gets us. I didn't have an answer."

Before you look at the evidence, do you think a credit in the caption lets the crew use the song?

[illegible]

Reading passage

Credit is not permission

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 4 minutes.

Words to know

- **Attribution:** Attribution is naming the person who made a work, such as a song, a photo or a video.
- **License:** A license is permission from a rights holder to use a work under specific terms.
- **Fair use:** Fair use is a part of U.S. copyright law that allows some uses without permission, judged case by case with four factors.
- **Disclosure:** A disclosure is a clear statement that tells people about a relationship or fact they would want to know.

The story: A song that carries the scene

It is Friday night, and Caio is editing the crew's festival film. It is a short recap made from crew footage and interviews. At 9:40 p.m., he saves a rough cut.

For 20 seconds, a released song plays under the setup montage. Caio pitched it up slightly, and the song sets the mood for the whole scene. The cut borrows one more piece. From 1:40 to 1:46, it shows a six-second clip downloaded from a TikTok post. That post used Stitch, TikTok's remix tool. The crew did not make the song or the clip.

At 10:02 p.m., Mateo texts the crew chat: "We'll credit them in the caption. Post tonight?" Caio writes back one question: "Credit gets us what, exactly?" Mateo does not have an answer.

Your role is to fill in the rights log before the film goes up.

 **Stop and think.** Why might Mateo think a credit in the caption is enough?

Two different questions

Attribution is naming the person who made a work, such as a song, a photo or a video. It answers the question "Who made this?" A **license** is permission from a rights holder to use a work under specific terms. It answers a different question: "Did the owner say yes to this use?" Mateo's caption would give attribution. It would not give the crew a license.

Two different questions, continued

In Case 8, you learned that a **disclosure** is a clear statement that tells people about a relationship or fact they would want to know. Naming the artist is honest, like a disclosure. But being honest about where something came from is not the same as having permission to use it.

Pitching the song up does not make it the crew's song either. "It's still their song, just a little higher," Caio says.

The crew starts a rights log. It lists each borrowed piece, who made it, where it came from and whether there is permission. Right now, both rows say "permission unknown." Mateo thought Stitch covered the TikTok clip. But Stitch works inside TikTok. A festival film is somewhere else.

Caio has two backup plans. The crew can use a library track with clear terms, or Dec can record a drum loop the crew owns. Either way, they post Sunday.

 **Stop and think.** What is the difference between attribution and a license?

When the music went silent

In February 2024, a licensing deal between Universal Music Group and TikTok ended. Videos using songs by artists like Taylor Swift and Olivia Rodrigo went silent (NPR, February 1, 2024). Nobody forgot to credit Taylor Swift. The license was the problem.

Fair use is a part of U.S. copyright law that allows some uses without permission, judged case by case with four factors (U.S. Copyright Office, updated July 2026).

 **Stop and think.** Why doesn't Stitch permission cover a festival film?

Sources

Real source | NPR | February 1, 2024

TikTok removes music from UMG artists, including Olivia Rodrigo and Taylor Swift

Real source | U.S. Copyright Office | July 2026

Fair Use Index

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document, then fill in both boxes under it. About 12 minutes.

Evidence A | Edit timeline

Caio’s rough cut, Friday, 9:40 p.m.

0:00—0:18 crew footage, no music. 0:18—0:38 sampled track, pitched up slightly, under the setup montage. 0:38—1:52 crew footage and interviews. 1:40—1:46 a 6-second clip downloaded from a stitched TikTok post.

Look closely: Which two parts of the cut did the crew not make?

What it shows

One question I still have

Evidence C | Rights log

Rights log, started Saturday morning

Columns: element, who made it, where it came from, permission or license and date. Row 1: setup-montage music, the recording artist, a streaming download, permission unknown. Row 2: 6-second clip, a TikTok creator, downloaded from TikTok, permission unknown.

Look closely: Which column says “unknown” in both rows?

What it shows

One question I still have

What is still missing from the evidence?

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

Key idea: fair use

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 8 minutes.

Credit and permission answer different questions. **Attribution** is naming the person who made a work, such as a song, a photo or a video. It answers the question “Who made this?” A **license** is permission from a rights holder to use a work under specific terms. It answers another question: “Did the owner say yes to this use?” Mateo’s caption would give attribution. It would not give the crew a license.

Without a license, the crew could ask whether the use is fair use. **Fair use** is a part of U.S. copyright law that allows some uses without permission, judged case by case with four factors. The U.S. Copyright Office names the four factors. They are the purpose of the use, the nature of the original work, the amount used and the effect on the original’s market. No number of seconds is automatically safe. Even a short part can count against fair use if it is the most recognizable part of the song.

Platform tools come with their own limits. Stitch lets people remix another person’s video inside TikTok. That permission does not automatically cover a downloaded clip in a film shown somewhere else. Using music the crew records, or a track with a clear license, can avoid the fair-use question. Caio’s two backup plans follow this idea: a library track with clear terms, or a drum loop that Dec records.

Professional standards

Real source | AIGA, the professional association for design

AIGA Standards of Professional Practice: The designer’s responsibility to other designers

“A professional designer shall not accept instructions from a client that involve infringement of another person’s property rights without permission”

In plain words: Designers who belong to AIGA agree not to use other people’s creative work without permission, even when a client asks.

Question: The rights log says “permission unknown” for the track and the TikTok clip. What does Caio need for each row?

Professional standards, continued

Your answer

For the song, Caio needs _____. For the clip, he needs _____.

In the news



Real source | CrashCourse (YouTube) | May 7, 2015

Copyright, Exceptions, and Fair Use: Crash Course Intellectual Property #3

Explains why giving credit is not the same as permission, and how fair use is weighed.



Real source | NPR | May 18, 2023

Supreme Court sides against Andy Warhol Foundation in copyright infringement case

Even a famous artist’s new version wasn’t fair use when it served the same purpose as the original.

Notes

Sort the evidence

On your own Match each piece of evidence to the claim it supports, challenges or narrows. About 10 minutes.

Test the crew’s two assumptions against the sources. Which evidence knocks each one down, and what single check could still make the plan work?

Evidence	Claim 1 Crediting the artist makes the use okay.	Claim 2 Twenty seconds is short enough to be fair use.
1 Credit names the creator but grants no permission		
2 Copyright Office: no formula makes a set amount safe; the heart of a work matters		
3 The sample is background mood, not commentary on the song		
4 Stitch permission applies inside TikTok, not to a downloaded clip in another film		

Still open

- Does any license cover this use? Check before posting.

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose the plan you would pick and explain why, then fix the two marked lines. About 8 minutes.

Caio's cut uses about 20 seconds of a released song as background mood for the crew's festival film. Mateo texts, "We'll credit them in the caption. Post tonight?" Which plan should the crew choose?

- ☐ **A** Credit the artist in the caption and post tonight.
- ☐ **B** Pause the upload. Check the track's license, and swap in licensed or original music if the license does not cover this use.
- ☐ **C** Cut the song to ten seconds, since short clips are fair use.

Why I chose it

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

We're good to post! ❶ We only used like 20 seconds of the song and we're putting the artist's name in the caption so they get credit. Plus it's not like we're making money off it, it's just for our page. ❷ Everyone uses songs like this on TikTok anyway so it's fine. We even changed the pitch a little so it's basically our own version now, and the whole cut is under two minutes. If they don't like it they can just ask us to take it down.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 2

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Grades 6–8

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft.

Make a rights log for the crew's short film and suggest a way to use music they're allowed to use.

Use: The case scenario and a kid-friendly summary of the Copyright Office page.

You'll make: Rights log plus 3–4 sentences

Time: 45 minutes

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners and a thin black border around the edges.

Your task, continued

- 1 Circle each part of the rough cut in Evidence A that the crew did not make.
- 2 Write who made each part, using the rights log in Evidence C.
- 3 Mark each part with a check for permission or a question mark for unknown.
- 4 Choose music the crew is allowed to use in place of the song.
- 5 Write 3 or 4 sentences in the Your draft box that explain your plan.
- 6 Check that your sentences say what credit does and what permission means.

Show it your way

Write it: Write 3—4 sentences with the frame “Credit tells people __. Permission means __.”

Say it: Explain to a partner the difference between giving credit and having permission, using the song in Caio’s film as your example.

Show it: Fill the rights log as a picture table: a small drawing of each clip or sound, who made it and a check or question mark for permission.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Borrowed part 1, and who made it

Permission for part 1

Borrowed part 2, and who made it

Permission for part 2

Your task, continued

Music the crew is allowed to use

Your draft

Credit tells people _____. Permission means _____.

Notes

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions, mark your level in each rubric row and write one change you made. About 6 minutes.

Does your rights log list both borrowed parts?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it say who made each part?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Do your sentences explain credit and permission separately?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does your plan avoid promising that the use is legal?	☐ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ Relies on myths.	☐ Cites credit as permission.	☐ Uses the four factors or license terms.	☐ Uses factors, license terms and platform differences.
Reasoning	☐ Assumes any use is fine.	☐ Applies one factor.	☐ Separates credit, permission and fair use.	☐ Weighs factors honestly and chooses a lower-risk path.
Audience & purpose	☐ Ignores the artist.	☐ Considers only the crew.	☐ Considers the artist and the audience.	☐ Balances creative goals with respect for the original creator.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Adds a credit.	☐ Replaces myths with a rights plan.	☐ Explains each step and a realistic alternative.

One change I made

Notes

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete each sentence frame. About 10 minutes.

- 1** Caio pitched the song up slightly. Does changing a song make it a new work? Why or why not?

- 2** Mateo says the TikTok clip goes in the rights log as “unknown.” What would the crew need to find out to fill in that row?

My take

I think the crew should ___ because ___.

The evidence that changed my first guess is ___.

One question I still have is ___.

Talk about this case at home

Case 14: Does giving credit let the crew use the song?

In this case, a group of friends wants to post a short film that uses 20 seconds of a released song. Your student compared giving credit with getting permission, then planned what the crew should do before posting.

Questions to talk about

- 1 What is the difference between giving credit and getting permission?
- 2 Why might a short part of a song still need permission?
- 3 Where could a student find music they have permission to use?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.