

Anime Club Starter Kit Guide for Operation Anime

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Introduction

This guide is designed to help you start your own anime club. It also has ways to help your club grow. It will help you choose what you want your club to be and how big you want it to get.

How to Start

Most anime clubs start out with a group of friends that watch anime together. When the people in the small group of friends wish to share their love for anime with the masses, they can form an anime club. The first thing to do is to pick a name for your club. It can be anything you want. Then, with the help of this guide, you can decide where to meet, what anime to show, what equipment to use, if you want an anime library, requirements for membership, and elect officers if necessary.

Where to Meet

An anime club can meet anywhere. The basic meeting places are members' houses, a room on a school campus, or a library. There are pros and cons to each. The main thing is to keep your meeting place consistent.

Before choosing your meeting place, you must consider several things: size of the room, the seating arrangement, the number of people attending a meeting, equipment setup, electrical outlet access, and handicap access. For larger groups of people, a school lecture hall would be best. For smaller groups, a member's living room should be sufficient. Here are the details for each type of meeting place:

- **The School Meeting Room**

This meeting place has probably the most restrictions on it, but it also has the best benefits, especially for larger clubs. The main benefit is that usually, clubs get to use the school's rooms and equipment free of charge.

In order to start a club at a school, you must first of all be a student of that school. The school will also require you to have officers, such as president and treasurer, which must be students or alumni of the school. There may also be a minimum member requirement. The school may or may not require your club to have a member of the school's staff or faculty to be a sponsor for the club in order to sign off on paperwork.

After all the requirements have been met and the paperwork complete, your club can start to use the school's rooms and equipment. When reserving a lecture hall, first pick a time for your meeting. It is better to meet on a weekend or after hours on a weekday. This way, you will have a greater number of empty lecture halls to choose from and it decreases your chances of disturbing a working professor or studying students. Next, pick your room. Each school has its own policy on room use. Within the policy there may be rules to follow such as

a noise level to keep under, a trash policy, and a food and drink policy. Usually, the cost for using a lecture hall is free or maybe a deposit.

- The Library Meeting Room

This meeting place has a lesser amount of restrictions on it than a school meeting room. Library meeting rooms are for medium size clubs of maybe 10 to 30 people depending on the size of the room and other library policies. Many libraries let non-profit groups and clubs use library meeting rooms and book library equipment for free. Otherwise, the rooms can be from \$20 to \$150. Many libraries have teen activity groups. Speak to the head of this and see if you can become part of their activity line-up. This means that you will always have an available room, but don't abuse the privilege.

There are three main cons to having your meetings at the library. The first is the viewing policy. It differs for every library, but a club should be able to show anime as high as the 13+ age rating with no problem. The second is the library hours. This means that you cannot show anime for an extremely long amount of time. If your club wants to have a big marathon, try having it at someone's house or see if you can get special permission from the library. Finally, the third con is to remember to keep the noise level reasonably low. It is a library after all.

- The Member Home Meeting Room

Home meetings have the least amount of restrictions. There is no charge, no red tape, and no paperwork. It is also the most comfortable. The main con to a home meeting is size. Home meetings are usually better for smaller groups of people. A club must restrict membership or move once it gets too big for its living room.

What to Show

The main event of any anime club meeting is usually the anime viewing. There are many things to consider when choosing anime for a viewing: Fansub or licensed title? Subtitle or dub? The entire club or at least the officers should make such decisions. There are pros and cons to each way.

- Fansub vs. Licensed

A fansub is an anime title that has been subtitled by fans of that series for other fans. When the title has been licensed for distribution in a country outside of Japan, fansub distribution in that country must stop. A licensed title is an anime series that has been licensed by a distribution company in a country outside of Japan. These are the titles you see in your local video store. If you choose to show fansubs at your meetings, you must make sure that what you show is not being distributed in your country. If you wish to show licensed titles,

you must get permission from the licensing company and possibly pay a fee. Visit the company's website for contact information. Your club can always show both.

- Sub vs. Dub

This argument is as old as the first otaku. This guide is not attempting to say which is better. It is only a guideline to help you decide what is best for your club. This argument only matters if you are showing licensed titles. "Sub" refers to anime that is shown in the Japanese language with subtitles in another language. "Dub" refers to anime that is shown in a language other than Japanese. Some people prefer to watch their anime in Japanese and others in their native tongue. There are many ways to solve the sub vs. dub crisis. You can have your members or officers take a vote on whether or not to show the dub or sub at that meeting. You can show subs at one meeting and dubs at the next. You can alternate between titles at the same meeting. You can just show subs. You can just show dubs. It all depends on what your members want. The key is compromise.

- Titles

After you get these decisions out of the way, decide what titles to show. You can take members suggestions or leave the showings up to the officers. You can have a member only meeting where members suggest titles and then everyone votes on what is shown from that. If you don't know what titles would be good for your club to show, www.animenfo.org or animeondvd.com are good sites that lists practically every anime and what it is about. For certain titles, it may even have screenshots or other information like licensing.

- Themes

Sometimes, showing a mix of anime every meeting can get monotonous. If you want to spice things up or try to attract a greater number of a certain type of member, try having a theme to what you show. The theme can be anything. It can be something like every anime is shonen (boy type) or every anime is shoujo (girl type). It can be obscure such as every anime has the same voice actor or seiyuu (Japanese voice actor) in it. You could have a comedy theme or an action theme, a cute theme or a mystery theme. The sky's the limit.

Where to Get Anime

- Licensed

Licensed titles are sold in many places now. Most large retail stores and video stores have an anime section. Your club can purchase or rent the titles. It can also get anime license companies to donate titles for screening. Remember

to get permission from the anime license companies before you show anything. If you do not know which titles are licensed, check out the Grand High Licensing list on <http://www.animeondvd.com> or <http://www.animenfo.org>. You can find licensed titles at stores such as Best Buy, Fry's, Movie Trading Co., Suncoast, Sam Goody, Wal-Mart, Target, and GameStop. You can also find them at your local comic or video game store.

- Fansubs

Do a search on Google for more information on acquiring fansubs. If your club decides to deal with fansubs, you must stop distribution and take the title out of your club library once a title has been licensed in your country. Remember to support anime and buy those titles that become licensed.

Equipment

The necessary equipment depends on how your club wants to show anime, where it meets, and how many members it has. Most pieces of A/V equipment can be purchased or rented from electronics stores. You can also try camera or television specialty stores. If you have your meetings at a school or library, see if you can use their equipment. There is usually a deposit or no cost at all. If you are low on cash, see if any of your members all ready have this equipment and are willing to share or try to buy your equipment used.

- Types of Equipment

Projector – The projector is better for larger groups of people in a lecture hall size room, but can be used in smaller rooms as well. Video projectors can be quite expensive especially if you go digital. They range from \$400 to around \$10,000. Make sure the projector has at least an RCA video in. If possible try to get with an S-video in for better picture quality. If your club decides to purchase a projector, the only drawback is every year or so, you will have to replace the projector bulb. The average cost is around \$400.

Video Screen – If you have a projector, you will need something to project the image on. This can be any white surface. It can be an actual video screen or just a wall.

Receiver – This piece of equipment is necessary if you have a video and audio system. It makes it convenient to control all of your equipment from one place.

Speakers – The size, kind, and number of speakers you need depend on your meeting room, number of members, and affect you want to have. It is not necessary to go all out, especially for a club just starting out. To start, maybe just get two speakers for stereo sound. Then maybe later get a better system. A good

rule of thumb is the more people and the larger the room, the louder they will need to be.

Television – the television can be analog or digital. It is better reserved for smaller groups of people. The larger the television, the better, but any size is fine as long as all the members can see the screen. Make sure the television has at least an audio and video out. If possible try to get one with an S-video out for better picture quality

VCR/DVD player – If your anime is on tape or DVD, you will need this equipment. Make sure there is an S-video in for better picture quality. If your club wants a media library, a VCR can be used to make library copies of master tapes.

Computer – If you wish to show your anime from a computer, you will need a video out card with S-video for better picture quality and a sound card.

Dolly/Pushcart – Hauling equipment can be an arduous task, but by purchasing a dolly or cart, you can make equipment setup and storage quick and easy. You can purchase these at hardware stores.

- Equipment Storage

If your club buys its own equipment, it will be necessary to find a safe place to store it. If you are a school club, try to see if there is an unused closet or storage space you can use for club storage. You should be able to get it for free, but there may be a deposit or small charge. If there are none available, see if you can get officers or members to store the equipment in their homes until you can get a place on campus. If you are a home-based club, see if officers or members can take turns storing equipment.

Officers

Not every club needs officers, but there needs to be some sense of order and at the very least, someone that can be the club's contact, perform official duties, and fill out paperwork. Someone also needs to take care of the club's money. This does depend on the type of anime club you have. If your club is a school club, then the school will probably require officers. If your club is more informal, then you may only need one or two. In this case, you may want to appoint members to have certain duties and rotate. A school club needs to have at least a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. This may differ among schools. Your club can have more officers to handle different responsibilities. It depends on what the needs of the club are. Here are some example officer positions and what their responsibilities might be. These responsibilities can be changed according to your club's needs. Officer positions can also be combined.

President – the leader and representative of the club. The president handles a lot of the paperwork. The president can also be the public relations representative when contacting companies, newspapers, or anyone else. The president is usually in charge of club promotions.

Vice President – the right hand person to the president, a sort of go-to-guy. The vice president helps the president complete the necessary duties for the club.

Secretary – The secretary keeps track of all the paperwork such as membership forms, minutes to meetings, room reservation forms, etc. Treasurer – The treasurer handles the money. He or she keeps track of how much money the club has and how much it spends. The treasurer also researches the cost of things that the club wants like video equipment

Sergeant at Arms – The Sergeant at Arms is the one that keeps the peace. Sometimes, for larger clubs, it is necessary to keep people in line. The sergeant at arms also guards the club equipment during meetings.

Public Relations – The public relations officer answers questions people put forth to the club. He or she also is the representative when contacting companies, newspapers, or anyone else.

Webmaster – If your club wants a website, it will need a webmaster. This person is in charge of maintaining and updating the club website. The webmaster can also take care of online advertising.

Librarian – If your club has a video/DVD library of anime, it may be necessary to have a librarian to maintain it. The duties of the librarian depend on the type of library your club has. If it is a fansub library, then the librarian must make sure to take out tapes that have licensed anime titles. It is also the librarian's job to add new anime. If your club has licensed titles, then it is the librarian's job to make sure your club has the licensing rights to allow your members to view your tapes. Such rights can be acquired by contacting the anime licensing company such as FUNimation.

Membership

- Requirements

The requirements for membership are different for every club. Some have many and some may have only one. It all depends on what type of anime club you want. If you have a school club, your members may have to be students. If your club needs money, you may want to have your members pay dues. There could be an age requirement or a parental permission form if the member is under a certain age.

- Perks

If you want your club to grow, you may want to consider giving your members more benefits. Member perks can also be advertised on fliers or in ads. For example, your members would have access to your club's library, could have a say in what you show at meetings, or have discounts at local anime and comic book stores. For more information, read the Marketing and Promotions section.

Meeting Agenda

A meeting agenda is a way to keep the meeting running smoothly. If you have more than one person running the club and setting up, an agenda helps to keep everyone on track. It also allows club members because then they will know what will be happening at your club's meetings. A meeting agenda eventually becomes necessary once your club has reached a larger size. However, smaller clubs can have one as well. It all depends on how formal or informal you want your club to be. Here is an example meeting agenda:

- Setup equipment
- Start of meeting
- Club announcements
- Library check in/check out
- Play anime for two hours
- 15-minute break and library check in/check out
- Play more anime for two hours
- End of meeting
- Take down and store equipment

Club Library

A club video tape/DVD library is a good way for your club to attract members. It can also be used as a type of fundraising. You can have each member deposit a certain amount of money at the beginning of their membership so that they may borrow tapes or DVDs from the library. Should anything happen to the tapes or DVDs that the members borrow or if they forget to bring them back on time, they lose their deposit. If they want to start borrowing again, they must pay another deposit. The deposit insures that your club's tapes and DVDs remain safe and is also a potential means of fundraising.

- Licensed vs. Fansubs

If your club decides to have fansubs in its library, you must make sure to remove the fansubbed titles once they become licensed for distribution in your country. If your club decides to have licensed titles in its library, you must get permission from each title's company.

- Types of media

Club libraries can be on three types of media: tape or DVD/VCD. For wear and tear purposes, it is usually best to keep your library on videotape. However, never have master tapes in your library. Make copies. If your library's tape gets damaged or stolen, you can make another copy from the master tape with little cost. Make sure that the library tape is a VHS tape and not SVHS. Not everyone has an SVHS VCR. Also make sure to put the tape on SP mode to extend the lifetime of the tape and to preserve picture quality. You can buy videotapes in bulk from American Recordable Media.

<http://www.americanrecordablemedia.com>. They also sell label sheets and cases.

- Storage

Your club library has the potential to get quite large. Large plastic storage bins are excellent to keep your tapes in. If you have DVDs get large disk storage cases that can hold at least 200 disks. If you have a school club and have managed to acquire a storage space on campus, you can keep your library there. Otherwise, see if members or officers are willing to house part, if not the entire library.

Marketing & Promotion

If you want your club to be known and to have more members, you must promote it. The more people that know about your club, the better off you will be. There are many ways to do this. Some are free and some are not. It's all up to your club as to how it wants to promote itself.

- Fliers

You can get them print fliers at the library or office supply stores like Office Max and Office Depot. As a last resort you can try a copy store like Kinko's. If you don't want to spend as much money, then see if you can use your school's computers and printers. Fliers can be for your next meeting, a fundraising event, an anime screening, information about the club, or anything else you need the masses to know. Make sure the fliers have the necessary information on them. Also put colorful images or text on them to make them attention grabbing. Post the fliers everywhere you can. Make sure you get the proper permissions and fill out all the necessary paperwork. If you are unable to post fliers, you can always hand them out on the street or leave them on tables at anime conventions.

- Articles

A good way to get free promotion is to get an article about your club in the local or school newspaper. If you are having an event or know of an event that members of your club will be at, such as an anime convention, contact the paper

and get them to cover it. Another way is a link exchange online. If your club has a website, provide links to other clubs' sites and in exchange have them put up a link to your site.

- Store Support

Another way is to get local anime and comic stores to give discounts to your club's members. In order to get discounts, contact your local anime and comic book stores for information. You can also go online and ask online anime and comic stores for discounts.

- Word of Mouth

Make sure to tell your members to tell their friends about your club and to invite them to meetings. You can also mention your club whenever you hear anyone talking about anime.

- Ads

You can look into placing an ad in a magazine or newspaper. You can also place ads in anime convention program books. Don't forget online advertising. Many popular websites have advertising space and get thousands of hits a day. Website advertising is usually cheaper than newspaper or magazine advertising as well. Even if people do not click on your ad, they will still see it.

- Events

A big way to promote your club is to have an event. Your club could take a field trip to a Japanese related place like a botanical garden, Japanese embassy, or a museum featuring Japanese art. You could go to a Japanese or Asian festival if one occurs where you live. You could all go to an anime convention. The event does not necessarily have to be Japanese or anime related. You could go anywhere and do anything as a group. People will see your large group and eventually ask what you all are doing. This provides an excellent segue into promoting your club. Instead of a field trip, though, your club could put on a mini anime convention. A mini con can kill two birds with one stone. It can be a fundraiser as well as promote your club. A mini convention works just like a regular one only it is for one day on a weekend and is usually held wherever the club can afford it. If you are in a school club try having your convention on campus so you can reserve an area at little or no cost. Any equipment you may need for your convention can be rented through the school for little or no cost as well. Try to get a building with many empty rooms. These rooms can house panels, video rooms, and everything else you want at your convention. Every school is different, however, so make sure your school's policies allow for your club to put one on. If you are not in a school club, it may be a little harder and more expensive. See if your local community center will let you rent the building

for a day. You will, of course, need a lot of help for such an event. Look to your members or anyone else who is willing to volunteer. You could also put your con on outside and make it more of a festival. The rooms would be booths like a carnival all with an anime theme.

Fundraising

Most clubs need money, especially for equipment. The easiest way to raise funds is to collect member dues. Dues can be of any amount and can be paid at any interval. Be sure to keep it to a reasonable amount. Most dues are around \$10 to \$15, but can be as little as \$2. Another way to raise funds is through donations. Donations can be of any amount and can be taken at any time. Most people will be willing to donate a couple of dollars if they know what you are trying to raise the money for, such as a video projector. You can also get donations from companies. Try writing to companies to see if they have recently gone through an electronics upgrade and have any a/v equipment they don't need anymore. The final way to raise money is through club events such as bake sales or raffles. These events can be put on at schools, libraries, conventions, or anywhere else, provided you get the necessary permissions and fill out the necessary paperwork.

Club Website

A club website is a good way to get information out to your member and officers. It is also a good way to advertise and make your club known to others. The website does not need to be fancy. You can have it list as little or as much as you like. You can put your meeting dates, your showing schedule, directions to meetings, club events, officer e-mails, and anything else you want the masses to know. If you are a school club, see if you can get space on the school web server. If you cannot, there are many free and low-cost website hosting services. Some suggestions for free web services are Yahoo and Tripod. You can also get free URL redirection.

If you do not want to make a website, try using Yahoo Groups or putting up a web blog for your club. There are free web blog services such as Blogger, eBloggy, and Blog*spot.

You could also have an online forum for your club. This will allow members and non-members to ask questions about your club and provide feedback. It also creates a community that will bring your members closer together and possibly attract new ones. If you need examples of some club website, Google has ample lists of clubs.

http://directory.google.com/Top/Arts/Animation/Anime/Clubs_and_Organizations