

Free Movies & Shows

THE QUICK VERSION

- 1 Get a free library card and its PIN; that's the only requirement.
- 2 Install Kanopy and/or Hoopla from your device's official app store.
- 3 Sign in by choosing your exact library and entering your card number and PIN.
- 4 Install the apps on your TV too, using the on-screen link code instead of typing on the remote.
- 5 Each title you start spends one monthly credit; credits reset on the first and don't roll over.
- 6 Look for the free bonus collections that don't use a credit, and build a watchlist before pressing play.

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Free Movies & Shows With Your Library Card (Kanopy & Hoopla)

With Your Library Card Kanopy and Hoopla — real films, no fees, no ads, just your card

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What's Inside

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WELCOME

1.! Read this first — this really is free, with no catch

Kanopy and Hoopla are genuine, legitimate services your public library pays for, so you watch at no cost to you — no subscription, no credit card, no ads. The only limit is a monthly cap your library sets (a handful of titles a month). All you need is a library card. That's the whole deal; there's no hidden bill coming. A free movie night, courtesy of your library card. Your library card doesn't just borrow books anymore. Through two apps — Kanopy and Hoopla — it streams movies and TV shows to your TV, tablet, or phone, free and without ads. I'm Bill, from Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. When folks tell me their streaming bills have crept up, this is one of my favorite things to show them — a stack of good films, documentaries, and classics they can watch tonight without paying a dime, using a card they already have in their wallet. This guide explains what Kanopy and Hoopla are, how the free "borrowing" works, how to sign in with your library card, and how to get them onto the big TV. It's one of the best-value corners of the whole streaming world, and almost nobody knows about it. Want me to set it up on your TV? If you'd like someone to link your library card and get these apps running on your television, that's a quick, cheerful visit. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

THE SHORT VERSION

2. The short version

Three steps and you're watching tonight — for free.

- Have a library card (and its PIN). Don't have one? They're free to get.
- Install the Kanopy and/or Hoopla app on your phone, tablet, or TV.
- Sign in by choosing your library and entering your card number.
- Browse and press play — each title you start uses one of your monthly credits.
- Credits reset on the first of the month; unwatched ones don't roll over.
- No fees, no ads, nothing to cancel.
- Your exact limit depends on your library. Libraries set their own monthly caps — often somewhere between a few and a dozen or two titles. Check your library's Kanopy/Hoopla page for your number; it's the one detail that varies.

WHAT THEY ARE

3. What Kanopy and Hoopla actually are

Two free streaming apps your library pays for on your behalf.

Kanopy and Hoopla are streaming services, much like Netflix to use, except your public library foots the bill. You watch at no charge, there are no commercials, and there's nothing to subscribe to or cancel. The library pays each time something is watched, which is why there's a monthly cap — the library is managing a budget, not nickel-and-diming you. They lean in slightly different directions. Kanopy is known for thoughtful films — independent and foreign movies, documentaries, classics, and acclaimed collections — plus a Kanopy Kids section. Hoopla is broader, carrying movies and TV alongside music, audiobooks, e-books, and comics. Many libraries offer both, so you get the best of each. Think of them as the library's streaming shelves. Just as the library lends books for free, it lends movies through these apps for free. The monthly limit is simply how many you can borrow at once — the same idea as a stack of library books.

HOW IT WORKS

4. How the free "borrowing" works

Credits, not cash — and they refill every month.

Instead of paying, you spend credits. Kanopy uses what it often calls "tickets" or "play credits"; Hoopla gives you a set number of "borrows" per month. Starting a movie uses one, and once it's used you can usually re-watch that title for a borrowing window without spending another. When your credits run out, you simply wait until the first of the month, when they reset. Unused credits generally don't roll over — it's use-it-or-lose-it each month, like a library-book allowance. The exact number of credits is set by your library and varies quite a bit from place to place, so the one thing worth checking is your own library's limit. Watch what you start. Because starting a title spends a credit, it's worth deciding before you press play rather than sampling a dozen. If you're unsure, read the description first; browsing itself is free.

YOUR LIBRARY CARD

5. You need a library card (they're free)

The one requirement — and most people already have it.

All of this hinges on a library card from a participating library, plus the PIN or password tied to it. If you have a card gathering dust in a drawer, dig it out. If you don't, getting one is free and quick — a visit to your local branch with a piece of ID and proof of address, and many library systems even let you sign up online. Here in our area, your local public library almost certainly participates. If you're not sure which apps your library offers or what your card's PIN is, a quick call to the branch sorts it out — librarians are wonderfully helpful with exactly this. Lost your PIN? The library can reset it if you have the card but not the PIN, the library can look it up or reset it for you. You often need that PIN to sign in to the apps, so it's worth sorting before you start.

GETTING THE APPS

6. Installing the apps and signing in

Same simple steps on a phone, tablet, or TV.

On a phone or tablet, open your app store, search for "Kanopy" or "Hoopla," and install the free app. Open it, choose "Find your library" (or similar), search for your library by name, and sign in with your card number and PIN. You may be asked to create a simple account with your email so it remembers you — that's normal and still free. On a streaming TV or player (Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV, Google TV), look for the same apps in the device's app store and install them there too. Signing in on a TV is sometimes easier using a "link" code: the TV shows a short code, and you enter it on a web page on your phone or computer to connect them — no painful typing with the remote. Use the link-code trick on the TV. When an app on the TV shows a code and a web address, type the code on your phone instead of pecking your card number out on the remote. It's far quicker and less error-prone.

ON THE BIG TV

7. Getting it onto the living-room television

A few ways, depending on what you have.

If you have a streaming player or a smart TV, the cleanest route is to install the Kanopy or Hoopla app right on it, as above, so it plays like any other channel. If an app isn't available on your particular device, you can often "cast" or mirror from your phone — starting the movie on the phone and sending the picture to the TV — though a native app on the TV is smoother when it's offered. Not sure which streaming device you have, or whether these apps are on it? Our streaming-player comparison guide can help you sort that out. In most living rooms today, one of these apps is just a quick install away from your usual Netflix and YouTube. A native TV app beats casting. If the app is available on your TV or streaming box, install it there rather than casting from your phone. It's more reliable and lets you leave the phone alone while you watch.

WHAT'S ON

8. What you'll actually find to watch

More than you'd expect — and genuinely good.

Kanopy's strength is quality over quantity: acclaimed independent and international films, documentaries, classic cinema, and prestige collections, plus a well-regarded Kanopy Kids area with no ads that's a relief for grandparents. Hoopla casts a wider net across mainstream movies and TV, and — because it also lends music, audiobooks, e-books and comics — one Hoopla login covers a lot of ground. These aren't bottomless like the big paid services, and they won't always have the newest blockbuster. But for documentaries, classics, thoughtful films, children's titles, and plenty of solid movie nights, the selection is deep — and the price can't be beaten. Great for documentaries, classics, and the grandkids. If your taste runs to documentaries, old favorites, foreign films, or ad-free children's shows, Kanopy and Hoopla punch well above their (free) weight.

THE MONTHLY LIMIT

9. Understanding your monthly limit

It varies by library — here's how to find and stretch yours.

Because the library pays per view, each sets its own monthly allowance — some give just a few titles a month, others a dozen or more, and a few adjust it over time to fit their budget. When you hit the cap, the app typically shows a note that streaming is limited at the library's request, and your credits reset on the first of the next month. A couple of ways to stretch it: many libraries keep a "no-credit" or "bonus" collection you can watch freely without spending a credit, and if you hold cards at more than one library system, each card may bring its own separate allowance. Check your library's Kanopy and Hoopla pages for the current numbers — that's the one detail that genuinely differs by place. Look for the free bonus collections Both services often have titles that don't count against your limit — Kanopy's no-ticket picks, Hoopla's bonus borrows in the last days of the month. A nice way to keep watching after your credits run low.

10. CUTTING A BILL OR JUST FINDING GOOD FILMS

Two ways people come to this — and both are fine Some folks come to this to trim their streaming spending; others simply want more good things to watch. Either way it's a win. If you're trimming streaming costs You want to lean on free options and maybe drop a paid service or two.

- Use Kanopy and Hoopla for documentaries, classics, and kids' nights.
- Pair them with other free options and see which paid app you can pause.
- Our streaming-bill-audit guide helps you decide what to keep. If you just want more to watch Your bills are fine; you'd just like a deeper, ad-free well of good films.
- Treat Kanopy as your "something worthwhile" app for films and docs.
- Use Hoopla's wider catalog — and its music and audiobooks — too.
- Set the apps up on the big TV so a free movie night is one click away. I'll get the free stuff flowing Whether you're cutting a bill or just want more to watch, I'll link your card and set these up on your TV so free movie nights are effortless. Call (330) 200-8042.

FOR THE GRANDKIDS

11. A quiet win for the grandkids

Ad-free children's shows you don't have to pay for.

If the grandchildren visit, Kanopy Kids is a small treasure: a children's section with no advertising, curated so you're not worrying about what pops up next. Hoopla, too, carries plenty of family movies and shows. Because there are no ads and no autoplay into something unsuitable, it's a calmer, safer watch than many free video sites. It's also a gentle way to keep screen time in bounds — the monthly credit limit naturally caps how much gets watched, and the ad-free, curated nature means fewer surprises. A free, wholesome option that the parents will appreciate too. Kanopy Kids is ad-free by design. Unlike many free kids' video apps, Kanopy Kids carries no advertising and is curated for children. A reassuring choice when the little ones are over.

ALONGSIDE PAID APPS

12. How it fits with your paid subscriptions

Not a full replacement — a free, worthwhile supplement.

Be honest with yourself: Kanopy and Hoopla won't replace Netflix for the latest binge series, and they have monthly limits the paid services don't. But they can absolutely replace a chunk of what you watch — documentaries, classics, kids' shows, thoughtful films — and that may let you drop or pause a paid subscription you keep "just in case." A smart move is to treat the free library apps as your default first stop, and only fire up a paid service for the specific show it alone carries. Over a year, leaning on free first can quietly save real money without feeling like you've given anything up. Make the free apps your first stop. Before you reach for a paid service, check Kanopy and Hoopla. If what you want is there, you've just watched for free — and you may find you need fewer paid apps than you thought.

IF IT WON'T SIGN IN

13. If it won't accept your library card

Almost always a card, PIN, or branch mix-up.

The commonest snag is sign-in. If the app won't take your card, check three things: that you picked the exact right library system from the list (there are often several similarly named ones), that your card hasn't expired (a quick library visit or call renews it), and that you're using the correct PIN. An expired card or a wrong PIN is behind most "it won't let me in" calls. If all that checks out and it still balks, the library's help desk is the right call — they handle this every day and can confirm your account is active and your card is enrolled for the service. It's rarely anything wrong with your phone or TV. Pick the exact library from the list. Choosing the wrong branch or system from the app's list is the number-one sign-in snag. Make sure it's your actual library — not a similarly named one in another town.

COMMON MISTAKES

14. Common mistakes

Avoid these and your free movie nights go smoothly.

- Not knowing your PIN, which these apps usually require to sign in.
- Expecting unlimited viewing — there's a monthly credit cap set by your library.
- Starting titles to "sample" and burning credits you meant to save.
- Missing the free bonus collections that don't count against your limit.
- Assuming it's a trial that will start charging — it never does; there's no card on file.
- There's genuinely nothing to cancel. Because you never enter a payment card, there's no trial and no bill. If you stop using it, nothing happens. That worry stops some people from even trying — don't let it.

IS IT LEGITIMATE

15. Yes, it's completely legitimate

No scam, no catch, no data games you need to fear.

People are rightly wary of anything advertised as "free movies" — that phrase usually signals a scam or a piracy site. Kanopy and Hoopla are the real, aboveboard exception: established companies that libraries across the country contract with, paid for out of the library's budget the same way it pays for books and databases. You're not pirating anything and you're not the product. You get these apps only from your phone's official app store or your TV's app store, and you sign in only with your genuine library card on the app's own screens. If a website promises "free library movies" and asks for a credit card or a download from outside the app store, that's not Kanopy or Hoopla — steer clear.

WATCH OUT

Only install from the official app store. Get Kanopy and Hoopla from your device's real app store, never from a link in an email or an ad. The genuine apps never ask for a credit card — if something does, it's an impostor.

OTHER FREE OPTIONS

16. Other free things your library card unlocks

Movies are just the start.

Your library card opens more than films. Through Hoopla and apps like Libby, the same card lends e-books, audiobooks, digital magazines, and music — all free, all without ads. If you already know Libby for library books (we have a guide on it), think of Kanopy and Hoopla as the movie-and-music members of the same family. Many libraries also offer free access to learning courses, newspapers, and research databases through their websites. It's worth a browse of your library's digital resources page — the card in your wallet quietly unlocks a surprising amount, and it's all paid for already by your tax dollars. One card, a whole digital shelf. Films on Kanopy and Hoopla, books and audiobooks on Libby, plus magazines and courses — all from the one free card. It's the best bargain in town.

HELPING A RELATIVE

17. Setting it up for a parent

Free entertainment is a lovely, practical gift.

For an older parent, especially on a fixed income, free movies and shows through the library are a genuine kindness — more to watch without a bigger bill. Set the apps up on their TV, sign in with their card so they never have to fuss with it, and show them how to browse and press play. Keep it simple: a tidy home screen with just the apps they'll use. Write their library card number and PIN somewhere safe in case an app ever asks again, and point them at Kanopy Kids for when the great-grandchildren visit. A parent who discovers free documentaries and classic films tends to be delighted — and a little proud to show it off. A simple, free movie setup I'll link a parent's library card, put Kanopy and Hoopla on their TV, and show them how to use it — so free movie nights just work. Call (330) 200-8042.

GETTING THE MOST

18. Getting the most out of it

A few habits make the free well go further.

To stretch your monthly credits, browse and read descriptions freely (browsing costs nothing), then spend a credit only when you're sure. Save titles to a watchlist as you spot them so you're never short of ideas. Lean on the no-credit bonus collections, and if you hold cards at two library systems, remember each may carry its own allowance. And don't forget this is only part of a bigger free-and-cheap streaming picture — free ad-supported services, an antenna for local channels, and a yearly audit of your paid subscriptions all stack together. Our streaming-bill-audit and free-streaming guides round out the strategy. Build a watchlist as you browse When a film catches your eye, add it to your watchlist rather than starting it. Then on movie night you spend your credit on something you've already chosen — no waste.

CHECKLIST

19. Your free-movie-night checklist

Run down this list and you're watching for free tonight.

- Library card in hand, with its PIN (get or reset either if needed).
- Kanopy and/or Hoopla installed from the official app store.
- Signed in by choosing your exact library and entering your card + PIN.
- Apps also installed on your TV or streaming player (use link codes).
- Know your library's monthly credit limit and when it resets.
- Found the free bonus/no-credit collections.
- Built a watchlist so credits go to titles you've chosen.
- Free tonight, and every month after Once it's set up, a free movie night is always a click away — and the credits refill on the first of every month.

COMMON QUESTIONS

20. Common Questions

The questions I hear most about library streaming.

Q: Is this really free? What's the catch? Really free. Your library pays for it, there's no subscription and no credit card involved, and no ads. The only limit is a monthly cap on how many titles you can start, set by your library. Q: What's the difference between Kanopy and Hoopla? Kanopy leans toward quality films — documentaries, classics, independent and foreign movies, plus ad-free Kanopy Kids. Hoopla is broader, adding mainstream movies, TV, music, audiobooks, and comics. Many libraries offer both. Q: How many can I watch a month? It depends on your library — some allow a few titles, others a dozen or more. Credits reset on the first of the month and don't roll over. Check your library's page for your exact number. Q: Can I watch it on my TV, not just my phone? Yes. Install the apps on your Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV, Google TV, or smart TV, and sign in — often with an easy link code so you don't type on the remote. Q: Do I need anything besides a library card? Just the card and its PIN, plus the free app. No card on file, no payment, nothing to cancel. If your card expired, a quick renewal at the library fixes it. Want it set up and ready tonight? I'll link your card and get Kanopy and Hoopla running on your TV. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

QUICK RECAP

21. The quick recap

The whole guide in one glance.

- Kanopy and Hoopla stream movies and TV free, paid for by your library.
- No subscription, no credit card, no ads — just a library card and PIN.
- You spend monthly "credits" that reset on the first; limits vary by library.
- Kanopy = quality films and ad-free kids; Hoopla = broader, plus music and books.
- Install the apps on your phone and your TV; use link codes on the TV.
- Look for free bonus collections that don't use a credit.
- It's completely legitimate — only install from the official app store.
- The best bargain in streaming A free, ad-free movie night from the card already in your wallet. Once you know it's there, you'll wonder why you ever paid for all of it.

22. Watching on Your Computer, Too

You don't need an app — a web browser works fine.

Not everyone wants to fuss with apps, and the good news is you do not have to. Both Kanopy and Hoopla work right in a web browser on a computer — the same Chrome, Safari, Edge, or Firefox you already use for everything else. This is handy if you would rather watch at your desk, if your eyes do better on a larger screen, or if your TV situation is complicated and you just want to see a film tonight without wrestling with the television.

- 1 Open your web browser and type the service's name into the address bar yourself.
- 2 Go to the official Kanopy or Hoopla website — not a link from an email.
- 3 Choose "Find your library" or "Sign in," then pick your exact library.
- 4 Enter your library card number and PIN to sign in.
- 5 Browse, click a title, and press play right there in the browser.

Watching on a computer is a comfortable way to try these services before you set them up on the television, and it is a perfectly fine everyday option on its own. The picture fills your screen, the sound comes through your computer's speakers or a pair of headphones, and nothing extra needs installing — no download, no setup. If you later decide you want it on the big TV, the chapters on streaming players will walk you through that step by step.

TIP

Type the website name into the address bar yourself rather than clicking a link in a message. That one small habit keeps you safely on the real Kanopy or Hoopla site and well away from look-alike pages that copy their look.

23. Turning On Captions and Larger Text

Small comfort settings that make a big difference.

If the dialogue is ever hard to catch — mumbled lines, a quiet scene, an accent you are not used to — captions make a world of difference, and most titles on these services offer them. Captions are the words printed along the bottom of the screen as people speak. You usually turn them on from a little speech-bubble or "CC" icon on the playback screen while a film is playing. It takes one tap, and you can turn them off again just as easily when you do not want them.

- Look for a "CC" or speech-bubble icon on the playback screen for captions.
- Many titles let you choose caption size and background for easier reading.
- Your TV or phone also has system-wide caption and text-size settings.
- Some films offer audio description, a narrated track describing the action.
- Turn the device volume up, and consider a small soundbar if speech is muffled.

Beyond captions, your phone, tablet, and TV each have their own accessibility settings that make everything larger and clearer — bigger text, higher contrast, bolder letters, and more. Those live in the device's Settings, usually under a section called "Accessibility." Setting them once improves not just these apps but everything you do on the device, from email to photos. It is well worth a few minutes, and a helper can sit and do it with you if the menus feel unfamiliar.

GOOD TO KNOW

Captions are a one-tap comfort, not an admission of anything. Plenty of people leave them on all the time simply because it is easier to follow along — there is no reason at all not to use them.

24. When a Movie Won't Play or Keeps Buffering

Stuttering or spinning usually points to the internet.

If a film freezes, spins, or keeps pausing to "buffer," it is almost always the internet connection catching its breath, not a fault in the app or anything wrong with your card. Streaming video is a steady river of data coming over your internet, and when that river narrows for a moment, the picture stops to wait for more to arrive. The fixes are the same ones that help any streaming slow down, and you can run through them calmly.

- 1 Pause the film for a minute to let it build up a buffer, then resume.
- 2 Check other things are online — try a website on your phone.
- 3 Restart your internet router: unplug it, wait thirty seconds, plug it back in.
- 4 Move closer to the router, or restart the streaming device or app.
- 5 Try lowering the video quality in the app's settings if the option is there.

If only one device struggles while the others are fine, that device probably has a weak Wi-Fi signal where it sits — a mesh point or an extender can push better signal into that spot. If everything in the house is slow at once, the whole connection is the issue, and a router restart or a call to your internet provider is the next step. A brief stutter now and then is normal and nothing to worry about; it is constant buffering that means the connection needs attention.

TIP

Pausing a film for a minute before you settle in to watch lets it get comfortably ahead of itself, so it plays smoothly instead of stopping to buffer every few minutes. It is the simplest trick for a shaky connection.

25. Casting From Your Phone, Step by Step

When there's no TV app, send the picture from your phone.

If an app is not available on your particular TV, you can often "cast" — start the movie on your phone and send the picture up to the television. It is not quite as smooth as a built-in TV app, but it works well and uses equipment many people already own. The two common flavors are Chromecast, built into Google TV and many Android phones, and AirPlay, built into Apple iPhones and iPads.

- 1 Make sure your phone and the TV are on the same home Wi-Fi network.
- 2 Open the Kanopy or Hoopla app on your phone and start a film.
- 3 Look for the little cast icon — a screen with waves, or the AirPlay triangle.
- 4 Tap it and choose your TV or streaming device from the list.
- 5 The picture jumps to the TV; use your phone as the remote to pause and play.

While casting, your phone is the control — leave it nearby, though you can usually lock the screen and the film keeps playing on the TV just fine. If you see no cast icon at all, the app on that device may not support casting, in which case a native TV app, where one is offered, is the better and steadier route. Think of casting as a handy bridge for the times when a direct app simply is not available on your screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

Casting needs your phone and TV on the same Wi-Fi network — that is the one thing people miss. If the cast icon will not find your TV, that mismatch is almost always why; get both onto the same network and it appears.

26. A Closer Look at Libby for Books and Audiobooks

The same card borrows reading and listening, too.

While Kanopy and Hoopla handle movies, a companion app called Libby handles library books and audiobooks, all borrowed free with the very same card. If you enjoy reading or listening, it is a natural next step, and it works much like the movie apps you have already learned: you borrow a title, enjoy it for a lending period, and it returns itself automatically when the time is up — no late fees, ever, and nothing to remember to bring back.

- Libby lends e-books and audiobooks free through your library card.
- Borrowed titles return themselves at the end of the lending period.
- Popular titles may have a wait list, just like a physical book on the shelf.
- You can read on a phone or tablet, or send e-books to a compatible e-reader.
- Audiobooks play through the app — lovely for drives, chores, or resting your eyes.

Setting up Libby is the same comfortable routine as the movie apps: install it from your device's official app store, find your library in the list, and sign in with your card and PIN. If a book you want has a wait, you place a hold and the app quietly notifies you when it is your turn. Think of Kanopy, Hoopla, and Libby as three doors into the same free library — movies through one, music through another, and the written and spoken word through the third.

GOOD TO KNOW

Audiobooks on Libby are a quiet joy for anyone whose eyes tire easily in the evening. The same free card that streams your movies will read whole books aloud to you, with nothing more to pay and no clutter to store.

27. Downloading a Title to Watch Offline

For a trip, a cabin, or a spotty connection.

If you are heading somewhere without good internet — a long drive, a flight, a cabin up north, a hospital stay — you can often download a title ahead of time and watch it later without any connection at all. Hoopla in particular lets you download many of its movies and shows to your phone or tablet while you are on Wi-Fi, so they are tucked away and ready to play wherever you end up, even with no signal in sight.

- 1 While on good Wi-Fi at home, open the app and find a title you want.
- 2 Look for a download icon — usually a small downward arrow.
- 3 Tap it and wait for the download to finish before you leave home.
- 4 Later, with no internet, open the app and play the downloaded title.
- 5 Delete it when you are done to free up space on your device.

A few sensible notes keep this smooth. Downloads take up storage on your device, so a long film is a sizeable file — always do it over home Wi-Fi, not on a phone data plan, to avoid surprise charges. The downloaded title still counts as one of your monthly borrows, and it stays available only for the normal borrowing window before it tidies itself away. Download the evening before a trip, and you will have entertainment ready the moment the signal drops away.

WATCH OUT

Download over home Wi-Fi, never over a phone's cellular data — a movie is a large file and could run up real data charges. Do it the night before you travel, with plenty of time to spare for it to finish.

28. Finding Something Good to Watch

Browsing tips so you're never stuck staring at the screen.

A free film does you no good if you cannot decide what to watch, and "there's nothing on" is a feeling everyone knows. A few simple habits turn that into a cozy evening with a good film. The most freeing thing to remember is that browsing itself is always free — you only spend a credit when you actually press play — so you can look as long as you like without it costing you a thing.

- Browse by category: documentaries, classics, foreign films, family, and more.
- Use the search box if you have a specific title, director, or actor in mind.

- Read the short description before you start, so the credit goes to a sure thing.
- Look at curated lists and staff picks — a gentle shortcut to good films.
- Check the Kanopy Kids or family section when the grandchildren visit.

If you are the type who likes to plan ahead, keep a running watchlist, which we cover more fully elsewhere — jot down anything that catches your eye so movie night always has a ready answer waiting. And do not overlook the quieter corners of these services: documentaries, classic cinema, and acclaimed independent films are exactly where they shine, often carrying titles the big paid services do not have at all. That is their real treasure.

GOOD TO KNOW

Browsing and reading descriptions never costs a credit — only pressing play does. So take your time, read a few summaries, follow a staff pick, and spend your credit on something you are genuinely sure you want to see.

29. Setting It Up on Roku, Fire TV, and Apple TV

The same idea on each of the common streaming boxes.

Most living rooms today run on one of a few streaming devices, and installing Kanopy or Hoopla is much the same on each of them. Whether you have a Roku, an Amazon Fire TV, an Apple TV, or a Google TV, the recipe does not change: open that device's app store, search for the app, install it, and sign in. The buttons just look a little different from one brand to the next, so do not let that throw you.

- 1 Turn on the TV and go to your streaming device's home screen.
- 2 Find its app store — "Search" or the store section, depending on the device.
- 3 Search for "Kanopy" or "Hoopla" and choose "Install" or "Add channel."
- 4 Open the installed app and choose to sign in.
- 5 When it shows a code and a web address, enter the code on your phone or computer to link your card.

That last step — the link code — is the real gift, and it is worth looking for every time. Instead of pecking out your whole card number with the remote one slow character at a time, the TV shows a short code, you type that code on a web page on your phone, and the two connect themselves. It is far quicker and avoids typos. Once you are signed in, the app simply sits among your other channels, ready whenever you are.

TIP

Always use the on-screen link code when a TV app offers one. Typing a few characters on your phone beats spelling out your whole library card number with a remote, one slow letter at a time, and getting it wrong twice.

30. How Much Internet Does Streaming Use?

For anyone on a slower or limited connection.

Streaming a movie uses internet data steadily the whole time it plays, which matters if your connection is slow or your plan has a monthly data cap. The reassuring news is that watching library films is no heavier than watching Netflix or YouTube — if those already work for you, so will Kanopy and Hoopla. It is really only worth thinking about on genuinely limited connections, which most homes do not have.

- Streaming uses data continuously while a film plays — more for higher quality.
- If regular streaming already works in your home, these apps will too.
- On a capped internet plan, several long films a day can add up.
- Most apps let you lower the video quality to use less data.
- Downloading over Wi-Fi, then watching offline, uses no data at viewing time.

If you are on a slower rural connection or a data-capped plan — a satellite or cellular home internet, for instance — you can lower the picture quality in the app's settings to ease the load, or download titles over Wi-Fi to watch later with no data at all. For most home internet today, though, a free movie night will not trouble your connection in the least. It is simply good to know the dial exists, tucked away in settings, for the rare times you might need it.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your internet is slow or capped, lowering the video quality in the app lets films play with far less data, trading a little sharpness for a steady picture. On ordinary home internet, you will never need to think about it.

31. Hoopla's Music, Audiobooks, and Comics

One login opens far more than movies.

Hoopla is broader than its movies, and this is easy to miss when you came for a film. The very same login, the same free library card, and the same monthly borrows also lend music albums, audiobooks, e-books, and comics. So one app can quietly be your movie night, your music, and your listening all at once — a surprising amount of value tucked behind a single sign-in you have already set up.

- Movies and TV, the headline feature, in a broad everyday catalog.
- Full music albums you can stream or download to enjoy.
- Audiobooks to listen to on a drive or while resting your eyes.
- E-books and digital comics, including many graphic novels.
- All of it drawn from the same monthly borrow allowance your library sets.

Because everything shares one monthly allowance, a borrow spent on an album is a borrow not spent on a film, so it is worth choosing with a little intention rather than grabbing everything. But the breadth is genuinely useful across a week: a long car trip can be an audiobook, a quiet afternoon a favorite classic album, and movie night a documentary — all from the one free app. Many people who signed up only for films end up using the rest just as much.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you came to Hoopla for movies, take a look at its music and audiobooks too while you are there. It is the same card and the same borrows, so you are already paying nothing for a whole shelf of extras.

32. Sharing One Card Across the House

Using your library account on more than one screen.

A common question I hear is whether the household can use one library card on several devices at once. Generally the answer is yes — you can sign in with the same card on the living-room TV, your phone, and a tablet, so you are not tied to a single screen. The monthly borrow limit, though, belongs to the card, not the device. So everyone sharing that one card is drawing from the same pool of credits each month, which is the thing to keep in mind.

- Sign in with one card on the TV, a phone, and a tablet alike.

- All those devices share the card's single monthly borrow allowance.
- Two people in the house with their own cards means two separate allowances.
- A title you start on one device can often be resumed on another.
- Keep the card number and PIN noted safely for when a device asks again.

If the household watches a lot and keeps running out of borrows before the month is up, the simple answer is for each adult to have their own library card — each card brings its own separate monthly allowance, and library cards are free to get. That effectively multiplies your household's free movie nights without a single penny changing hands. For most couples, two cards is plenty to keep everyone happy all month.

GOOD TO KNOW

The monthly limit lives on the card, not the device or the screen. If your household keeps running short before the month ends, a second free library card for another adult quietly doubles your borrows at no cost.

33. Keeping Your Logins Straight

A gentle system so you're never locked out.

The most common snag with these services, after the library card itself, is simply forgetting how you signed in months ago. Kanopy and Hoopla may each ask you to create a small account with an email and password so the app remembers you, on top of your library card and PIN. That is a few separate pieces to keep track of, and jotting them all down in one spot saves real frustration the day something asks you to sign in again.

- Your library card number and PIN — the keys to everything.
- Any email and password you set up for Kanopy or Hoopla itself.
- Which library system you chose from the list, in case you must sign in again.
- Where each of these is written down, kept somewhere safe at home.

Write these on a single sheet and tuck it somewhere safe at home — a drawer with your other important papers, or a password manager if you have taken to using one. It is best to avoid keeping passwords in a text message or an unlocked phone note. If you do get stuck, each app has a "forgot password" link that emails you a reset, and your library can always reset your card PIN over the phone. You are never truly locked out; it is only ever a short detour.

TIP

Keep your card number, PIN, and any app passwords on one sheet in a safe spot. Ninety percent of "it won't let me in" moments are just a forgotten detail that this one simple page prevents entirely.

34. When the App Needs an Update

Keeping the apps fresh so they keep working.

Now and then an app that worked perfectly fine starts acting up — a film will not load, a screen looks wrong or blank, or it crashes the moment you open it. Before you worry about your card or your device being broken, the likeliest cause by far is simply that the app is due for an update. Apps are improved and fixed constantly behind the scenes, and an out-of-date one can misbehave until it catches up to the current version.

- 1 On a phone or tablet, open the app store and check for updates to Kanopy or Hoopla.
- 2 Install any waiting update, then open the app again and try.
- 3 On a streaming TV, apps usually update themselves, but you can remove and reinstall a stubborn one.
- 4 Close the app fully and reopen it, or restart the device, to clear a stuck app.
- 5 If it still misbehaves, sign out and back in with your card and PIN.

Most phones and streaming devices can update apps automatically if you let them, which saves you the chore entirely — it is a setting well worth turning on once and forgetting. When an app truly will not behave even after updating and restarting, removing it and installing it fresh from the official app store almost always clears the trouble, and your library card simply signs you right back in where you left off.

GOOD TO KNOW

An app that suddenly misbehaves is more often out of date than broken. Updating it, or removing and reinstalling it, fixes most glitches — and your library card logs you straight back in with nothing lost.

BILL'S HERE TO HELP

35. You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made getting free library movies onto your TV feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything. When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I'm a patient tech helper — not a mechanic, an electrician, or the manufacturer — so for repairs, wiring, or warranty work I'll help you understand your options and line up a trustworthy local pro. Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Kanopy vs. Hoopla

Two free library apps, slightly different strengths

	Best for	Also has
Kanopy	Films, docs,	classics
Kanopy Kids	Ad-free kids	Curated, safe
Hoopla	Movies + TV	Music, audiobooks
Both	Free, no ads	Monthly credit cap

Many libraries offer both -- so you get the best of each, free.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

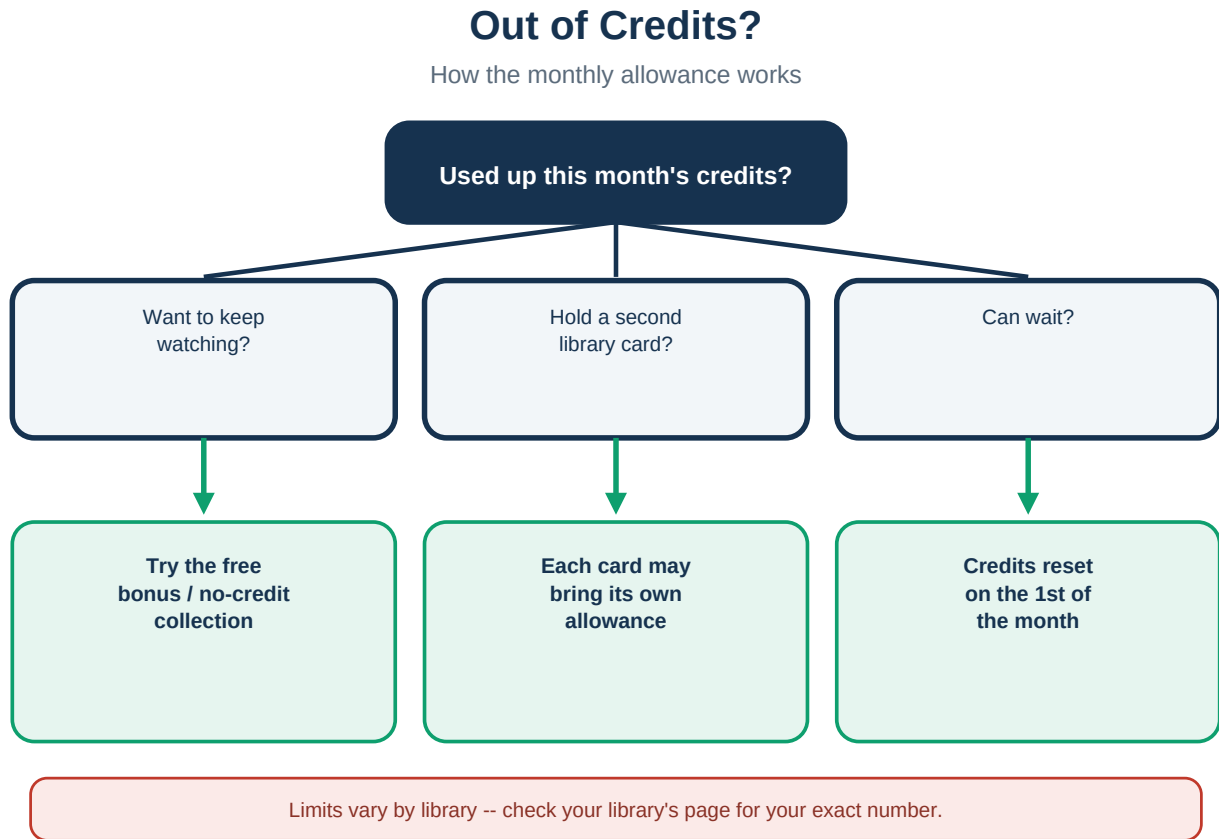


Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

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