

COPYRIGHT LAW

What is Copyright?

Copyright is the law of the United States that protects the work of authors, artists, composers, and others from being used without permission.

Does the public have a right to use music and art?

Yes, in fact, copyright laws try to balance the rights of artists and others with the rights of the public. **Fair Use** protects the rights of the public to limited use of copyright material.

What is Public Domain?

Works that are not copyrighted are **public domain** and may be used without permission. However, you should still give credit to the source.

What is Fair Use?

Fair Use allows you to use a limited amount of copyrighted material for your educational use. Think about the material you want to use in your report. Does it pass these tests:

Does it have a non-profit educational purpose? What kind of material do you want to use? Are you using only a small portion? Will your use deprive the author from making money?

I found a great photograph from the Smithsonian web site. Can I use it in my report?

Yes, the Smithsonian has granted permission to students to use their photographs for school reports. Many materials are in the public domain at government web sites. Be sure to read the copyright statements

Does it matter how much of a song or video I use?

Yes. Amount refers to use of a portion of a work. For motion media, you can use 10% or up to 1,000 words. For music, lyrics and so forth you can use up to 10%, but no more than 30 seconds of an individual work.

Can't I use images and text from a site if it doesn't have the word copyright or the copyright symbol on the page?

Just because a page doesn't have the word or the symbol @ doesn't mean it isn't copyrighted. In fact, almost everything on the web is copyrighted.

I can show everybody my project by putting it on my web page, right?

Not quite. When you put your material on a web page, then it's being shown to an audience outside your school. If you have copyrighted material, normally exempted for student projects within a school, your project no longer falls under the **Fair Use** umbrella.

What is attribution?

You should always give **credit or attribution** to the person who created the work such as a photograph, sound recording, motion picture, or document.

I want to use a cool sound recording from a web site, but I can't find anything about copyright. What should I do?

The best policy is to write for permission to use the file. Find the contact person and compose an email message. Put "**Permission to Use**" in the subject line. Most of time you will receive a reply to your request. Do not assume that **no response** means it is okay to use it.

Who's going to know?

You'll know! Besides, put yourself in the author's place. What if you created a great thing-a-ma-jig but someone made a copy so now no one would buy them?

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