

All creators are inspired by something. Whether it is a piece of music, a blog post, a poem, a rap, a logo, a video, a photo collage...creators' ideas or inspirations most often come from something else that has been created. So how do you know when it's okay – and when it's not okay – to use someone else's work, or parts of someone's work, in yours? How can you protect your rights as a creator while respecting the rights of other creators?

COPYRIGHT is the legal protection for a creative work that gives the creator control over his/her work. Copyright provides them with control over their work to: reproduce or make copies, distribute, sell, make new work based on the original work, and perform their work. Using it (sharing, copying, performing) without getting permission is called copyright infringement and is against the law.

Copyright Protects any original idea or artistic creation in any media that is recorded in some form. For example:

- Books, scripts, blogs, poetry, lyrics, research paper, article, review, any form of writing
- Artwork, photographs, any form of visual materials
- Websites
- Dance, theatre, performance art
- Video, film, video games, animations
- Music, sound works, audio recording, or multimedia creation

Copyright Does Not Protect the facts or ideas that your creation is based on; it only protects your original creative expression. For example: facts, common knowledge, and ideas are considered within the **public domain** (see next page).

PLAGIARISM is when you copy and paste, or use someone else's words or work (intentionally or unintentionally), as your own. A way to avoid doing this is to take notes in your own words, avoid "copying & pasting," and properly cite your source(s) (where you found the information), giving credit to the original author(s).

PIRACY means more than what Hook and Johnny Depp's character are famous for, but is not that far off! Copying, downloading, sharing music, video games, movies, software, or other digital media, in order to keep, sell or give it away without paying for it or permission is called piracy. Ways to avoid being a digital pirate include buying the song, game, or movie from a reliable source (rather than from a friend, neighbor, or street vendor) and listening to it, playing it, or watching it with a friend (rather than burning a copy for them).

DID YOU KNOW?

- The former music sharing service Napster was famously shut down due to copyright infringement.
- Not all copyrighted content has the © symbol.
- Copyrights expire 70 years after the death of the creator.

WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR WORK

- 1** Sign all your work with your full name and date
- 2** Add a © symbol and date to your work
- 3** Put a watermark (digital stamp) on your digital photographs or artwork
- 4** Add credits with your name (and any collaborators) to your digital creations

DIGITAL PIRATES A RRRRRRR NOT SO COOL:

- Buy legally to support your favorite artist or game designer...so they can keep doing what you both love and appreciate!
- Ever seen this? >>> Where? And what do you think about it?



PUBLIC DOMAIN is another way of saying "belonging to everyone." There is a lot of content within the public domain: ideas, facts, common knowledge, or U.S. government documents are considered public domain. If you want to use music, photography, artwork, text, or video in a project fairly, check out **Creative Commons, Wikipedia, Flickr**, or ask your school or local librarian to help you find content you can use.

CREATORS' TIPS

To protect yourself, and be fair to others, follow these tips before using creations, information, or things you found:

- ▶ **GIVE CREDIT!** Check who made or created whatever you found. Give credit to the author or source. If you can't find an author's name, note the organization's name and location.
- ▶ **TAKE GOOD NOTES!** Note the website where you found whatever creative work you want to use or reference (i.e., book, photo, video, article, music, design, etc.) Make note of the date. Write down as much information about the author or creator as you can find. You will need it!
- ▶ **ORGANIZE!** Bookmark each site you use and save information in a Word document and organize it by medium or alphabetize it by author.
- ▶ **ASK!** Ask for permission to use it. Find an email or other contact information and send a request explaining what you want to use, why and how you will use the creation, and for how long.
- ▶ **BUY IT!** Sometimes you're going to have to spend to use something. You may pay money to use it in certain ways or buy it to own it completely.
- ▶ **BE ORIGINAL!** There are still plenty of good ideas that haven't been created yet. You're original, and your ideas and creations can be too. Here's your chance!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Works in the "public domain" are free to use without needing permission.
- Public domain works include:
 - > Content that was originally copyrighted, but the copyright has expired. (Usually a copyright lasts the life of the creator plus 70 years)
 - > Content that was never copyrighted by the creator
 - > Content that is created by the U.S. government