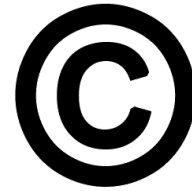


Copyright

The person that holds the copyright for a work is the person that has the right to copy that work. Mostly, the copyright holder is the author, artist, composer, etc. who originally created the work, but not always. The holder of the copyright is the person or persons who have the legal right to reproduce, distribute copies, adapt, perform or publicly display the work.



Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States authorizes Congress to "to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries."

In other words, copyright is intended to protect people who create original work from being stolen from. That way, they will be more likely to produce more creative work.

Some things cannot be copyrighted, such as a slogan. Slogans and titles and symbols are instead trademarked by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Work created after 1989 doesn't have to explicitly say that it is copyrighted in order to be copyrighted. It doesn't have to have a © on it. The instant a thought is recorded in some way, written or filmed or recorded, it is automatically copyrighted. You can officially register a work with the U.S. Copyright Office, though, and if you do, you will probably get a larger legal settlement if your copyright is infringed.



For works created after 1977, copyright lasts for the lifetime of the copyright holder, plus 70 years, unless it's a corporate author, in which case it can last 95 to 120 years. After the work has passed out of copyright, it is in the *public domain*, meaning anyone is free to use, adapt, distribute, or copy it as much as they want.

One general rule is if the work was published before 1923, it's definitely in the public domain, and you can use and copy it however you wish. But you still have to cite it.

Also, if you download, copy, or share music, videos, pictures, movies, or software from the Internet, make sure you're doing so legally. The Recording Industry Association of America has even successfully prosecuted 12-year-olds for illegally downloading music. They're dead serious about it.

Plagiarism

The Lane Community College Student Code of Conduct defines plagiarism as "the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person, without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials such as term papers or other academic materials prepared by a person other than the submitting student."



Academically it's okay and encouraged that you use someone else's ideas and words in your own work. That's part of the learning process. But if you do that without saying where you got it from, then your reader will assume that you're saying that you're the one that came up with it. You would be stealing someone else's ideas and passing them off as your own, which in a college environment is not acceptable. It also constitutes a copyright law violation.



Sometimes the line between plagiarism and your own work can be blurry. For instance, you are not required to cite information that is *common knowledge*. So, for example, if you write a paper and say that plants use a process called photosynthesis in order to produce oxygen, you don't have to cite it because that information is commonly known. But if you write a paper and use the exact wording of a textbook that discusses photosynthesis, then you should quote it and cite it.

When you use the original text *exactly* as written, word-for-word, it's called a *direct quote*. You must put it in quotation marks and cite it.

When you use put another's ideas into your own words, it's called *paraphrasing*. You still must cite it, even if you're not putting it in quotation marks--for example if the author talks about photosynthesis being the most energy-efficient process on Earth or something like that.

When you are using information that you found on the Web, the same rules apply. Quote it and cite it if you are using someone else's exact words, and cite it if you are paraphrasing. Almost everything on the Web is copyrighted, even though it might not say so.

Remember that if you found it on the Web or in a Library database, your teacher can find it too. You might get in trouble for plagiarism if you don't properly cite it. Teachers are more experienced at spotting plagiarized work than you might think; they can often tell just by comparing it to your previous work or even the way you talk.



Resist temptation. Don't get into situations where you are tempted to plagiarize. Start your writing assignments early. Ask for help from you instructor. Ask for help from the Tutoring Center or at the Library Reference Desk. We want you to succeed, but you have to ask for help!