

Copyright The Basics



What is copyright? In the UK 'copyright' exists automatically in any piece of work that has been created by human effort, from the written word to art, music, typographic design and even databases. Only the creators of individual "works" have the right to copy their own work freely (and to choose what else happens to their work). Everyone else must respect that copyright and either ask for permission before copying a work, or hold off from copying it at all.

Is there copyright in online text and images? Yes, they're no different from printed text and images. It's a common misconception that digital material is copyright-free – it isn't. Just because it's easy to copy, doesn't mean you should do so.

Why shouldn't I copy stuff I want to use? As well as the laws that protect copyright, there are ethical reasons to respect it. Copyright means that creators get recognition for their work, including payment if they decide to licence their work. If you wrote or designed something, wouldn't you want to be recognised and rewarded for your creativity? Or at least to have some choice in the matter? Also, if you don't bother to reference other people's work when you re-use it, you could fall foul of plagiarism rules. So, show respect.

Check out the pages on copyright on AskHerts for lots more help, including info on fair dealing and other exceptions to use of copyrighted material.

Plagiarism? It means passing someone else's work off as your own. It's a serious academic offence and can result in an assignment being failed.

But I need to use other people's research, don't I? Plagiarism also includes quoting or paraphrasing an author's work without giving a reference and you may plagiarise without meaning to, if you don't understand how to reference your work properly. So it's important to correctly acknowledge the work and ideas of others.



Plagiarism

Always include attributions (a.k.a. references) to others' work when you write assignments. That includes for text quotations, maps, images, ideas, results, programs, diagrams, charts, tables and figures.

There's more information about academic integrity and how to reference properly on Library SkillUp.

SHARING DIGITAL MATERIALS ©

What are 'Creative Commons'? In recent years a new way of dealing with intellectual property has grown up. Sometimes called copyleft, it sits 'on top' of copyright and is a system that allows copyright owners to let other people know what they are happy for them to do with their work. These are Creative Commons licences – CC for short.

So there's more than one CC licence? For someone who wants to re-use copyright material, the presence of a particular Creative Commons licence answers the question, "What can I do with this work?" (though not everything will have one).

How can I find pictures I'm allowed to use? When you search for an image on Google Images, click on 'Tools' and then on 'Usage Rights' to be able to limit your search to images with CC-licences already applied.

Creative Commons

The licences range from highly permissive to less so. Full details of Creative Commons licenses are on the Creative Commons website – <https://creativecommons.org/about/cclicenses/>

- CC 0 means that a creator has surrendered their copyright altogether and put their work into the public domain – so there are no conditions for re-use.
- CC BY: allows re-users to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, so long as the creator is acknowledged by an attribution (hence the 'BY' part of the name). This licence allows for commercial use.
- CC BY-SA: the same as CC BY, with the addition that you must licence the modified material under identical terms ('SA' stands for 'share alike').
- You can add NC to either of the above licences, meaning all uses of the material must be for non-commercial purposes only.
- A final element can be added to the licences: ND, which stands for 'non-derivative'. That means 'derivatives' or adaptations of the work, including translations, are not permitted without the author's permission.



What is Open Access? Open Access (OA) refers to online research outputs that are free of all restrictions on access (e.g. no paywalls) and free of many restrictions on use. OA can be applied to all forms of published research output, including academic journal articles, conference papers, and books. It goes hand in hand with Creative Commons licences and there is usually some form of CC licence on OA research.

What's behind the idea of OA? The OA movement has grown up in response to the seemingly inexorable rise in the price of published research (mainly journal subscription prices, but also the high price of books), coupled with an ideological belief that taxpayer-funded research should be free at the point of use. We are currently in a transition period during which Open Access is gradually making headway. Organisations that fund research are spearheading the campaign to make it more open.

So can I re-use anything in an OA work? Open Access is great for anyone who wants access to research but remember to check the licence before you re-use OA material. Also, a text may be fully Open Access but the images, maps, diagrams etc embedded in it may not be. Check individual pictures for details of what's allowed, if you want to re-use them in your work.



Open Access

