



TEACHERS' NOTES: COPYRIGHT

What is copyright for?

Copyright is one of the ways that a person can own something they have created. This could mean that they will be able to make money from their work, and make it clear to everyone that they have created it. If someone holds the copyright for their work others are not allowed to copy it or use it without permission.

Many kinds of work can be protected in this way, including music (both the musical notes themselves and the way the music has been recorded), films and computer programmes, but we will start by looking at how copyright applies to books

Why do we need it?

If you do a lot of work on something, such as a project or coursework, and someone else pretends that they did the work, that's not fair. In the same way, if you wrote a book you would not want someone else to take the credit for it, or to copy it.

Imagine that you spent at least a year writing a book and it was published but it didn't sell many copies. Then, 10 years later, someone else writes a book that uses exactly the same story with the same characters. That book sells lots of copies, the author becomes famous and is on TV all the time talking about "their" book.

Or imagine that you found out that everyone could read your book for free on the Internet when it had taken you such a long time to write it and you needed money from selling the book to live on.

How would you feel then?

What does copyright mean?

You can show your work is protected by copyright just by using the © symbol. This means nobody can copy or share it without your permission and you can charge them money for copying or sharing it (economic rights). Even if someone does pay you for copying your work, you are still the owner of the work and you can still insist on being given credit for it and deciding how it is used (this is called moral rights). All books published in the UK since 1988 include a statement about the author/illustrator's moral right to be identified as the author/illustrator.

A book is protected by copyright until 70 years after the author (or illustrator, etc.) dies. If there is more than one author, the copyright protection lasts until 70 years after the last author dies. If the book is then published again with an introduction by another author, that author's introduction is protected by copyright.

Exploring Copyright: Primary Activities

Choose any book in the classroom, school library or at home.

Find the title page, which is usually a few pages in on the right hand side. Often the book's page numbers have not started yet, but if they had the title page would be around page 5.

Look at the left hand page opposite the title page where you will find, in most books the copyright symbol – © followed by a year.

The © symbol is a label for the part of the book contributed by the author and in many cases the illustrator. The © year is the year that the book was published, not when it was written.

If more than one author has written the book, each author will have a © symbol for their chapter or story next to the date that it was published.

If a book contains lots of photographs, illustrations and graphics (for example maps and charts), each one might have a © symbol. Sometimes all the copyright details will be printed together at the back of the book. The designer of a book can also have a © symbol because the designer has chosen the way the words and images in the book have been arranged as a whole.

Find following types of books in your school or public library and find examples of the copyright symbol:

- A non-fiction book with photographs or illustrations.
- A picture book with an author and illustrator
- A book that has been translated from another language
- An anthology of poems or stories.

Watch a film or TV programme and find out where the © symbol appears.

In groups of three or four, create a display explaining how copyright works and why it is important.

- Give each team member one topic or type of book to research.
- Write up your findings in sections.
- Prepare a copyright sheet for the project which gives everyone credit for their share of the work. So there will be a © symbol for each piece of writing and also for each illustration whether you have found illustrations on the internet or created them yourself.
- Create a display including the copyright sheet.

Create a comic strip story including

- A writer who has written a new book
- A villain who wants to steal the writer's work
- A Copyright Cop who stops the thief.

Display the finished story and don't forget to credit the writer and illustrator.

Exploring Copyright: Secondary Activities

RESEARCH TASK

Find out when you are allowed to copy someone else's work and how to credit them.

Which of these activities would be an infringement of copyright if you did not have permission for them?

- A production of a play by Shakespeare
- A production of the musical Wicked
- Photocopying poems by Carol Ann Duffy, the Poet Laureate, and handing them out to the public at a National Poetry Day event.
- Publishing poems by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, the First World War poets, in a newspaper to commemorate the First World War.
- Recording books as audio files for visually impaired people.

Find out about exceptions to copyright using reference books and the internet.

How to respect copyright

If you include material from someone else's book in a project or essay, you need to credit the book by listing the author's name, the title of the book, the name of the publisher, the year the book was published and the city it was published in.

TALKING POINTS

Some ideas to explore in an assembly, library lesson, book group, tutor group, after-school club or breakfast club (whenever there is room for a discussion)

1. Writers and illustrators are often asked to donate their work for free, for example to contribute a story to an anthology, or give artwork to be auctioned or sold to raise money.

- Why might some people think that's a reasonable thing to ask (for example: it's for charity; the publisher of the book can't afford to pay; the story was written a long time ago)?

- How does this compare with what we expect people with other jobs to do for free?

- Are writers and illustrators justified in refusing to give their work away?

2. Why should copyright last for 70 years after the writer's death?

- The writers can decide who gets the benefit of their life's work after their death: their families or whoever inherits their literary estate. How long should this continue? (J M Barrie left the copyright of his play Peter Pan to Great Ormond Street children's hospital. The copyright expired in 2007 but an exception was made to the 70-year rule for the hospital which still benefits from new productions and adaptations of the play within the UK.)

- Other classic books such as Alice in Wonderland and The Wind in the Willows can be copied and adapted freely. If a new illustrated edition of Alice in Wonderland is published with a much shorter text, the illustrator and the writer of the new Alice are protected by copyright while Lewis Carroll isn't. Is this fair?

- Could some characters in books, such as Alice and Peter Pan, be so well known outside the books that they could be said to no longer belong to the writer? In this case, should the writer's family still make money from them?