It’s easy to copy a DVD or music file, scan an image, transfer digital files, photocopy, stream video, etc. Sometimes it works better to substitute the word “use” for “copy.” How do you know if the use is legal? How much is too much? What are your rights and responsibilities as a user of information?

This is an overview of copyright for students and PreK-12 educators. You’ll find several “think-about” sections to help you decide if copying is a good idea for these areas and more:

- Fair Use
- Web Content Creation
- Images
- Video and Continuous Learning
Copyright Decision Tree

Is the work in the public domain or is the use allowed under a license agreement?

- Yes: Go ahead and use it. Include a citation.

  Is there a Creative Commons license that allows the use?

    - Yes: Go ahead and use it. Include a citation.
    - No: Does the use meet all four fair use criteria (and is not specifically prohibited)?

      - Yes: Go ahead and use it. Include a citation.
      - No: Is the use allowed under the copyright law or related acts?

        - Yes: Go ahead and use it. Include a citation.
        - No: Are there special uses during a global public health emergency?

          - Yes: Only if special, specific licensing terms are given by the copyright owner. Use according to those specific terms (including the end-date). Include a citation.
          - No: Consider asking for permission or don't use it.
Copyright law goes way back to the days of Benjamin Franklin. Any creative work is copyrighted, even if not registered with the copyright office.

- Even if a creative work doesn’t have the © symbol, assume it’s still copyrighted. As soon as a work is a “tangible medium of expression,” it is copyrighted.

- If you purchased a book, streaming service, video, game, sheet music, etc., you have a legitimate copy for your limited personal use. You haven’t purchased the copyright. Frankly, you probably couldn’t afford to purchase the rights!

- Why is it important? It’s the law. It’s only right to respect the rights and property of others, just as others need to respect your copyright. It’s big business (think of recent examples in the music industry, Twitter, and YouTube). It can affect you because copyright infringement is easily detected with bots and reported (800 numbers).
Copyright Owner’s Exclusive Rights

Copyright Law gives certain exclusive rights to the copyright owner. If this was all of the law, no one could listen, read, view, share, adapt, project, or perform works.

1. **reproduce** the copyrighted work in copies or phonorecords;
2. **prepare derivative works** based upon the copyrighted work;
3. **distribute copies** or phonorecords of the copyrighted work to the public (sale, transfer of ownership, rental, lease, or lending);
4. **perform** the copyrighted work **publicly**;
5. **display** the copyrighted work **publicly**;
6. **perform** a copyrighted sound recording **publicly** by means of a **digital** audio transmission.

Fair use and educational exemptions for teaching provide the guidance for working with copyrighted works. And, that’s where the balancing act begins – between copyright owner’s rights and the user’s rights and responsibilities when using those works.
It Starts with Fair Use

Fair use is part of the copyright law. It should be a well-thought reason for copying. Fair use is a “defense” to a claim of infringement, not an automatic excuse.

Fair use of a copyrighted work can be used for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. Even with these permissions, not every use in education is a fair use. If the copying is not specifically prohibited in the copyright law, it may be allowed under fair use.

There are no legal rules about how many words, notes, or minutes can be used, but it is fair to suggest that one should use as little as needed.

Fair use was meant to be flexible. You have to make good decisions based on a careful study of the circumstances. Use the four criteria listed below to decide if the copying is a fair use. All four of the criteria must be met.

• Purpose and character of the use (nonprofit, educational, etc.)
• Nature of the copyrighted work (factual, creative, published, etc.)
• Amount to be copied in relation to the whole
• Effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the work

Think-abouts:
Here are some basic questions to help you decide whether the copying is a fair use.

• Is it for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research?
• Is the work copyrighted at all?
• How do you plan to use the work? Will it be public?
• Is the work covered by a license?
• Is your use prohibited in the copyright law?
• Will you need permission from the copyright holder?
• How much are you going to use?
• Is the part you want to copy central to or the “heart” of the work?
• Is this a one-time use or repeated or long-term use?
• Will you be able to clearly explain (to the superintendent) how you decided the copying was a fair use?

Is copyright the same as plagiarism? No, they are different. If you copy something and pass it off as your own without indicating the source or the fact that it’s not your own, that’s plagiarism. You can be in trouble even if you plagiarize something in the public domain or it’s a fair use.
Creative Commons Licenses

You’ll see the symbols listed below instead of the © symbol. These licenses make it clear how a work may or may not be used. It encourages people to remix, use, and share the work. More info is at Creative Commons or this video. There is a built-in search engine so you can find text, music, images, video, and media.

Three general rules when using Creative Commons:
- Be aware of what the license allows.
- Ask questions.
- When in doubt, get permission.

Attribution
CC BY
Lets others distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon a work, even commercially. Must give credit to the original.

Attribution-NonCommercial
CC BY-NC
Lets others remix, tweak, and build upon a work. Must give credit to the original. Derivative works can be licensed differently.

Attribution-ShareAlike
CC BY-SA
Lets others remix, tweak, and build upon a work, even commercially. Must give credit to original and license the new work under the identical terms.

Attribution-NoDerivs
CC BY-ND
Lets others redistribute the original as long as it is unchanged and credits the original.

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs
CC BY-NC-ND
Lets others download and share if they credit the original. The work can’t be changed.
Bibliography and Works Cited

Along with the rights to use copyrighted material comes the responsibility of giving credit to the author. Credit the source, even if it is a fair use. Credit and copyright information can be in a separate section of a multimedia project. Check with the teacher or teacher librarian for the works cited format used in your school. AEA Scout generates citations that can be copied/pasted.
How to Request Permission to Copy

When you seek permission, always ask first if they actually own the copyright. The creator may have assigned their rights to someone else (publisher, music or video producer, photographer’s employer, etc.)

Most major publishers have online permissions links. You can also request permission by email. Don’t ask for blanket permission to copy. Address the request to the permissions department of the publisher/producer and include this information:

- Title, author and/or editor, and edition of material
- Exact material to be copied (amount, page numbers, URL, track, file, etc.)
- Number of copies to be made
- Use of the copy (or distribution)
- Whether the copy will be sold
- Type of copying (download, digital transfer, scan, photocopy, etc.)

Software

This is a summary of the Computer Software Copyright Act of 1980. Read the software license for restrictions and permissions.

- You can make one back-up copy of a program you own and use it if the original fails.
- You can adapt a program by adding content or adapting to another language.
- You can’t sell, distribute, or transfer the adapted version.
- You can’t make one copy for home and one for school use.
- You can’t make a copy for a friend.
Internet and Creating Web Content

Look to the four fair use criteria and copyright law when determining what and how much can be copied. Just because information is on the Internet does not mean you have the right to use it any way you want. Some copyrighted works may have been posted to the Internet without authorization of the copyright owner.

Think-about:

- Assume that text, graphics, video, sound and music are copyrighted.
- Don’t copy the source code, HTML, and frames codes to create your own website. They are creative works and may be copyrighted.
- Don’t copy logos or trademarks and make them a hyperlink. Use the words, not the logo.
- Read the copyright statement on the web site. Some give permission to copy—like .gov sites.
- File sharing or downloading files made from unlawful copies probably violates copyright law.
- Consider asking for permission to add a URL to a website if traffic will be high (bandwidth issue).
- Follow the guidelines for the licensed content for Iowa students and educators in the Digital Content section.
- Avoid deep linking to a website. It bypasses the homepage that may include important information.
- Check if the district has a policy on school-sponsored publications. It may include guidelines for posting information on the Internet.
- Check that the information on the website was posted legally and that the web author has a right to give others permission to copy.
Remixing/Mashups/Reusing

You can use copyrighted materials to create something that’s new—something that’s transformed into an entirely different work. “Transformativeness” is allowed when a work has been changed (using fair use) and value has been added to the original. For example, a parody transforms the original.

Here are some resources of editable media to use in school:

- **Soundzabound** audio files
- **Learn 360** is searchable by editable videos
- **Creative Commons** is searchable by media that can be shared and remixed
- **Google Advanced Image Search** can be limited to media for reuse*

If your remix will be shared with the public or uploaded to the Internet, read the restrictions for using content from the licensed online databases.

If you post to YouTube, refer to the guidelines [http://www.youtube.com/t/copyright_education](http://www.youtube.com/t/copyright_education).

*There is a difference between free to view and free to use. Some images may be scraped off the Internet and should not be copied/reused.*
Music

Be sure to follow fair use guidelines.

Peer-to-peer (P2P) has many legitimate uses. In general, using a P2P to copy commercial music and video files, without the copyright holder’s permission, for personal enjoyment is likely a violation of copyright.

Posting a video with copyrighted music (even if just background music) to a public website may be a violation. Keep in mind the educational purpose, fair use, and exemptions such as parody. In addition, there are also special licenses, called mechanical licenses, that affect the use of music online and digitally. The copyright law was amended in 2018 and new rules taking effect in 2021 are being written right now.*

Use the Soundzabound royalty free music library licensed for Iowa K-12 schools. Permissions include:

- Synchronization with film and video
- Broadcast and podcast rights
- Rights to duplicate and sell videos in education
- Continued use for student portfolios

ASCAP, BMI and SESAC are performing rights organizations that represent lyricists and composers. They can grant licenses for the use of music in their catalogues. Others that grant licenses to use music include the recording companies that make the CDs and digital music files.

The Music Modernization Act (MMA) was recently signed into law. Additional information and guidelines on the impact on education regarding blanket licensing, easier ways to get music clearances, how to use pre-1972 words, and more will be coming.

*Look to www.copyright.gov for more details or go to https://www.lutzker.com/?s=music for information on the Music Modernization Act. (Legal opinion from Lutzker and Associates, June 2020.)
Images
When is permission required? This question applies to just about all copyright, but here are some examples related to images. Permission should be acquired for reproduction, publishing, posting, sharing, social media, adapting, modifying, etc.

Think-abouts:
• Always assume any image is protected. Research first.
• Look for a credit or contact info.
• Look for a watermark.
• Try a reverse image search.
• Safest to link to an image – but don’t copy it or embed before you link.
• Use your own photos/images that you created.
• Use Creative Commons licensed images within terms and conditions of license. Or use images from the digital content sources provided by Iowa AEAs.
• Use freely available stock images (some require a license fee).
• Use public domain. Be careful that it’s not a new adaptation with a new copyright date.
• Get specific permission for the use.
Digital Content Provided by Iowa’s AEAs

This digital content was purchased for Iowa preK-12 students and teachers. Fair use still applies. In addition, the licenses have specific copying and usage guidelines. Ask your school teacher librarian for assistance.

Access through AEA Scout or through the native interface at your AEA’s website.

AEA Digital Library
- Can download and use the resources.
- Can use images in multimedia projects.
- Can keep content in student and teacher portfolios.
- Can’t post any content to the Internet.

American History in Video & PBS Learning Media
- Can clip videos to any length.
- Can use videos and images of videos in Word, Google Doc, PowerPoint, Blackboard, etc.
- Can put video clip or full video in a personal playlist, annotate it, and pull in additional content from the web.

Playlists can be made public, shared with just your school, or kept private.
- Can't post/re-use videos on the Internet without giving full credit to the original publisher and Alexander Street Press.
- Can’t decompile or reverse engineer the videos; modify or create a derivative work; remove, obscure, or modify copyright notices; sell, distribute, or commercially exploit the videos.
- Authorized Users are the school’s currently enrolled students, employees, faculty, and staff.

BookFLIX, TrueFLIX, FreedomFLIX, ScienceFLIX
- Can’t copy or redistribute content.

Culture Grams
- Can download or print a reasonable portion of the articles or other works under fair use.
- Can’t systematically download materials (print or electronic) to create a collection of materials.

Encyclopedia Britannica
- Can copy reasonable portions for lesson plans, interactive whiteboards, reports, presentations, and school newspapers. Must keep copyright or trademark notices.
Can't publish, distribute, retransmit, or sell access.

Gale
- Can download, display, view and print or make limited paper or electronic copies.
- Can electronically link to content.
- Can use figures, table, and brief excerpts in educational works.

Clipart.com School Edition
- Can download unlimited images, photos, and web art images for educational use.
- Can use in projects such as websites, presentations, newsletters, brochures, advertisements, announcements, labels, e-greetings, web templates, vinyl cutting, routing, engraving, t-shirts, school projects, screen-printing, and mechanical embroidery. Contact iCLIPART if for commercial use.
- Can't give to a third party, share content across a network or on a CD, add to a "print-on-demand" website, or use commercially.

Learn 360
- Can edit videos marked with the EDIT icon. This includes converting them to different formats or clipping.
- Can download and use the educational resources inside the school building, including print, video, images and audio files.
- Can store materials on school computers.
- Can't post any content to the Internet.

SIRS Researcher
- Can make printouts (online, offline, fax, email) for school or personal use.

TeachingBooks.net
- Can't download, save, or play Original Author Program videos or Book Reading audio files off any machine other than TeachingBooks.net server.

Teen Health & Wellness
- Can download, print, email limited copies for personal, non-commercial use.
- Can use information in multimedia presentations.
- Can link to the homepage or article pages.
- Can't republish the information.
- Can't download in a systematic manner to create a collection of materials (print or nonprint).
- Use the proper citation form and keep/display the author image or photo information.

Check with your AEA for other digital content resources.
This is a summary of the U.S. copyright law (Title 17) and copyright guidelines. This document does not constitute legal opinion (except where annotated). It is intended to be a general discussion and not a definitive analysis of copyright.

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