

# Copyright Basics



For Students at TWU

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For more information:

[www.twu.ca/library/copyright](http://www.twu.ca/library/copyright)

## What is Copyright?

Copyright is the law that protects an original fixed expression. "Fixed" means an idea is written down, photographed, printed, painted, etc. Copyright doesn't cover intangible ideas.

## Fair Dealing

Copyright is not absolute. Fair dealing allows us to use "insubstantial" parts of a work without permission for:

- research or private study,
- criticism or review

We must cite the source. Fair dealing in Canada is not as broad or well-defined as Fair Use in the United States. See [this page](#) for more information.

## Public Domain

Unlike taxes, copyright is not forever. In Canada, works leave copyright and enter the [public domain](#) 50 years after the year in which the creator died. Remember when copying material from an edited book that while the creator's portion may be in the public domain, the editorial comments may not be. Translations enter the public domain 50 years after the death of the translator (assuming the original is already out of copyright).

## Copyright Vs. Plagiarism

**What's the difference between plagiarism and violating copyright?**

**Plagiarism** is when we use someone else's words or ideas, but imply they are our own by not acknowledging our source. It can be avoided by proper citation. **Copyright** violation is using more of a published work than is allowed under fair dealing without permission from the creator.

## Copyright FAQs

**Is it OK to use recorded music with my video?**

Probably not, unless you have written permission from the composer and performer. It's best to find music released under a [Creative Commons](#) licence.

**How much of a work is it ok to photocopy?**

Probably one chapter of a book (about 10%), one article from a journal, etc. See [this guide \(PDF\)](#) for more details.

**I'm doing a presentation in class. Is it OK to show a video as part of it?**

It depends on the licence. Go [here](#) for detailed information.



### **Is it OK to use pictures from the Internet in my PowerPoint presentation?**

Maybe. You'd need written permission from the copyright holder. Another solution is to find images published under a Creative Commons licence, such as those on [Wikimedia Commons](#).

### **Is it OK to show YouTube clips in class?**

Probably. YouTube has a system whereby copyright owners can request that a video be removed. Therefore, it's safe to assume that videos are on YouTube because the owners want them to be seen. For other video-sharing sites, check their copyright information page. **NOTE:** It's a violation of copyright to download and save a YouTube video to your computer unless the owner of the video provides a download link. If a video disappears from YouTube, it's usually because the copyright owner has requested that it be removed.

### **Is a mashup a violation of copyright?**

Maybe or maybe not. We could argue that sampling small parts of larger works and combining them into something new is permissible under fair dealing. However, copyright also protects the moral rights of creators. Moral rights include the right of a creator to prevent changes to a work.

### **Is it OK to show clips of documentaries archived online (e.g. CBC, PBS, etc.) in class?**

In Canada there is no provision for educational use (as there is in the US), so you'll need to check the terms of use for each site. Linking to a documentary is fine.

**NOTE:** If the news site has uploaded the video to YouTube, you're probably ok showing it under YouTube's terms of use.

### **Is it OK to include copyrighted information in a handout for everyone in class?**

Yes. As long as it is covered by fair dealing and students aren't charged for it. **NOTE:** This applies only to physical copies, not PDFs.

#### More Information

- [Canadian Copyright Act \(C-42\)](#)
- [Canadian Heritage -- Fair Dealing after CCH](#)
- [A Guide to Copyrights](#)
- [Compleat World Copyright Web-site](#)

If you have questions, contact:  
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