



Using Images:

Copyright guidelines for the use of images in education

Did you know?

The images you find online are most likely protected by copyright, regardless of whether any copyright statement is displayed. Copyright protection applies instantly and automatically when a new work is created; no copyright notice or registration is required.

Context matters

You have more flexibility to use copyrighted materials in the classroom due to the restricted audience and educational setting. If you would like to make your project available to a wider audience, you must reevaluate your use of others' copyrighted material. You may need to rely on a different copyright exception or ask permission.

Find images

Find public domain, Creative Commons licensed, and copyrighted images:

- go.osu.edu/hsl_images
- wordpress.org/openverse
- flickr.com/creativecommons
- go.osu.edu/google-search
- go.osu.edu/public-domain-resources

Remember to check each source and image for copyright information and licensing requirements!



Options for using images

In the classroom

Section 110(1) of the U.S. Copyright Law permits the performance or display of copyrighted materials, including images, videos and music, in the course of face-to-face teaching activities at a nonprofit educational institution. The copyrighted work must be acquired legally.

This exception allows the use of images in lecture or presentation materials. Students may also use images in course assignments such as a paper, thesis, poster or other work as per class assignments and degree fulfillment requirements.

For online learning via Carmen or other

closed course Section 110(2) of the U.S. Copyright Law allows the performance or display of copyrighted materials, including images, videos, and music for online learning provided that certain conditions are met.

Visit go.osu.edu/110 to learn more about these requirements.



Cite your sources

Provide attributions to the known copyright owner(s) of each image. These citations demonstrate responsible use and are a scholarly tradition; however, you cannot avoid copyright infringement simply by crediting the source.

- At minimum, provide the author's name, title of the image (if available) and source of the image.
- Include any additional information required by terms of use or license.
- Insert citation under the image in small font, as a footnote or as an endnote.

For citation examples and detailed instructions for Creative Commons licensed works, visit:

go.osu.edu/cite-images.

Contact

Copyright Services

libcopyright@osu.edu

614-688-5849

go.osu.edu/copyright

Copyright Services at the Health Sciences Library

Prior Hall

copyright@osumc.edu

614-292-4892

go.osu.edu/hsl_copyright

Beyond the classroom

You have several options for using images in projects with a wider audience, such as conference presentations, blogs, websites, open online courses or publications. One option will not fit every situation; you must determine which best fulfills your need while complying with copyright law.

Fair use

The fair use doctrine (Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law) allows the use of copyrighted works to support activities such as teaching, research and scholarship. However, these educational uses are not automatically considered fair use.

A four-factor analysis is used to determine fair use; all four factors are equally important and must be weighed together. The four factors are: purpose of use, nature of use, amount of work being used and the effect of the use on the commercial market. Visit go.osu.edu/fair-use.

Comply with an available license or find an alternative

If you do not require a specific image, there may be an alternative available with fewer or no copyright restrictions.

- Some sources will allow you to use their images without further permission or paying a fee provided you comply with their stated license terms, such as attribution required or noncommercial uses only. Creative Commons licenses are frequently used in this regard. Visit creativecommons.org/licenses to learn more.
- Public domain images generally include those published before 1923 or produced by the federal government. Works in the public domain are not protected by copyright. Available to the public (e.g. online) is not the same thing as public domain.
- Make it yourself! You own the copyright if you create a new image or take an original photo.

Request permission

If none of the above options apply or if you would simply feel more comfortable, you may contact a copyright holder and seek permission to use their work.

Visit go.osu.edu/permission for more information.