

Lesson 27. Exploring Basic Copyright Issues: Copyright, Fair Use, Creative Commons, and the Public Domain

HAND OUT

Copyright law has several features that permit quotations from copyrighted works without permission or payment, under certain conditions. Fair use is the most important of these features. It has been an important part of copyright law for more than 170 years. Where it applies, fair use is a user's right.

—Code of Best Practices in Fair Use
for Media Literacy Education, p. 5

Activity 1: Brainstorm and Free Write

- What do you know about “copyright”? What have you heard in the news? What have you seen in copyright notices for movies, books, games, and music?
- Under what circumstances is it legal, and academically appropriate, to use copyrighted material: never, always, or sometimes? Why?

Activity 2: Better Understand Copyright and Fair Use

- Watch “User Rights, Section 107” at <http://youtu.be/8tWhKeb-fUQ>.
- To watch with the lyrics in front of you, check out <http://bit.ly/usersrights>.
- Discuss key issues addressed in the video. What is “transformativeness”? What are the “four factors”? Why do context and situation matter when considering fair use?

Activity 3: Apply What You Have Learned

- Explore *Copyright Clarity* by Renee Hobbs (2010) and the reasoning guide “Document the Fair-Use Reasoning Process” at <http://bit.ly/fairuserreasoning>.
- Use the reasoning guide on material you plan to use in your media project.

Activity 4: Creative Commons

- View video on the history of Creative Commons at <https://creativecommons.org/videos/get-creative>.
- Discuss the major points of the film.
 - What is Creative Commons?
 - How does it help with searching for information?
 - How can you use a license for Creative Commons?

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- Explore the Creative Commons website to discover what Creative Commons is and how it functions.
- Try a Creative Commons search at <http://search.creativecommons.org>.

Activity 5: Public Domain and Other “Copyleft” Materials

- Visit the Copyright Friendly Wiki to find other sources for public domain and “Copyleft” materials with open or generous copyright terms at <http://copyrightfriendly.wikispaces.com/Home>.

Reflect and Plan

As you look at the current draft of your media project, what considerations do you need to make related to copyright and citing your sources?