



Introduction to Copyright for Educators

This e-course is produced The Multimedia Unit of the Learning Resources Section *in collaboration with the Mabel Walker Professional Development Institute of the Department of Education, MOETVT.*

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Introduction to Copyright for Bahamian Educators

Copyright for Educators: Creating Responsibly in the Digital Age - Understanding the Law, Respecting Creativity, and Empowering Students.

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On May 21st, 2025, the Tribune newspaper reported The Bahamas signed five international treaties under the World Intellectual Property Organization. It continues to document that the Bahamas Intellectual Property Office or BIPO had been dormant for 50 years. And this movement through the signing of these treaties is intended to provide the Bahamian public with services that preserve their rights and protect their intellectual property. As of the time of that report, the Bahamas is set to sign an additional five treaties.

Additionally, the press statement from the office of the attorney general noted that these signings are steps to ensure that the intellectual property office is fully aligned with the subsidiary legislation governing trademarks, patents, copyrights, and industrial designs as executed by the attorney general. This milestone indicates that the Bahamas is well on

its way to ensuring that the intellectual property rights of its citizens are respected and preserved.

Welcome to the Learning Resources Section, your source for all things education and media in the Bahamas. I'm Miss Johnson, Multimedia Officer and your facilitator for this series. This is the first in a series of self-paced courses offered by the Department of Education to inform, instruct, and empower the 21st century educator. Today, we will be introducing you to the Copyright Act of The Bahamas 2024. Whether you're creating worksheets, recording lessons, or guiding students through creative projects, understanding copyright is essential. Our goal today is to help you feel confident using and creating content legally and ethically.

We'll explore the basics of copyright law, how to use others work responsibly, and how to encourage students to do the same. While this presentation is not comprehensive of patents, trademarks, and general intellectual property, the focus on copyright is one specific to the education-based creative and the student creator. This presentation does not constitute legal advice. Please be sure to speak with a registered legal practitioner for additional information and guidance. That being said, let's begin.

The Basics of Copyright | Copyright for Bahamian Educators

Understanding Copyright: The Basics.

What is copyright? Copyright is a legal right that protects original works of authorships like books, music, videos, and artwork. It gives creators control over how their work is used. In the Bahamas, copyright is governed by the Copyright Act 2024, which aligns with international standards like the Bern convention. As educators, we often use creative works in our teaching. So, it's important to know what's protected and how we can use it legally.

Copyright protects a wide range of works, including literary works like novels, textbooks, academic papers, blog posts, and website articles, instructional manuals, and computer software code. Plus, musical works inclusive of the accompanying music. That's your sheet music for a piano, a song with lyrics, musical score for a school play, and original jingles. Then we have dramatic works inclusive of any accompanying music. So, a scripted school play or skit, radio drama, stage performance with background music and a dramatized reading of a poem, plus artistic works, painting, drawings, photographs, sculptures, installations, graphic design, and architectural blueprints. Our next category is motion pictures and other audio visual works. That includes your educational videos and documentaries, animated teaching clips, recorded classroom lectures, student created short films, then choreographed works, a dance routine created for a school performance, a choreographed PE routine, or a cultural dance sequence recorded for educational use. Now we move on to sound recordings. The next category that includes a podcast episode, a recorded interview or oral history, a music track recorded by students and audio books or spoken poetry, and finally architectural works, blueprints or CAD designs, a 3D model of a

student design structure and photographs of original architectural designs. They are all covered by copyright.

What is not protected by copyright? Copyright protects how ideas are expressed, not the ideas themselves. You cannot copyright a concept, method, or system, only the specific way you describe or present it. For example, you can't copyright the idea of a superhero who controls water, but you can copyright your specific story or artwork about that superhero. The next thing that you're not able to copyright is facts or news headlines. Basic information like it rained today or the prime minister gave a speech is not protected. For example, a news article is protected, but the facts it reports are not. For more information, see section 7, subsections 6 and 7 of the copyright act 2024.

So, the question becomes, when does copyright begin to exist? In the past, copyright was said to exist the moment that a piece of work is created. That's mostly true, but we can be clearer. Copyright begins to exist at the moment it is fixed to a medium. That means it must be written physically on a piece of paper, recorded in audio form, or captured in digital form.

So, who owns copyright? Usually, the person who creates the work owns the copyright, but there are exceptions. If you create something as part of your job, your employer may own the rights. The work is considered a work for hire. And for clarity, if you as an educator compose a lesson plan, worksheet, or workbook, story, poem, dance routine, song, or a mural while in the execution of your duties as a teacher contracted by the Department of Education, that copyrighted work is the property of the Department of Education. This is covered in sections 20 and 21 of the copyright act.

Two, if you collaborate with others, you may share ownership. We see this most often in songwriting where more than one person has contributed to the composition. That is where more than one person wrote the lyrics and a team of people composed the music. If the work was not composed as a work for hire, all of the persons involved in the song

competition own the copyright to the song. This is usually simplified by the contributions or collaborators splitting residuals that result from the copyright.

And number three, rights can also be transferred or licensed to others for ownership. If you create something and transfer the rights to someone else, then copyright follows the recipient. Often the copyright owners as they age transfer or bequeath their copyright material to family members which ensures that the value of money that can be earned remains in the family or the estate.

A person may purchase a copyright from an existing legal copyright holder. This is called a license. The license determines the length of time the copyright can be used and its other terms. Licenses can be exclusive, which means only one person can use it at that time for the agreed purpose. They can also be non-exclusive, which means multiple people can purchase the copyright and use it for the agreed time and purpose. You do, however, under the act have the moral right to be identified as the author of the piece.

Moral rights. In addition to economic rights, creators also have moral rights. These include one, the right to be identified as the author. Two, the right to object to changes that harm their reputation. These rights are protected under sections 12 and 13 of the Act and are especially important when adapting or remixing content.

Now let's talk about compilations and derivative works. This information can be found in section seven and subsections three and four of the act. A compilation is a collection of content like anthologies or databases. These are works that are compiled. A derivative work is a new creation that is based on or adapted from an existing copyrighted work. Both a compilation and a derivative work can be protected if the original material was used legally. According to subsection 4, in a derivative work, only the new parts you added or created are protected, not the original material you used. For example, if you create a study guide using quotes from a textbook, only your original summaries and structure are protected, not the textbook content that you used. Here are some examples of derivative works. Translations of a book into another language, a movie made from a novel, a remix or

arrangement of a song, a dramatization of a historical event based on a biography, a painting based on a photograph. And here's a key point. Only the original copyright holder or someone with permission can legally create or authorize derivative works. When creating a compilation or derivative work, remember that your copyright is separate from the copyright in the original material. That means it does not give you ownership or control over the original copyrighted material.

How long does the copyright last in the Bahamas? Copyright lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years. After that, the work enters the public domain and can be used freely. This long duration means that even older works like music from the 1950s or books from the 1960s may still be protected.

I hope the information in the section has been helpful. Please continue to the question-and-answer portion of section one. Upon completion, you may continue to section two.

Using Copyrighted Works | Copyright for Bahamian Educators

Section Two: Using Copyrighted Works in Educational Content.

Welcome to section two of copyright for educators. In part one, we introduced you to the definition of copyright, categories of copyright works and ownership. In this section, we will discuss how you use copyrighted work in educational content. Let's continue.

Fair Dealing in Education.

The Bahamas has an equivalent to the United States copyright term fair use called fair dealing. In the Bahamas, we follow the principle of fair dealing, which allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission, but only for specific purposes like research, review, or criticism, news reporting, or teaching. For example, quoting a few lines from a poem in a literature lesson may be fair dealing, but copying an entire chapter from a textbook and distributing it would not be. Just because fair dealing is the term used, it is not a blanket exception. Again, the portion used must be reasonable and appropriate. The use must not undermine the market value of the original work, and the source and author must be acknowledged where possible. So always ask, is the portion I'm using reasonable? Am I affecting the market value of the original work? If in doubt, seek permission.

I'd like to go further by also explaining that reducing the market value of a work means perhaps you are copying or photocopying entire textbooks so that your students will have access to it. That reduces the market value of the book because the author of that book is no longer able to gain money or residual income from the sale of the book because they are being copied illegally.

Licensing and Permissions.

When your use goes beyond fair dealing, you'll need to get permission. This is where licensing comes in. A license is legal permission to use a work under certain conditions. It can be exclusive or non-exclusive. You can request permission directly from the rights holder or use content that's already licensed for reuse, like creative commons materials. When trying to acquire permission, here are a few steps that you may find valuable. Identify the rights holder. That can be the author, publisher, or licensing agency.

Two, send a written request outlining how you plan to use the work. It may be helpful to include the version of the song, book, video, page, line, or timestamps, things that make it easier for the author. Section 17 and subsection one of the Copyright Act indicates that someone who owns a copyright can consent to any lawful use of the copyright or can wave their rights to a copyright work as laid out previously. Section 12 focuses on the right to be identified as the author and section 13 focuses on a right to object to derogatory treatment of work. For example, if a family has commissioned a photo from a photographer, paying for it and the photographer because the photo is a work for hire is not the copyright holder of that image. The photographer cannot sell or license that image to another person.

However, in the era of social media, common practice is to download someone's photo, especially for those considered to be public figures, and recreate or duplicate that photo as a piece of merchandise on t-shirts, cups, mugs, etc., your posters and class, without the written permission from the copyright holder, which would be the family. the family has not waved their copyright to the creators of that merchandise and that photo is being illegally used to generate income or profits that do not benefit the family who are the copyright holders.

Moreso if that recreated image is considered derogatory, disrespectful or not reflective of the morals, mores or values of the photo subject or the family who owns the

copyright that according to copyright law can constitute legal action to recoup losses at most and demand a cease and desist at best. The same principle applies for popular cartoon characters, movie characters, landmarks, etc. So, educators, be mindful not to put yourself in a position to be subpoenaed or sued over unlawful use of copyright materials. Simply put, if you own the copyright, you may give up, wave, or license those rights, and you may object to the derogatory use of your visual art as indicated in sections 12 and 13, respectively.

Finally, if you are using someone's copyrighted material with permission, keep a record of the permission granted by the author in a file that's easily accessible. Be sure to review the time limits on your permission letters to ensure that your licenses are up to date in the event that you need to renew permissions.

But where would you obtain content that can be used free of charge for educational purposes? Creative Commons licenses are a great resource for educators. They allow creators to share their work with clear rules like whether you can modify it or use it commercially. You want to look for licenses like CC BY, which means you can use and adapt the work, just give credit, and CC BY-NC, which means that you can adapt the work, just give credit, but it is for non-commercial use only. This means you cannot sell whatever you create using the copyright work, but you can use it. You can find Creative Commons licensed content on sites like Pixabay, Unsplash, and the Free Music Archive.

I feel the need to define the term royalty as used in this presentation. A royalty is a fee paid to the copyright holder every time a copyright piece is used by anyone. When copyright material is royalty-free, that means the person seeking to use the material may pay a one-time fee and will no longer have to pay fees each time the copyright material is used. This means that royalty-free content is still the property of the original creator. You have the right to use the image, music, or video under the terms of the license. Royalty-free libraries also exist. Again, sites like Pixabay, Unsplash, and free music archives may be helpful. Educational licenses are also available. Some publishers offer special terms for schools. Read the terms and conditions for any content site that you may choose to use.

Now, let's talk a bit about attribution. Even when you have permission or are using Creative Commons content, you must give credit. A good attribution includes the creator's name, the title of the work, the license type, and a link to the source. For example, photo by Jane Doe, CCBY 4.0 via Sunsplash. This not only respects the creator, it models good digital citizenship for your students. Let's look at a few classroom scenarios. You want to use a song in a student video project. Check if it's royalty-free or get permission. You're creating a workbook. Use short excerpts and site your sources. You're showing a film clip. Keep it brief and for instructional purposes only. When in doubt, use licensed or public domain content or create your own.

Attributions are not only for work created by external sources. They are for educators and students as well. Here are a few things that educators can remember in the real world. When a copyright work is created for an employer by an employee, the employee should be credited. Here's a real life example. This presentation is made as part of my work duties with the Department of Education. Therefore, in spite of all my hard work, the Department of Education owns the copyright. However, I am still credited for scripting, writing, and production of this content. That attribution will be found in the credits. This is the same for anything created in the execution of duties as an educator. The lesson plans, worksheets, passages, poems, books, drawings, paintings, videos, etc. If completed as part of the job, belong to the Department of Education.

Thank you for completing module two. Please complete the questions which follow and I'll see you in module 3.

The Student Creator | Copyright for Bahamian Educators

Students have intellectual property rights as well. When students create a copyright material, which is an original essay, poem, song, drawing, painting, choreography, video, etc., that student or those students own the copyright of that piece. They are not employed by the Department of Education and as a result, they retain full copyright of their work. Even if a piece created by students for a competition and is submitted on behalf of the school, the copyright belongs to the student unless their parent agrees that with the submission the copyright is waved, licensed or transferred to suit the terms of the competition. Simply put, submissions for competitions by students should have a release form signed by parents indicating that the piece can be used for the purposes of the competition. Which brings me to the next section.

How do we encourage copyright conscious student educators? Now that you know the very basics of copyright, all of those principles follow. As educators, we're not just content creators, we're also mentors. It's important to help students understand that copyright isn't just a legal issue. It's also about respecting creativity. We want you to start with age-appropriate discussions. For younger students, explain that copying someone's work without asking is like borrowing something without permission. For older students, introduce terms like intellectual property and plagiarism.

Encourage students to create their own content, whether it's writing, music, videos, or artwork. and celebrate originality and effort. You can also introduce them to tools and platforms that support their ethical creativity. Use the Creative Commons search engines for finding reusable content. Teach them how to cite sources properly. Show them how to license their own work if they want to share it. When students create content, especially for public sharing, set clear guidelines. Make sure they only use content they have rights to,

which is their originally captured or created content or content acquired through the public domain, permission from a licensed copyright holder, or content that they have created themselves from scratch, require proper attribution for any third-party material, discuss privacy and consent, especially when sharing videos or photos online. You can even introduce them to platforms like Wikipedia Commons or Soundtrack Trap for Education where they can explore and contribute responsibly. And now, how do we model best practices?

The best way to teach copyright awareness is to model it. When you as the educator cite your sources, you use licensed content and talk openly about permissions, students learn by example. You're not just protecting yourself. You're empowering your students to be thoughtful, ethical creators in a digital world. In this crash course, we have covered copyright.

We've discussed what can be copywritten and who owns those rights. We've also clarified tools and strategies to use content legally and ethically and how we can pass that knowledge on to our students.

Want more tips on content creation and copyright? Follow the Learning Resources Section's YouTube Channel or go to LRSBahamas.com for more information on our upcoming courses and existing resources.

I'm Miss Johnson, Education Officer for Multimedia. Thank you for participating.

Sources:

[Bahamas Copyright Act 2024](#)

[Press Releases – Office of the Attorney General](#)

[Defining Compilation and Derivative Works, US Copyright Office](#)

[Tips for Legally Using Images in Presentations, Copyright Laws.com](#)

[Using Copyrighted Material for Educational Purposes, The New York Times](#)

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Acknowledgements and Credits:

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Professional Development Section

Production & Development: Bodine V. Johnson, Education Officer, Multimedia, Learning
Resources Section

Executive Production: Liesl Wright, Assistant Director of Education, Learning Resources
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