



# COPYRIGHT IN THE LECTURE HALL

By Amy Pascalia Abra Asimah  
Regional Maritime University / LIBSENSE



Copyright in the Lecture Hall © 2025 by Amy Pascalia Abra Asimah is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

# INTRODUCTION

Have you shared a textbook, novel, CD, or article from your collections at home with a friend? Was it returned to you and on time? In doing this, you have shared a copy of the material with one person.

How about making copies of that relevant textbook and sharing it to all your course-mates during lectures. How would that affect the author of the textbook? The author will not benefit financially and will also not get credit for the work.

Therefore, Copyright law determines how others access and share authors work and the authors benefit from their creativity. However, the evolution of internet made sharing easier than before, hence the importance of copyright to protect creators original works.

# WHAT IS COPYRIGHT LAW

Before 1694, any book published had to be licensed by official censors. After that, Copyright law started with the Statute of Anne of 1710.

[Ghana's current copyright law is Act 690](#) issued by the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana. It was enacted on 17 May 2005 and replaced Parliament's Act No. 110, the country's previous Copyright law from 1985.

Copyright is automatically granted as soon as a work or an idea is physically expressed.

There are exceptions and limitations to the law for public good/interest such as meeting the needs of persons who are differently abled (visually impaired) and purposes of parody.

## Essential Fundamentals

CONSIDERS  
PUBLIC  
INTEREST

WORK  
MUST BE  
ORIGINAL

EXCLUSIVE  
RIGHTS

DOES NOT  
PROTECT  
FACTS OR  
IDEAS

LAST A  
LONG TIME

AUTOMATIC

# WHY COPYRIGHT LAW?

## THERE ARE TWO (2) MAIN RATIONALES FOR COPYRIGHT LAW

1

### UTILITARIAN

Encourage the generation of more creative works through shared knowledge by incentivizing creators for social and financial benefits

2

### AUTHOR'S RIGHTS

Ensure that creators get credit for their works and maintain the personal and moral rights over their works

## ELIGIBLE

- ❖ Literary works
- ❖ Dramatic works
- ❖ Artistic works or works of visual arts
- ❖ Cinematographic works
  
- ❖ Translations, adaptations, arrangements of literary or artistic works
- ❖ Collection of literary or artistic works
  
- ❖ Databases
- ❖ Computer software

## NOT ELIGIBLE

- ❖ Facts
  
- ❖ Ideas
  
- ❖ Systems/methods of Operation
  
- ❖ Government Publications

**Intellectual property law** refers to all the laws that protect creative works.

Do you know that **copyright law** is just one type of **intellectual property law**?

Can you tell which of the intellectual property law protects the creator and the one that protects the public from confusion?

- ❖ **COPYRIGHT LAW:** It gives creators exclusive rights to copy, share, and adapt their creative works for a limited period of time
- ❖ **TRADEMARK LAW:** It protects the public from confusion about the sources of goods and services. Logos, colors help the public differentiates between similar goods and services and protects the brand and its reputation
- ❖ **PATENT LAW:** Just like copyright, it gives inventors time limited exclusive rights to their inventions
- ❖ **DESIGN PATENT:** It gives designers time-limited rights to their designs based on its function rather than creativity

In Ghana, a creator automatically receives copyright protection once the idea has been physically expressed.

However, a creator can go further to register for copyright protection of his/her creative works.

**Public Domain** contains works that are not protected by copyright, which makes these creative works freely available to copy, share, reuse, adapt and translate by anyone interested. Works in the public domain are valuable resources for the general public. There are four (4) main ways that creative works can enter the public domain.

## COPYRIGHT TERM EXPIRED

In Ghana, copyright expires after the creator's lifespan plus 70 years

## NOT ENTITLED TO COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

Works that are not copyrightable such as ideas, facts and government publications

## CREATOR CHOOSE TO ADD WORK TO PUBLIC DOMAIN

Creators can choose to add their works to the public domain before copyright expires.

## CREATOR DIDN'T MEET REQUIREMENTS

In most countries, there are no formalities for acquiring or renewing copyright protection but this was not always so. However, works have entered the public domain due to failed adherence

## HOW CREATORS CAN ADD WORKS TO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

The Creative Commons legal tool called [CC0 \(CC Zero\)](#) Public Domain Dedication helps creators put their works in the worldwide public domain



## WHERE WORKS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN CAN BE FOUND

Some sites that host Public Domain works:

- ❖ [Project Gutenberg](#)
- ❖ [Public Domain Review](#)
- ❖ [Digital Public Library of America](#)
- ❖ [Wikimedia Commons](#)
- ❖ [Internet Archives](#)
- ❖ [Library of Congress](#)
- ❖ [Flickr](#)
- ❖ [Europeana](#)
- ❖ [The Smithsonian](#)
- ❖ [Auckland Museum](#)
- ❖ [Rijksmuseum](#)

# QUIZ

## COPYRIGHTABLE OR NOT?

**Researcher's Article**      Yes or No?

**Recorded Lecture Note**      Yes or No?

**Student's Essay**      Yes or No?

**Ghana Government Statistical Report on Website** Yes or No?

**Names of Planets**      Yes or No?

# QUIZ

## COPYRIGHTABLE OR NOT?

**Researcher's Article** Yes or No? Yes (Any original written or typed work is automatically granted copyright)

**Recorded Lecture Note** Yes or No? Yes (Any original work that is recorded or broadcasted is protected)

**Student's Essay** Yes or No? Yes (Any written document is protected)

**Ghana Government Statistical Report on Website** Yes or No? No (In the Public Domain)

**Names of Planets** Yes or No? No (Facts are not copyright protected. It is a general knowledge owned by everyone)

Copyrights are not absolute, there are exceptions and limitations.

These exceptions and limitations to copyright are very important aspect of the copyright design to ensure that the rights of the public are not unduly restricted by copyright.

The Berne Convention created guidelines for exceptions and accepted in some form by every country known as the 'three step' test

In the U.S., the Fair Use Doctrine which is a four-factor test is implemented by judges to determine if the use is fair

## FOUR-FACTOR TEST

- ❖ PURPOSE & CHARACTER OF THE USE
- ❖ NATURE OF THE COPYRIGHTED WORK
- ❖ AMOUNT AND SUBSTANTIALITY OF PORTION USED
- ❖ USE'S EFFECT ON THE POTENTIAL MARKET

Most countries have broad limitations & exceptions in these areas:

- Parody, criticism, & quotes
- Educational purposes
- Libraries, Museums & Archives
- Persons with disabilities

## *MARRAKESH TREATY – ACCESSIBILITY*

Permits copying/modifying copyrighted works to facilitate accessibility for persons with visually impairments and print disabilities

## *COMPULSORY LICENSING SCHEMES*

Allows creators to pay a fee to use copyrighted works without permission from the copyright holder. Also known as Royalty payment.

Example: 1. Musicians pay royalty to perform and record cover songs  
2. To rebroadcast shows and movies, streaming services pay royalty

# COPYRIGHT CASE

## UPSA vs CopyGhana (Warning for Universities)

### *Reprographic Rights Organisation of Ghana (CopyGhana) vs University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA)*

The Accra High Court has ruled against the University of Professional Studies, Accra ([UPSA](#)), for illegally reproducing copyrighted materials without the required license. The Court's decision highlights the legal and financial consequences of flouting Ghana's Copyright Act, especially for institutions engaged in teaching and learning.

The case was filed by the Reprographic Rights Organisation of Ghana (CopyGhana), which represents authors and publishers. CopyGhana accused UPSA of allowing students and lecturers to photocopy and digitally reproduce large volumes of literary works using photocopiers installed at its libraries, faculties, and private copy shops on campus—without obtaining a reprographic license.

**The judgment sends a strong message to educational institutions that the Copyright Act is not optional.**

- ❑ [Copyright Basics](#) by Creative Commons, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)
- ❑ [Copyright and Fair Use: Academic and Educational Permissions](#) by Stanford Libraries, licensed under [CC BY-NC 3.0](#)
- ❑ [Copyright Act \(Ghana\)](#) by Wikipedia, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)
- ❑ [Copyright in the Classroom](#) by Karrienne MacPherson, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)
- ❑ [The Public Domain](#) by Creative Commons, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)
- ❑ [Exceptions and Limitations of Copyright](#) by Creative Commons. Licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)
- ❑ [U.S. Copyright Law](#) by Ashley Bean, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)
- ❑ [High Court Rules Against UPSA in Copyright Case: A Warning for Universities](#) by Managing Ghana, licensed under All Rights Reserved

# THANK YOU

**Q & A**