Copyright is a form of protection given to the authors or creators of “original works of authorship,” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works.  What that means is that, as the author of the work, you alone have the right to do any of the following or to let others do any of the following:

make copies of your work;

distribute copies of your work;

perform your work publicly (such as for plays, film, dances or music);

display your work publicly (such as for artwork, or stills from audiovisual works, or any material used on the Internet or television); and

make “derivative works” (including making modifications, adaptations or other new uses of a work, or translating the work to another media).

In general, it is illegal for anyone to do any of the things listed above with a work created by you without your permission, but there are some exceptions and limitations to your rights.  One major limitation is the doctrine of “Fair Use.”

What Can Be Copyrighted?

Written works, musical works, dramatic works, choreographic works, sculptural works, movies, sound recordings, architectural works, pictures, drawings and other graphic works can all be copyrighted.

How Long Does Copyright Last?

* • If a work was created between 1978-present: The copyright will last for the span of the person’s life plus 70 years.
* • If a work was created between 1923-1978: The copyright is protected for 95 years.

What is the Public Domain?

In terms of art, everything created eventually ends up in the public domain. Once a copyright has run out it is considered public domain and can be used by anyone in whatever way they would like to use it. It is basically considered public property and no one then owns it. Everything published before 1923 is in the public domain. Authors can choose to put works directly in the public domain by including a notice that the item is in the public domain or creative commons.

What is Fair Use?

There are some exceptions to the rules of copyright. Fair use is the use of copyright protected material for the purpose of teaching, comment, news, reporting, criticism, and research. It allows the limited use of copyrighted materials without having to pay for use or ask permission for use  
Examples:

* • You can use excerpts from a book to write a review of it. However, you can’t reproduce whole chapters of the book for reviewing purposes without permission.
* • A class dealing with film studies can screen a movie without payment for study purposes. However, no admission can be charged and only students in the class can attend the screening.

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[http://www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov/)

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtJdfHXk\_u8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtJdfHXk_u8)

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