

## To what does copyright apply?

Copyright applies to all **original** literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works. These include books, other writings, music, sculptures, paintings, photographs, films, plays, television and radio programs, and computer programs. Copyright also applies to other subject matter including sound recordings (such as records, cassettes, and tapes), performer's performances, and communication signals.

## What is not protected by copyright?

Themes, ideas, most titles, names, catch-phrases, and other short-word combinations of no real substance.

## Who owns the copyright?

Generally, the owner of the copyright is:

1. The **creator** of the work;
2. The **employer**, if the work was created in the course of employment unless there is an agreement to the contrary;
3. The person who **commissions** a photograph, portrait, engraving, or print for valuable consideration (which has been paid) unless there is an agreement to the contrary; or
4. Some **other party**, if the original owner has transferred the rights.

## How do I obtain copyright?

You acquire copyright **automatically** when you create an original work or other subject matter.

## Do I have to do anything to be protected?

No. Since you obtain copyright automatically, the law automatically protects you. However, it is still a good idea to register your copyright and to indicate notice of copyright on your works.

## Does the Copyright Office check to ensure that my claim of copyright is legitimate?

No, the Office does not verify ownership. Only the courts can do that.