

Copyright and licenses for publishing educational media

This guideline helps you to avoid copyright violations according to German/European law when you are creating a piece of media (e.g. picture, video, text) during your studies. If you are using multiple resources for one final product (e.g. images, music, and short animations for one video) you need to follow this guideline for each item. Looking at copyright and avoiding violations is part of a professional education and will be relevant for every piece of media you will create for publication.

Types of material you might encounter when creating your piece of media:

- images/ photos/ designs
- Special case - AI art
 - Check the AI art tool's use rights/ license agreement
 - Proper source citing is necessary (tool, tool version, image prompt)
- videos/ gifs/ animations
- text
- music
- design elements (e.g. google sheets/ powerpoint, microsoft items, canva designs)

For each item, ask yourself:

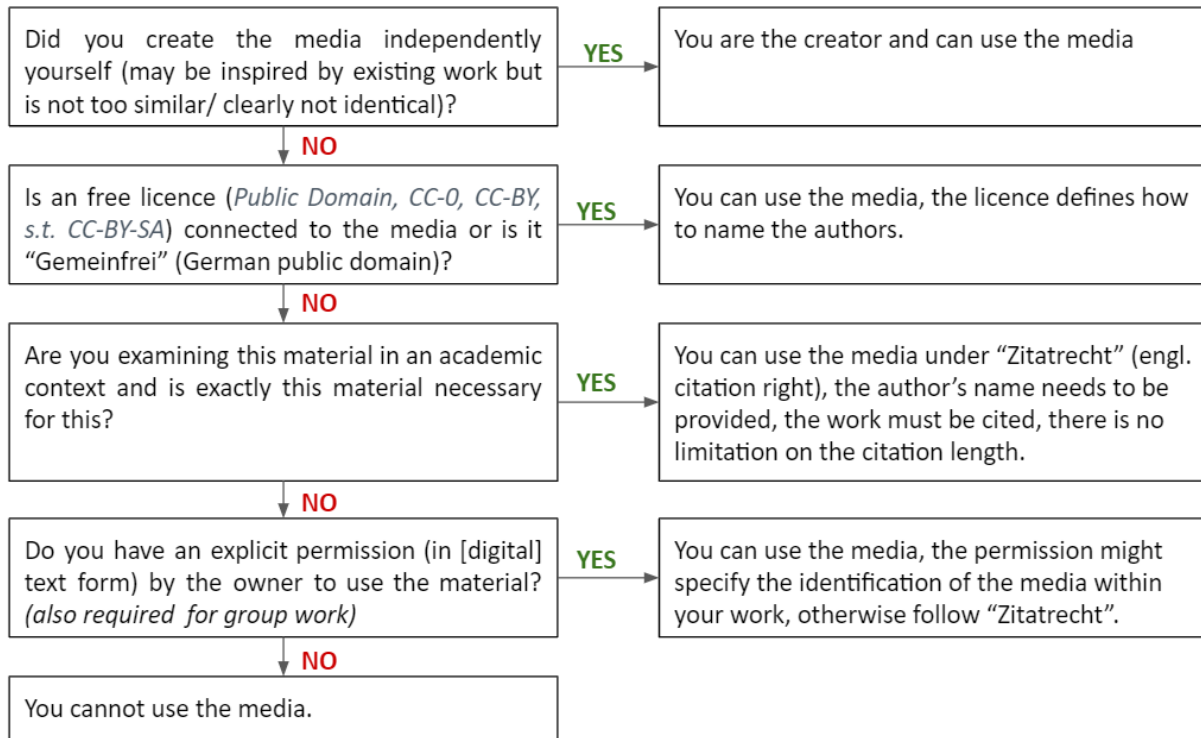


Figure 3: A decision tree to determine the associated copyright of a material to decide whether you are allowed to publish it and which conditions apply.

Clarifications of the decision tree above

- “Gemeinfreiheit” or German public domain typically covers content whose owners have been dead for more than 70 years. It may be marked with the creative commons zero or public domain mark.
- “examining [...] in an academic context” is typically done for all student work, unless it is for entertainment only and has nothing to do with the topic of your creation (e.g. funny pictures, franchise items)
- “exactly this material necessary” is a difficult concept, because this exact item/material is often not necessary and just picking one of many options is not allowed (e.g. using one of hundreds of pictures of a normal distribution, why would it need to be that one?). Whereas, discussing a particular source would justify the use of their material.
- “Explicit permission” must be kept securely and be verifiable on demand. There is no limit to the length of time it must be stored (other than that the media enters “Gemeinfreiheit” 70 years after the death of the owner).

What can happen if you publish your course work with copyright protected items?

- “Beauty” elements that are not copyright free and not required to understand the content cannot be used just to beautify your image/video/presentation (e.g. franchise items/themes, gifs or memes) as they cannot be argued to fall under ‘scientifically examined’.

Companies actively look for copyright violations to sue. For example, a German school was sued for using a copyright protected photo.

- Textbook (dt. Lehrbücher) elements are usually copyright protected and publishers actively look for copyright violations/ unauthorized use as they lose income if they cannot sell their products.

How to mark your sources, a recommendation:

- In a spoken text (that is not connected to a referenced piece in accompanying visual media), speak out a short reference (e.g. “In their 2018 article, Miller et al. stated ...”).
- Short reference sources clearly recognizable as source in the moment of appearance (e.g. “Miller et al. 2018” or “Source [1]”).
- A complete list according to (scientific) bibliographical standards needs to be included at the end of a text, or a presentation, or in the closing credits of a video as well as in the metadata. Tip: follow a citation style guide such as APA. Licenses might define how to reference the material (<https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/attribution/>)





How do I find out what license a material has?

Check the environment in which your material is embedded. Look for the license name or icon in metadata, footnotes, the credits of a video, description, etc. around the item. If you cannot find a clear license, be cautious and rather request the author’s permission or not use the material.

What free licenses are there, and how can I find out if a material is covered by it?

The licenses by Creative Commons (CC) listed in Table 1 allow use of the material, under certain conditions. If you encounter other licenses, inform yourself about the rights the license gives you. Read more in the respective license agreement.

Table 1: List of licenses that allow the use of the licenses material. Be aware of the attributed rights attached to each license, as explained in the overview.

License name	Attributed rights	Icon
Public domain	“Our Public Domain Mark enables works that are no longer restricted by copyright to be marked as such in a standard and simple way, making them easily discoverable and available to others. Many cultural heritage institutions including museums, libraries and other curators are knowledgeable about the copyright status of paintings, books and manuscripts, photographs and other works in their collections, many of which are old and no longer under copyright.” (Source 1)	 (Source [4])
CC0 or No Rights Reserved	“CC0 enables scientists, educators, artists and other creators and owners of copyright- or database-protected content to waive those interests in their works and thereby place them as completely as possible in the public domain, so that others may freely build upon, enhance and reuse the works for any purposes without restriction under copyright or database law.” (Source [2])	 (Source [4])
CC-BY or Creative Commons -Attribution	“This license lets others distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. This is the most accommodating of licenses offered. Recommended for maximum dissemination and use of licensed materials.” (Source [3])	 (Source [4])
CC-BY-SA or Creative Commons -Attribution -ShareAlike	“This license lets others remix, adapt, and build upon your work even for commercial purposes, as long as they credit you and license their new creations under the identical terms. This license is often compared to “copyleft” free and open source software licenses. All new works based on yours will carry the same license, so any derivatives will also allow commercial use. This is the license used by Wikipedia, and is recommended for materials that would benefit from incorporating content from Wikipedia and similarly licensed projects.” (Source [3])	 (Source [4])

Some suggestions where to look for copyright free/ freely licensed material:

Attention: Make sure to check the license of the specific piece of media you want to use. Some of the pages below contain collections of media, some of which have a 'free-to-use' licence.

- Images/ Photos
 - Images on Wikipedia are usually licensed CC-BY-SA
 - [Pexels](#)
 - [Pickup image](#)
 - [Pixabay](#)
- Videos/ Gifs/ Animations
 - [Twillio](#)
 - [Videvo](#)
- Text
 - [Twillio](#)
 - [Europeana](#)
- Music
 - [Orca](#)
 - [CCmixter](#)
 - [CreativeCommons](#)
- Design elements of the tool you use
 - [Powerpoint design templates](#)
 - [License free canva templates](#)

Sources

Source [1]: Public Domain Mark, <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/pdm/>, creative commons, 11.01.2023, [CC-BY 4.0](#)

Source [2]: CC0, <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/>, creative commons, 11.01.2023, [CC-BY 4.0](#)

Source [3]: About the Licenses, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=en>, creative commons, 10.01.2023, [CC-BY 4.0](#)

Source [4]: Downloads, <https://creativecommons.org/about/downloads/>, creative commons, last accessed 21.07.2023, [CC-BY 4.0](#)