Copyright & Creativity for Ethical Digital Citizens

Curriculum Overview

What Makes This Curriculum Unique?

Never before have educators, copyright experts, and open information advocates worked together to teach students essential digital citizenship skill surrounding copyright, fair use, public domain, and Creative Commons. The new curriculum, Copyright & Creativity for Ethical Digital Citizens, features lesson plans, videos, activities, and handouts, designed to inspire creativity and help students make conscious choices about sharing their own creative work while understanding the value of respecting the rights of other creators.

Diana Graber, Digital Literacy Educator, responded to the new curriculum: “As a digital literacy educator, I am excited about having these practical, useful tools to teach a complex topic. Finally someone has made copyright, fair use, and creative commons understandable for young people.”

Creative work is a big part of all of our lives, particularly online. Sometimes we make and share our own creations. Sometimes we listen to or read the creative work of others; sometimes we do both, for example, when we quote someone’s work in a blog post or video of our own. It’s important to know that copyright tries to accommodate and encourage all of this. We all need to know something about copyright if we want to understand how this world of creators and creativity works.

In these lessons, we discuss our roles as consumers and creators, what copyright is and what it protects, and why it might be important for our creativity. We also discuss the limitations of copyright, what it doesn’t cover, such as facts and ideas, government documents, and situations of fair use.

We also offer practical tips for how to get online media legally and ethically from lawful sites that respect the rights of the artists and creators and distribute their work with permission. The lessons teach how to recognize the good players, the sites that offer content legally, versus others that encourage illegal filesharing.

Finally, the lessons explore how to find creative work online that is free to use in our own creative work and may be shared with others. Download the curriculum at ikeepsafe.org/copyright.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LESSON SUMMARIES

GRADE K—Respect the Person: This lesson helps young students realize the importance of attribution—getting credit for the work they do and giving credit to others for their creative work.

GRADE 1—It's Great to Create & Play Fair: Grade One's lesson builds upon the kindergarten lesson, promoting creative expression and helping students realize the importance of attribution—getting credit for the work they do and giving credit to others for their creative work.

GRADE 2—Creativity & Sharing Fairly: In second grade, students learn about ownership concepts associated with creative work. The lesson encourages students to think about how their work might be shared.

GRADE 3—Sharing Fairly: This lesson introduces the concept of fair use. It promotes creative expression and gives students experience with the basic idea of copyright.

GRADE 4—Digital Sharing Ethics: Promotes creative expression and gives students an experience that helps them understand the challenges and benefits of respecting ownership and copyright, particularly in digital environments. Respecting ownership is an important part of being an ethical digital citizen; the lesson also explores the concept of fair use.

GRADE 5—Copyright in the Real World (Part 1): This lesson gives students an experience that teaches them how to identify copyrighted work and understand Creative Commons licenses for finding creative work.

GRADE 6—Copyright in the Real World (Part 2): Part two reinforces fair use concepts and promotes creative expression and gives students experience understanding copyright protections and consequences.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON 1—Creativity in the Online World: Our Roles as Creators and Consumers: In Lesson 1 we cover our roles as consumers and creators and the basic protections of copyright. We also provide a high level view of copyright's limitations—the things it doesn't cover, like facts and ideas, fair uses, and time (as creative work falls into the public domain). These are important concepts for all digital citizens.

LESSON 2—Acquiring Content Legally and Ethically: Lesson 2 shows students what to do when they want new music, movies, images, even software. Students learn how acquire content in ways that are legal and ethical and how to recognize the good players who provide content legally versus those who encourage illegal filesharing.

LESSON 3—Sharing Content—How Much is OK? When we find new music or movies that we love, our natural inclination is to share those with our friends. That's a good thing, and good citizens know how to do it ethically! Lesson 3 teaches how to draw the line between sharing that is legal and ethical and sharing that violates copyright law.

LESSON 4—Creating New Content Using Others' Work: In our role as creators, we often want to use others' creative work in our own work. For example: a collage of images, movie mashup, using music or images to liven up a blog post or presentation. In lesson 4, we learn about fair use, which allows us to use copyright protected work in certain situations without permission. We also learn where to find creative works that we are free to use with little or no restrictions—Creative Commons and Public Domain.