

You're one of a kind.

So is the copyrighted music you rely on.

Keep it legal. You want your students to value music. When you observe the copyright law you show them the way. The future of music is in your hands.

Here's how to keep it legal:

1. Know what you can do
2. Know what you can't do legally
3. Get permission to use other's property

Did you know... Infringement of the copyright law can result in fines of up to \$30,000?

What You Can Do:

1. You may make emergency photocopies to replace missing parts for an imminent performance, provided you replace all copies with purchased music in due course.
2. You may edit or simplify music as long as the fundamental character of the work is not distorted. Note: You may not alter or add lyrics.
3. Teachers may make 1 copy per student of excerpts of musical works for academic purposes. Note: The excerpts cannot be used for performance. The excerpt cannot comprise more than 10% of the complete work or comprise a performable unit.
4. Teachers may make a single copy of a student performance to be used for evaluation or rehearsal purposes.
5. Teachers may make a single copy of a recording owned by the institution or teacher for creating aural exercises or examinations.

Note: This pertains only to the copyright of the music itself and not to any copyright which may exist in the sound recording.

What You Can't Do:

1. Do not copy or download music to avoid purchase.
2. Do not keep photocopies in your library. Destroy any unauthorized photocopies immediately and replace them with legal editions.
3. Do not copy out-of-print works without permission of the publisher. Note: If it is vital you obtain music that is out-of-print, contact the publisher directly. They can confirm if the work is out of print and can sometimes arrange for you to obtain a legal copy.
4. Do not make arrangements of works without permission of the copyright owner.
5. Do not copy music for use in performance unless you replace it with a legal edition in due course.
6. Do not copy without including copyright notice.
7. Do not copy to create anthologies or compilations.
8. Do not reproduce material designed to be consumable such as workbooks, standardized tests and answer sheets.
9. You cannot use the excuse of not knowing the copyright owner for not following copyright law. Resources are readily available to help you do so.

** This guide is based on the U.S. copyright law of 1976. The links to various sites are offered as a search tool. The MPA assumes no liability for any errors or omissions in the information found at these organizations web sites.*

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KEEP IT LEGAL.

Think of copyrighted music as a piece of property, and you'll be on the right track. When in doubt, ask the owner for permission. You may or may not receive permission, but when you use someone else's property, you must have their permission. This is true for musical works as much as for anything else you own. The music you use is created by composers, arrangers and publishers, and, to ensure future music is available, they must be compensated for it. The future of music is very much in your hands.

Getting Permission:

The Music Publishers Association of the United States helps you find information on our website mpa.org so you can obtain permission from copyright owners.*

1. If you have a copy of the music, look for the copyright holder or publisher's name, and use the "Copyright Search" link on mpa.org to access the Music Publisher Directory and index of Publishers' Imprints to find the publisher's contact information.
2. If you do not know or can't locate the publisher of the music, research further by accessing one of the three U.S. performing rights organization websites. Links to each are provided on mpa.org in the "Copyright Search" section.
 - a. ascap.com/ace – ACE is the searchable database of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers
 - b. bmi.com – Search by song name to access publisher information on songs licensed by BMI. Some additional non-BMI publishers will also be listed.
 - c. sesac.com – Access the "repertory" link to search titles for the SESAC. While the organization is called the Society of European Stage Authors & Composers, the organization now spans internationally and in all genres.
3. How to secure permission for sound recordings? If you copy and distribute recordings of songs which you did not write and are not in the public domain.
 - a. harryfox.com – Use the Songfile search and the License Music link to obtain mechanical and other rights information.
4. Permission forms are available on many publishers' websites or use the forms provided at mpa.org/copyright_resource_center/forms
5. How do I know if a work is still protected by copyright, or if it is in the public domain?
 - a. Know the law: Works in the U.S. with a copyright date of 1922 or earlier are in the public domain. Works created after January 1, 1978 will be protected for the life of the composer (author) plus 70 years. Copyrights in effect on that date, if renewed, will continue for 75 years from the date copyright was originally secured. Those works in their initial 28-year period of copyright on January 1, 1978 can be renewed for an additional 47 years, while the copyright of works in their renewal term on that date were automatically extended for an additional 19 years.
 - b. Still not sure? Try the Library of Congress.
6. Visit copyright.gov/records to search for copyrighted works.

For more information, see
The United States Copyright Law – A Practical Outline.