

What is copyright?

Music copyright is a form of intellectual property that allows a person to own the music they create, and prevents others from copying or reproducing the work without permission.

If you write any of your own original teaching material you own the copyright to the content. An exception applies if the work was created in the course of your employment for an educational establishment, in which case the copyright remains with the employer unless your contract states otherwise.

Can I use photocopies for educational purposes?

In school: making copies of sheet music for use in lessons will require a licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency (www.cla.co.uk). Most organisations will have already obtained a collective licence that covers photocopying for teaching purposes, however you should always check. If there is no licence available, the teacher is not able to copy more than 1% of any work in any one quarter of the year.

Self-employed teachers: copying a copyright-protected work, even if only for private use, without obtaining a licence from the copyright holder is an infringement of the law. Contact the copyright owner or their publisher to apply for permission; you'll need to do this for each work you intend to reproduce and for each occasion the material is used.

Beware of downloading sheet music from illegal websites. These infringe copyright and you should avoid using this material for teaching.

Can my students perform copyright works in a public concert?

If pupils are performing to teachers and pupils in a school assembly or concert then no special licence is required for a copyright work. If the concert can be described as a 'public performance', for example if parents and other guests are in the audience, then you'll need to obtain a licence beforehand. Check with your organisation as to whether it has a blanket licence in place for public performances.

Do I need a licence to use a recording of a radio or TV broadcast for educational purposes?

In school: you will require a licence to use recordings of broadcasts for educational purposes. Many organisations already have a licence from the Educational Recording Agency. You can check your organisation's licensing status at www.era.org.uk/licence.

Self-employed teachers: recording constitutes a form of copying and you'll need a licence from the copyright holder.

Summary

- Reproducing a copyright work in any format will require a licence. This may be in the form of a blanket licence for a school or organisation, or a licence from the copyright holder.
- Ask your institution what licences they have in place and what they cover.
- Ask your students to buy their own music books, if possible.