



Getting Permission to Use Copyrighted Material in Your Own Work

If you want to use a copyrighted item and "fair use" does not apply, you need to obtain permission from the copyright holder to reproduce copies.

Before giving you permission to reproduce an item, the copyright holder will want to know specific information about the intended use, how many copies are to be, how the copies will be distributed, and when the copies will be distributed. The more narrow and specific you can make your request, the better chance you will have to use the materials.

You can send the copyright holder a letter or e-mail to make the request. You should not telephone the copyright holder because you cannot document the response to a telephone call.

You can generally find the copyright holders e-mail or postal address using an Internet search.

Example #1: Requesting Permission to Copy an Article for a Class

"I want to make copies of your article for my class" is not as effective as saying "I want to make 31 copies of your article to distribute to the students in the history class I am teaching at Schoolcraft College during the 2013 Winter semester."

Example #2: Requesting Permission to Incorporate an Image in a Digital Literacy Project

"I want to use this image in a video" is not as effective as saying, "I am working on a video for my history class and would like permission to use the image. The video will be posted on YouTube once it is finished."

If the copyright holder does not respond to your request, you do not have the right to reproduce the materials. Or, not being able to locate the copyright holder does not give you permission to reproduce the materials.

You may contact the copyright holder via e-mail or by U.S. Mail. A telephone call is not advisable because phone calls do not produce written records.

Please be aware that the copyright holder has the right to charge you a fee for making the copies. You may decide that the fee is too much. However, unless you pay the fee, you are not able to legally use the materials.

Example #3: Requesting Permission to Incorporate an Image as Part of *Resources for Researchers*

I sent the following e-mail to Students for Liberty to get permission to reproduce an image from their website.

I am in the process of revising and updating *Resources for Writers*, a website that provides free resource materials--without any advertising--to students.

I would like your permission to reproduce the attached image from the Students for Liberty website on the "Argumentation: Pre-writing Exercise" page on *Resources for Writers*. In addition to giving you the photo credit, I am also linking back to one of the essays in your blog.

You may see the final page at <http://writing.stevenlberg.info/mini/m001.html>. Please let me know if this is a problem.

Thank you.

Within 24 hours, I received the following response:

Professor Berg,

Certainly, please feel free to reprint the information and graphic.

Sincerely & For Liberty,

Jennifer

Because I only requested that I use the image on the website, I cannot reproduce it on this handout without requesting permission to do so.

Requesting permission is not difficult. And I have found that most copyright holders are very both quick and positive in their response.



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