Using third-party material in your teaching

Using third-party material is a crucial part of teaching. Works in the public domain can be freely reused but if a work is still in copyright your use must be covered by either a copyright exception or a licence.

Public domain
Copyright lasts for a limited time, normally 70 years after the creator dies. The typographical layout of works is protected for 25 years from publication.

If copyright has expired, the work is in the public domain and you can freely reuse it.

Copyright exceptions
Copyright law allows limited copying in certain contexts, including for non-commercial 'illustration for instruction'. Your use must be fair to the rightsholder.

Usually this only covers shorter excerpts: copying more will normally require a licence.

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The University has licences for library resources, as well as collective licences which enable copying of certain material.

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If your use isn't covered by an exception, here are the licences and other options open to you.

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Request scans of up to 1 chapter, 1 article or 10% of a publication under the CLA licence via the Reading List Service.

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Use Box of Broadcasts to view archived recordings and request upcoming broadcasts under the ERA licence.

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Look for images in the public domain or with a Creative Commons licence if your use is not covered by an exception.

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Copy a cutting from an NL A-licensed news publication which can be distributed to up to 250 students.

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Link to online resources if possible. If you need to copy, check the reuse terms of the resource and request permission if necessary.

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Need advice? Visit our website or email library@abdn.ac.uk.

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