

Finding and using images for your learning resources

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Copyright, fair use and public domain

Just as you would provide a citation and reference for any texts you quote from, you should also provide information on the source and ownership of images you include in your resources. This resource will help you to find and use images in your learning resources without breaking copyright law.

- [Copyright](#)
- [Fair use](#)
- [Public domain](#)

Finding and using images for your learning resources

What is copyright?

Copyright is a legal right which protects intellectual property - something created, such as a painting or a photograph when an idea from the mind is put into a physical form.

Copyright applies automatically when an item such as photograph or painting is created and provides its creator with the exclusive right to decide what to do with it, if it can be copied for example, or used in publications in print or online.

Images, including photographs, are protected until 70 years after the death of the owner.

Current legislation on copyright can be found in the [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988](#)



[Landscape artist Emma Auriemma](#)
by Tomwsulcer - Wikimedia / [CC0 1.0](#)

[BBC: Copyright aware](#)

[Intellectual Property Office](#)

Some institutions retain copyright of all resources created by employees. You should check your terms and conditions in relation to work you create during your employment.

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Creative Commons

[Creative Commons](#) is a non-profit organisation set up to allow copyright holders a means to share their work with the world, while still retaining certain rights. If the work has a CC licence, it can be used, subject to the conditions attached, without contacting the copyright holder for permission.

One of the licences available has a 'Non-commercial' (NC) clause; however, it may not be clear how the copyright holder wishes their work to be used. For example, would it be acceptable to use such an image in a free to access Blog which takes contributions from paid bloggers?

In Education, we should be fairly safe using works with an NC licence however if in doubt, find an alternative or contact the copyright owner for clarification.

Understanding the licence

- There are 6 versions of the licence. Make sure you check the conditions of use - some are more restrictive than others.
- A user friendly ('human-readable') deed is supplied for each licence but behind this is legal code which should be checked if there is any doubt regarding use of the image.

Using the licence

- The information which follows is based on version (4.0) of this licensing system but you will come across works licensed under versions 1 to 3 too. Check the conditions of use each time.
- You must not suggest that the licensor endorses you or your use of the image in any way.

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Attribution

The owner of the image should be credited and a link provided to the source, together with a link to the licence deed. (Earlier licences may require the name of the image too – check the appropriate deed).



Alien Fig Tree by Wonderlane at [Flickr](#) / [CC BY 2.0](#)



[Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#)

This is the easiest licence to work with, having the least restrictions.

You may copy and even edit the image, use and distribute in any format, including in commercial projects.

Under the following terms:

Attribution: You must credit the creator and attribution parties by name, if these details have been supplied, and provide a link to the original material, together with a copyright notice linking to the deed. You should also indicate if any changes have been made to the original image.

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Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International ([CC BY SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

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Under the following terms:

Attribution: You must credit the creator and attribution parties by name, if these details have been supplied, and provide a link to the original material, together with a copyright notice linking to the deed. You should also indicate if any changes have been made to the original image.

ShareAlike: If you edit or build upon the image, you may distribute it only under the terms of the original licence.



Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International ([CC BY ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/))

You may copy and distribute the image, including in commercial projects.

Under the following terms:

Attribution: You must credit the creator and attribution parties by name, if these details have been supplied, and provide a link to the original material, together with a copyright notice linking to the deed.

NoDerivatives: If you edit or build upon the image, you may not distribute the modified image.

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NonCommercial: You may not use the image for commercial purposes.



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NonCommercial: You may not use the image for commercial purposes.

ShareAlike: If you edit or build upon the image, you may distribute it only under the terms of the original licence.

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[Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International \(CC BY NC ND 4.0\)](#)

You may copy and distribute the image.

Under the following terms:

Attribution: You must credit the creator and attribution parties by name, if these details have been supplied, and provide a link to the original material, together with a copyright notice linking to the deed. You should also indicate if any changes have been made to the original image.

NonCommercial: You may not use the image for commercial purposes.

NoDerivatives: If you edit or build upon the image, you may not distribute the modified image.

[CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication \(CC0 1.0\)](#)

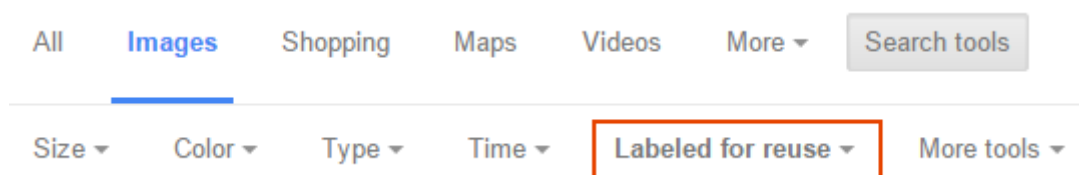
The creator of this image has waved copyright and dedicated the work to the public domain.

You may copy and edit the image, use and distribute in any format.

Sourcing and using images

Searching for free to use images has been made easier with the introduction of search tools and filters by search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing.

For example, once you have searched for an image in Google you'll see a new toolbar at the top of the screen - click on 'Search tools' and then 'Usage rights' and select 'Labeled for reuse'.



Google image search toolbar

Finding and using images for your learning resources

The images displayed will have been marked for reuse, i.e. public domain or with a Creative Commons licence or similar. However, ensure that you check the provenance of any images prior to use and check also that any licence conditions work with your planned use of the image.

Video: [Google image search](#)

Attribution

When you have found a suitable image, provide details of the source of the image together with a link to the appropriate licence. If the image is in the public domain, state this. Just as with text you are quoting, you should provide your readers with the opportunity to visit the original source of the image; even in the case of an image which states 'no attribution required', it's 'nice' and more professional to do so. There are examples below.



[Road Junction & Hadrian's Wall Path](#)
by Nigel Homer at Geograph / CC BY-SA 2.0

Finding and using images for your learning resources



[Pixabay / CC0 1.0](#)



[Poppy Field by wazimu0 at Flickr \(cropped\) / CC BY 2.0](#)

Check the CC licence each time for conditions of use. We are on version 4 now but earlier licences are in common existence and may have slightly different conditions. For example version 2 requires you to provide the title of the image if available, as I have done in images 1 and 3, and indicate if any changes have been made (image 3 has been cropped slightly).

Finding and using images for your learning resources

Seeking permission to use a copyrighted image

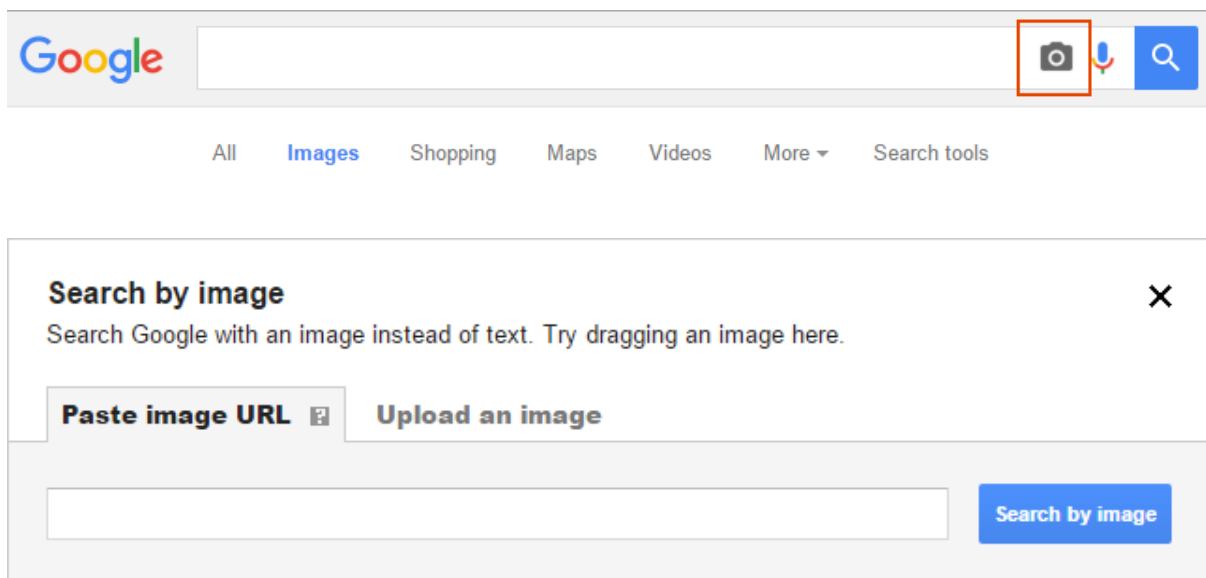
If you come across an image which has no copyright information, you should assume that the owner has retained copyright in full. You will also see images marked as '© All rights reserved'.

If you cannot find a similar, free to use image and really must use the copyright protected image you have located, it is worth contacting the owner. Very often permission will be granted for use in educational resources. Give the owner as much information as possible regarding details and location of the image online, who you are and how you would like to use it, and ask what attribution should be included if permission is granted.

Searching by image

If you have downloaded an image previously but didn't note the copyright information, or if you've found an image online and want to check that you have located the original, try Google's 'search by image' facility.

You'll find this by clicking the camera icon in the search box from within the image search tab.



Finding and using images for your learning resources

Image resources on the web

Search engines such as Google will pull images from around the web but here are some image banks you may like to peruse - really useful resources.

[FlickrCC](#)

Many Flickr users make their images available under Creative Commons licences.

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

"A database of freely usable media files to which anyone can contribute."

[Geograph](#)

Geograph photographic archives cover Britain and Ireland and are released under Creative Commons licences.

[NASA](#)

NASA material is not protected by copyright unless noted and can be used freely - NASA should be acknowledged as the source of any images used.

[Pixabay](#)

Free high quality images "All images and videos on Pixabay are released free of copyrights under Creative Commons CC0. You may download, modify, distribute, and use them royalty-free for anything you like, even in commercial applications. Attribution is not required."

[OpenClipart](#)

High quality clipart which can be freely used and even edited on the website.

[Morquefile](#)

Free to use, high quality photo archive.

[Image*After](#)

Resource bank of images which can be used, and modified, for personal and commercial use.