



# What the copyright symbol really means

KS2 COMPUTING

DIGITAL LITERACY

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

## What is a copyright symbol?

The **copyright symbol** looks like a circle with the letter © inside it. You'll see it on books, films, music, websites, and video games. It's like a label that says: "**Someone created this, and they own it.**"

When a creator puts a copyright symbol on their work, they're telling the world that **nobody can copy, share, or sell their creation without permission**. It's a legal way to say "**This is mine!**"

Think of it like your name written inside a book you made at school. It shows everyone that **you** created it, and other people shouldn't copy your ideas or claim they made it.

## Why do creators use it?

**Authors, musicians, filmmakers, and artists** use the copyright symbol to protect their hard work. They spent time, energy, and often money creating something special. The copyright symbol is their way of protecting that work.

For example, if a musician writes a song and records it, the copyright symbol means **nobody else can sell that song without paying them**. If a company copies the song and makes money from it without permission, that's **illegal**.

## What does it actually protect?

Copyright protects creative work like:

**Books, poems, and stories • Films and videos • Music and songs • Pictures and art • Computer software and games • Websites and blogs**

The symbol doesn't just protect the **idea** though. It protects the **exact way** someone expressed that idea. Two people can write different songs about love, but only the songwriter who wrote a specific song owns the copyright to it.

Think of it like your homework. You had to work hard on your essay about dinosaurs. If your friend copied it word-for-word and handed it in as their own, that wouldn't be

fair, right? Copyright works the same way for creators.

## How long does copyright last?

Here's something interesting: **creators don't need to put the © symbol on their work for it to be protected.** In most countries, copyright is **automatic** as soon as someone creates something. But the symbol reminds people that the work is owned.

Copyright usually lasts **70 years after the creator dies** (or **70 years after the work is published**, depending on the country). This means your great-great-great-grandchildren might still benefit from something you create today!

## Why should you care?

Understanding copyright is important because **you're growing up in a digital world** where it's super easy to copy and share things. Knowing about copyright helps you **respect other people's work** and **understand the rules** for using things online.

Next time you see the © symbol, remember: **it's there to protect someone's creativity.**