

A Student Guide to Copyright for In-Class Multimedia Presentations



The purpose of this guide is to help students understand their rights and responsibilities related to the use of images, videos, and other media in multimedia classroom presentations and assignments. This guide does not cover copyright questions related to written assignments or other purposes. For more information on copyright, see the [Copyright](http://www.mtroyal.ca/copyright) website (<http://www.mtroyal.ca/copyright>).

What is copyright?

Copyright protects a creator's work (such as a film, photograph, novel, song, poem, website, software, etc.) from being copied, distributed, or adapted without the permission of the copyright holder (who is usually the creator, publisher, or producer of the work). Copyright automatically applies to all creative works as soon as they're created. The Canadian [Copyright Act](#) tries to provide a balance between the user's and copyright holder's interests; therefore, there are some exceptions that allow limited copying under specific circumstances, including research, private study, education, parody, satire, review, criticism and news reporting.

Why does it matter to me?

There are legal and ethical issues to consider when using someone else's work in your assignments. While plagiarism relates to the use of a work without *acknowledgment*, copyright infringement relates to the use of a work without *permission*. You cannot use videos, songs, or photographs, for example, in a public performance without ensuring you have permission from the copyright holder to do so (unless it is covered by a license agreement or exception in the [Copyright Act](#)). Simply acknowledging something isn't good enough if you don't have permission to use it.

Remember – just because you can't find a © symbol, it doesn't mean there's no copyright!

Can I use copyrighted images in PowerPoint presentations?

Under the Educational Exceptions in the [Copyright Act](#), copyrighted images (including charts, graphs, photos and diagrams) may be included in classroom presentations without permission as long as they are on display for educational purposes on the premises of the institution and there is no commercial version available. However, different considerations apply when the Powerpoint slides are distributed to a class as handouts, made available on the Blackboard system or made available to the public in any other manner.

Can I make handouts of my PowerPoint slides? Can I post my slides to my course Blackboard site?

It depends. The [Copyright Act](#) contains specific exceptions which allow you to display an image or a video on a projector or presentation software such as PowerPoint. However, these exceptions do **not** discuss classroom handouts or posting to Blackboard. For these purposes, Powerpoint presentations which contain copyrighted material are considered the same as all other handouts, and are covered by a general exception in the Copyright Act known as the "fair dealing" exception. Please see the Fair Dealing

Guidelines for information on what materials are permitted to be handed out or posted on Blackboard under this exception.

Can I play a copyrighted song in a presentation?

You can play a copyrighted song in a presentation as long as the song is played for educational or training purposes, the presentation takes place on Mount Royal's campus, the audience consists primarily of Mount Royal students, and the presentation is not done for commercial purposes. While this criteria includes the vast majority of presentations given in classrooms to students, there may be situations in which these criteria are not met. Typically in these situations, you will need the copyright holder's permission or you will need to obtain a license to play the music through a licensing agency such as SOCAN. Please contact the Copyright Advisor for help with this process.

Can I show a video in class?

The majority of videos on VHS, DVD or Blu-Ray can now be shown in class without seeking permission from copyright holders. Videos may be shown anywhere on Mount Royal's campus provided that they are shown for an educational or training purpose, the audience consists primarily of Mount Royal students and they are not shown for a commercial purpose. The copy of the video shown must not be an "infringing" copy; it should be a legitimately purchased video. The source of the video is not important: students may bring in a video from home, purchase a copy themselves or obtain a copy through a library or video rental store.

Some video distributors who specialize in educational material require customers to sign an agreement when purchasing videos. The terms of these agreements may prohibit the showing of the purchased videos in the classroom. Students who choose to purchase videos through these distributors should read any agreements carefully to understand what they can and cannot do with the video. Where the library has purchased videos from these distributors, the videos will be marked accordingly.

Whether online videos may be shown in the classroom depends on the specific terms and conditions a particular web site imposes on its users. YouTube videos may be streamed in the classroom for educational purposes provided that the video is accessed directly through the YouTube website. They cannot be downloaded and/or altered in any way for the purposes of showing the video in the classroom, nor may they be embedded or posted into Blackboard sites or other class websites. Showing the video in the classroom is not permitted if the content of the video itself violates copyright; if the video itself is an illegal copy. For videos found on other websites (non-YouTube videos) please refer to the site-specific terms and conditions.

How can I find media that is safe to use in my presentation?

- See the [Copyright Guide](#) for a list of copyright-friendly and open access multimedia resources you can use in your presentation.



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