

Introduction

Having a website to share researched materials is great.

It's a streamlined way to keep records meetings and build a portfolio of information on countless countries.

However, like most things in this world, there are some rules that we must follow.

This document is a guide to help you avoid **plagiarism** and potential lawsuits.

What is required of you

If you find a source (website, video, book, picture, etc.) **immediately cite it** in **MLA 8** format. This applies to *all* sources.

Categorize the source. Figure out if the material (quote, line of information, picture, etc.) is **copyrighted, creative commons, or public domain.**

Include this categorization in your research document before you share it.

If your source is **copyrighted**:

- Do not attempt to sell the source (i.e. make money off of it).
- Only use **factual**, informative sources. If the copyrighted source is of creative nature, such as a fiction novel or film, err on the side of caution and **do not use that source.**
- Use information from a single source **sparingly**. Don't pull every single argument from a single source. Refrain from using the **thesis** or main idea of the source.
- Include the link (if the source was online) alongside your citation when sharing copyrighted materials with the club.

If your source is **creative commons**:

- Check which rules apply (see video linked below, under creative commons)

- If attribution is required, attach the **author's name** with your research
- attach a **date of publication** if given
- do **not** paraphrase if it is **no derivatives** (the equals sign); use word for word quotes

If your source is **public domain**:

- Go for it! Nothing is stopping you.

How to categorize sources?

Keep reading below to learn about copyright, creative commons, and public domain.

Types of Sources

There are several types of sources you will encounter when conducting research. Here is a list of the most common ones:

Check out [this](#) link for a more extensive list with more helpful details.

1. Copyright



Copyrighted materials are *owned* by someone.

If a source is copyrighted, you have to get the author's permission to use the work. **Unless** the copyrighted material is being used under **fair use**.

Read more about **fair use** later in this document.

2. Creative Commons



Think of creative commons works as copyrighted materials where the author has given permission **but** under a few conditions. In order to use the material, you have to follow some rules.

Please watch [this](#) video to learn about various “rules” that apply when using creative commons.

3. Public Domain



Materials that are public domain are ready to be used by anyone; no permission needed.

Fair Use

Fair use is the exception to needing permission from a copyright holder.

If you want to use information from a copyrighted source (particularly for educational purposes, like in our situation), you must meet certain criteria:

1. Purpose (profit, nonprofit)
2. Nature (factual, creative)
3. Amount (how much is used)
4. Effect (will this harm the market for this material?)

Read more in detail about these four criteria [here](#), from the University of Chicago.

Here is a helpful image to show you what are safe, and not so safe, sources to use.

The red section is the most risky, because there are more rules that must be followed.

The green section is the safest, because there are less rules that must be followed.

