

Program Summary

Digital Citizenship and Creative Content Curriculum

Digitally delivered content is part of the fabric of students' lives today. There is enormous access to content, yet it typically comes with many different underlying usage rights that few understand. Very few students are exposed in a positive way to how they can properly manage and use digital or commercial content — whether their own or others'; whether music, movies, art, software, or other creative material; and whether free, licensed, purchased, or subscribed.

Creative rights and the materials they protect are an important part of our culture. It's crucial that students understand the options for managing content and respect the wishes of others regarding creative content — at a personal level that is meaningful to their everyday lives. Students interact online with music, movies, software, images, and other digital content every day. Are they aware that these works are protected and that some of their uses may not be consistent with the creator's wishes? Students themselves are often creators. Do they understand how creative rights are relevant to them? Where can they go to get information about appropriate online behaviors to help them make the right decisions for themselves and as citizens in a digital world?

The Digital Citizenship and Creative Content Curriculum program was developed to create awareness around the issue of creative content and to foster a better understanding of the rights connected with it. Ultimately, its goals are to instill in students an appreciation of the value that creative content has for the creator, and to establish a personal respect for creative rights in a way that changes their behaviors and perceptions about digitally delivered content.

The program consists of both student and educator resources. For students, an interactive website provides multiple opportunities to explore the topic of creative rights and even experiment with some creativity of their own. They will have an opportunity to see what other artists, singers, songwriters, and the like think about the topic, and to create their own personal set of creative rights guidelines. For teachers, a comprehensive set of cross-curricular classroom activities organized into thematic units provides a variety of ways to engage students in this learning experience. Supplemental resources will help with answers to basic questions around the topic of creative rights, provide means for assessing student learning, and indicate how these materials align with national standards.

Target Audience: Middle and high school students in grades 8-10

Subject Areas: Civics, Computer Science, Debate, Economics, Fine Arts, Government, Journalism, Language Arts, Technology, and Video Production

Unit Structure

There are four units that comprise the curriculum resources. Each unit consists of a set of standalone yet complementary lesson plans centered on and playing off of a creative rights-related scenario presented through a case study. Each unit has 4–6 of these project-oriented activities, one of which serves as the culminating lesson for the unit. Guiding questions help set the expectation for what students will learn, and baseline and post-unit assessments establish baseline knowledge and gauge student learning. Modification and Extension suggestions recommend ways to abridge or expand the activities within the unit, and provide tips for engaging parents and peers outside of the classroom.

Outline of Curriculum Units

Creative What?

This unit explores the general topic of creative content and the rights associated with it. Using the backdrop of a high school's Battle of the Bands, the unit will help students define intellectual property and creative content by relating it to a common scenario they might encounter. Students will begin to recognize and internalize the importance of respecting creative rights and will conduct their own research to help clear up misconceptions about the rights that apply to them and their peers.

Case Study: Battle of the Bands

A high school student council is sponsoring a school-wide Battle of the Bands. A student not involved in the production decides to videotape and sell copies of the show to students and family members. When the performers learn about the tapes, they are understandably upset.

Activity 1: The Mystery of the Purloined Script

This activity is a role-play within a role-play in which students assume the identities of a student film crew and cast. The crew and cast discover that an almost-exact replica of their own original film has won top honors (and cash) in a film festival. The students conduct an investigation to determine whether any copyright violations were committed and what actions can be taken. This activity demonstrates not only the clear-cut issues, but also gray areas that must be addressed when working on real-world intellectual and creative projects.

Content Areas: Technology, Civics, Language Arts, Fine Arts, Journalism

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Activity 2: Who Knows What?

Chances are, your students will have different ideas about the meaning of intellectual property as it relates to creative content. In this activity, students conduct research to learn more about the topic. The research will consist of man-on-the-street interviews to determine general knowledge, attitudes, and misconceptions about copyrighted content. After compiling the information from their interviews, students write a paper and presentation about their findings and their recommendations.

Content Areas: Technology, Journalism, Language Arts, Video Production

Time Required: Four 60-minute class periods, plus additional time outside of class for interviews

Guiding Questions

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to intellectual property:

- What is intellectual property and creative content?
- Why are creative rights important?
- Are all citizens protected equally by copyright law?

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

Activity 3: Mistaken Identity

Students research copyright laws to see who “owns the rights” to the school Battle of the Bands as a whole, as well as the individual rights of performers, choreographers, arrangers, musicians, etc. They will also investigate laws and rights regarding reproduction, modification, distribution, public performance, and public display.

Content Areas: Technology, Civics, Economics, Computer Science, Debate, Journalism

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Activity 4: A Lasting Tribute

Students collect and organize various memorabilia that could be used to prepare a video or multimedia montage to honor a well-liked, respected member of the school family. Students examine the packaging of the items and/or research any commercial products they would like to use and determine which are in the public domain and which are protected under copyright laws. If use rights are required, they will also find out how to obtain those rights. In their research, they might find a resource that has no copyright protection, but if used, could be interpreted as an invasion of privacy.

Content Areas: Civics, Language Arts, Fine Arts, Journalism, Video Production

Time Required: Two 60-minute class periods, and additional time outside of class

Culminating Activity: Student Policy-Makers

Using the case study scenario as a backdrop, students research potential problems in their own school district regarding creative rights. Students look into existing rules surrounding school performances, and then draft a recommended school-/districtwide policy for this issue. Students then forward their draft to decision makers and stakeholders. In a follow-up activity, students create a profile on the MyBytes Web site to define their own rules about creative content.

Content Areas: Civics, Language Arts, Fine Arts

Time Required: Two 60-minute class periods, and additional time outside of class

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

By Rule of Law

Intellectual property can be very valuable, and thus, creators of this content are protected by laws in the United States and around the world. In this unit, students explore creative rights and learn about the laws that protect the creative process. The unit's activities encourage students to form opinions about what's right, what's wrong, and how the laws affect them as creators, consumers, and good digital citizens.

Case Study: Stick Bombs on the Sly

A student creates his own Halo-type video game and gives a copy to his friend. The friend starts making copies of the game and selling the counterfeit software to others. The friend claims this is no big deal because the creator did not copyright his game. What does the game creator do? What are his rights?

Activity 1: The Why, the What, and the How of Copyright Law

Set in the context of downloading pirated software, this activity explores the theme of copyright law. The activity begins with students reading the unit case study and characterizing Dave's actions as entrepreneurial or dishonest. Students will then discuss whether there are laws or consequences pertaining to copying and selling the intellectual property of others. Students conduct research to determine what the consequences are and why they exist. Using what they've learned, students create their own consequence and/or law based on a downloading court case. To conclude, students revisit the case study to determine if their perceptions and opinions about this situation have changed.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts, Technology

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Activity 2: What Did I Agree To?

Most of us don't take the time to thoroughly read the user agreements that come with software we purchase or download. Yet, those agreements are essential to protecting creative rights. In this activity, students look at sample user agreements to discover the important rights that are granted to both the user and the creator of intellectual property. Students discuss whether these rights should be applied — more explicitly — to other forms of media as well. Students then develop their own teen-friendly user agreement for a popular software program or other form of creative content.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Technology, Language Arts

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Guiding Questions

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to intellectual property:

- What current laws protect creative content?
- What are the advantages of adhering to these laws?
- What are the penalties for infringing these laws?
- How are laws different in other countries?

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

Activity 3: The Value of the Cost

In this activity, students compare the value of owning original software – and other forms of copyrighted works – with the risks of acquiring and using counterfeit goods. They review the unit case study and identify possible problems students who bought the counterfeit game might encounter. Students will then apply critical thinking skills to create an unbiased value vs. risk consumer assessment.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Technology, Language Arts, Economics

Time Required: Two 60-minute class periods

Activity 4: It's Not Just a Game

This activity explores the creative process involved in creating gaming software. Students review the unit case study in order to relate the creative process of game development and programming to the concept of intellectual property. Students then brainstorm the steps they think Eric used to take his game from idea to finished product. Then, students learn about the step-by-step process of creating gaming software and create a flowchart to visualize this process.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Technology

Time Required: Two 60-minute class periods

Activity 5: Creative Content Anthropologists Explore “Fair Use”

This activity looks at copyrighted works through the lens of “fair use.” The activity begins with students summarizing what they know about creative content, how it can be used, and how it can be protected. Then, students research ways that copyrighted works can be used within the guidelines of fair use. Students assume the role of anthropologists and conduct a fair use assessment in their school to understand what is being done and why it is happening from a socio-cultural perspective. In conclusion, students discuss the types of policies to implement so that creative content is better understood and infractions are avoided.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Civics

Time Required: Two 60-minute class periods

Culminating Activity: An International Creative Content Summit

Student groups select a country and research its copyright laws. Students then represent that country in an imaginary international summit where the goal is standardizing these laws across the globe.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts, Fine Arts, Government

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

Calling All Digital Citizens

When creative content is so easily accessed and shared online, a basic understanding of copyright becomes important. This unit explores the creative content commonly found on social media Web sites, how copyright laws protect content, and how Web sites' terms of use may govern use of that content. Students analyze those provisions and determine how they protect the rights of the creator. In addition, they examine their own use of creative content on social media sites.

Guiding Questions

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to using creative material:

- How do creative rights and fair use relate to social media?
- Have I ever infringed on anyone's creative rights?
- How is social media changing the conversation around copyrighted content and creative rights?

Case Study: Beta Test Gone Haywire

A high school student creates a mini software application and posts it to a social media site to share it with his friends. The next thing he knows, a friend's sister has uploaded it to her company's Intranet and is trying to take credit for it. In the end, the company contacts the original creator for permission to use the application, compensates the creator, and even offers him an internship in recognition of his good work.

Activity 1: How Do You Network?

This lesson serves as a foundation for introducing the relationship between social media sites, creative content, and copyrighted material. Students will share ways that they currently utilize social media sites and the copyright issues that surround those activities. They then will examine how content is created and shared on one of the Top 10 Social Media sites. Finally, students will describe ideal ways to create and share content on social networking sites while considering the rights of creators.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Technology, Civics

Time Required: Two to three 60-minute class periods, plus time outside of class

Activity 2: Copy This!

In this activity, student pairs will imagine that they want to include or mix someone else's original creative content onto their personalized Web site. They will conduct research to learn if and how they need to obtain the rights to this media and summarize the steps they'd need to follow to get permission. Finally, they will analyze common processes used to obtain rights and recommend changes to that process.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Technology, Civics

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods, plus time outside of class

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

Activity 3: Fair or Unfair?

Students learn about the concept of fair use, analyze how fair use permits or limits the use of creative materials on social media sites, and determine whether five imaginary scenarios would fall under existing fair use guidelines. Finally, they will draw conclusions about the benefits and downsides of the fair use application as they relate to social media creators and content.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Civics

Time Required: Two 60-minute class periods

Culminating Activity: Creating a Vlog (Video Blog)

As the culminating activity for this unit, students will examine their own feelings about creative content, creative rights, and fair use related to social media. They will then work in pairs to create a vlog (video blog) that shares these feelings, and their experiences and ideas for this issue.

Content Areas: Fine Arts, Civics, Language Arts, Video Production

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods, plus additional time outside of class

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

Protect Your Work, Respect Your Work

This unit explores the theme of protecting creative content through a series of experiential activities. Students learn how to protect their own creative works, how to share their works legally, and how to use other people's creative works in a fair and legal manner. They explore issues related to originality and plagiarism, and then have a chance to become agents of change in the culminating activity by developing a public service announcement.

Guiding Questions

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to intellectual property:

- How does creative content impact my life?
- How can I protect my original work?
- How can students be the drivers of change?
- What is my vision for creative content and creative rights in the future?

Case Study: A Similar Story

Students submit their entries for a short story contest. The winner's story idea was borrowed from another published book, and an outcry results among the students. The focus in this case study is on the value of originality. Students will consider: How much does existing content have to be changed in order to be considered unique? What is the value of originality?

Activity 1: Sign Me Up!

Once you've created intellectual property, how do you protect it? This activity explores the process of copyright registration and Creative Commons licensing for various creative works. Students are introduced to the idea of creative ownership and then connect this idea to copyright and Creative Commons licensing. They go through the process of filling out the paperwork for copyright registration or Creative Commons licensing. Then, students compare and contrast the registration process for the following domains: literary, serial/periodical, performing art, and visual art; and the differences between registering for copyright and applying for a Creative Commons license.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Activity 2: Please Permit Me...

In the digital age, awareness of, understanding of, and abidance by copyright law make for a complex subject. But teens shouldn't be afraid to interact with others' creative content and even use it by obtaining permission. In this activity, students explore the creative rights associated with photographic images, literary excerpts, and song lyrics. Then, they discuss whether they think it would be necessary to obtain permission to use such creative works on their personal Web pages. Students draft letters requesting permission to use and, if they have an actual Web page, they submit their letters and report back with responses.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Language Arts, Fine Arts

Time Required: Four 60-minute class periods

Outline of Curriculum Units, cont.

Activity 3: Original, Inspired, or Plagiarized?

Throughout their history, advertising campaigns have used other successful campaigns as inspiration. So, how does one distinguish between originality, inspiration, and plagiarism? In this activity, students evaluate specific examples of advertising in order to create a set of guidelines for categorizing ads as original, inspired, or plagiarized. Then using these guidelines, students are secretly assigned the task of creating an advertisement that is original, inspired, or plagiarized. (Only the educator will know who was assigned what.) Students evaluate one another's work to determine if the work is original, inspired, or plagiarized.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Fine Arts

Time Required: Four 60-minute class periods, plus additional time outside of class

Activity 4: Tell It to the Court

In this activity, students analyze the unit case study to determine if plagiarism has occurred. Students then discuss whether accidental plagiarism exists and if the consequences for accidental plagiarism should be any different than the consequences for intentional plagiarism. Students take on the roles of those involved in the case study and participate in a mock civil court case. They determine, based on law, the outcome of the case.

Content Areas: Civics, Language Arts

Time Required: Three 60-minute class periods

Culminating Activity: Agents for Change

In this culminating activity, students create a public service announcement (PSA) to inform their peers about creative rights and how students can become active participants and agents of change in the creative rights debate.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Technology, Fine Arts, Video Production

Time Required: One 60-minute class period, and additional time outside of class