

# What Does a Copyright Mean, and What Are the Different Types?

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What is [a Copyright?](#)

A copyright ascertains exclusive rights to persons who create original works of authorship, including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and certain other intellectual works. Being a form of intellectual property law, it applies to both published and unpublished works.

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*Alex Sluzas, Esq.*

Copyright law does not apply to facts and ideas. Instead, it protects the representation of facts and ideas. Works that are still intangible and not rendered onto a physical medium are just ideas and therefore not entitled to copyright protection.

Unlawful usage of works protected by the copyright law is known as copyright infringement. In case of infringement, you can seek the help of a copyright attorney. Copyright lawyers help clients apply for copyrights and represent

them in disputes over copyrighted material.

Copyright offers the owner exclusive right to:

- Reproduce the work in copies
- Prepare imitative works based upon the original work.
- Distribute copies of the work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership or by rental, lease, or lending
- Perform the work publicly if it is a literary, musical, dramatic, or choreographic work
- Display the work publicly if it is a pictorial, graphic, audio-visual or sculptural work. This right also applies to the still images of a motion picture or other audiovisual creations.
- Broadcast the work publicly using a digital audio transmission if the work is a sound recording

Copyright law applies to the following:

- Literary works
- Musical works
- Dramatic works
- Choreographic works
- Artistic works

- Motion pictures and other audiovisual works
- Sound recordings
- Architectural works
- Literary Works

Section 101 of the Copyright Act defines “literary works” as “works, other than audiovisual works, expressed in words, numbers, or other verbal or numerical symbols or indicia, regardless of the nature of the material objects, such as books, periodicals, manuscripts, phonorecords, film, tapes, disks, or cards, in which they are embodied.”

Works termed as “literature,” such as novels, poems, stories, essays, etc.

Written work like catalogs, reference books and databases are also applicable for copyright protection. On the Internet, this definition of literary work includes emails, blog posts, online forums posts, and even computer programs.

### Musical Works

“Musical works” include the instrumental component of the work as well as any accompanying words. According to Section 115 of the Copyright Act, musical works should have “compulsory licensing” once they have been released to the public. These compulsory licenses allow any musician to perform or record their own version of a song without getting permission from the original songwriter.

### Dramatic Works

Any work of action, with or without words or music that can be performed before an audience falls under the category of “Dramatic works.” Dramatic works include plays, screenplays, scripts, choreographic notation, choreographic shows and scenarios for a film (but not the film itself). Any work that is intended to be performed dramatically and has been recorded in some form is qualified for copyright protection. Copyright owners of dramatic works possess the right to reproduce, publish, publicly perform, communicate or adapt their works.

### Artistic Works

Artistic work commonly includes pictorial, graphic and sculptural works. Artistic works are protected by various statutory rights pursuant to section 32 of the Copyright Act 1968. Some examples provided by this section include paintings and drawings, sculptures, crafts, architectural plans and buildings; and photographs; and maps and plans. Digital illustrations also fall under this category.

### Motion Pictures and Other Audiovisual Works

“Audiovisual work,” involves anything which combines both images (visual) and recorded sound (audio). The category of “audio-visual works” includes not just movies. Everything from movies to slideshows to video podcasts—anything that is meant to be visually presented (be it on a projector, TV or computer screen) that consists of recorded sound and images.

### Sound Recordings

Sound recordings are defined by the Copyright Act as “works that result from the fixation of a series of musical, spoken, or other sounds, but not including the sounds accompanying a motion picture or other audio-visual work.”

Unlike musical works copyright, which protects the musical notes that make up a song, the actual recording of that performed notation is protected as a sound recording. That is, an actual recording of the song onto a physical medium (the CD, tape, mp3 file, etc.) is considered a sound

recording. Sounds can also include speeches, sound effects, and audio books.

## Architectural Works

The architectural work category protects the design of a building in architectural blueprints, architectural drawings, and even buildings themselves. In the case of architectural works, copyright can protect the work's general form as well as the arrangement and composition of spaces and elements in the design. Buildings meet the general requirements for copyright protection if they are not just basically functional but have adequately original design.

If you are in need of a [copyright lawyer](#), contact the offices of Paul & Paul for all of your intellectual property needs. Call toll-free at 866-975-7231 to receive a consultation today.

### About the Author:

Alex Sluzas, of Paul & Paul, is an Intellectual Property Rights attorney. His experience encompasses a variety of practice areas, including Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights. Mr. Sluzas has comprehensive litigation experience in a diverse array of technical areas. He has specialized in the study of liquid crystals and physical polymer chemistry. A former senior scientist and trademark counsel with Rohm and Haas Co., his focus areas include: polymers, resins, monomers, alloys, coatings, tertiary and quaternary wastewater treatment, printed circuit board cleaners, and other solvents. He has experience in mechanical, computer, biotechnology and chemical arts, trademarks, and copyrights.

### About Paul & Paul

Paul & Paul is one of the leading Patent Law firms in the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area. Our attorneys have the experience before state and federal courts throughout the United States, including the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the U.S. Copyright Office, the U.S. International Trade Commission, and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission.

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