

# Using content under a Creative Commons licence

Copyright applies to original artworks - this includes texts, images, music, films, audio recordings, sculptures... The creator of the work is usually the copyright owner. Copyright gives the rights holder economic and moral rights over how their work may be re-used. There are exceptions to copyright law in the UK, but in most cases for public use of the work you would need permission from the rights holder. This is where Creative Commons make things easier.

Where traditionally copyright is “all rights reserved”, a Creative Commons (CC) copyright licence means “some rights reserved”. When a work is published using a CC licence, the user does not need to ask the creator for permission to use the work as it is already given with the terms set out in the licence.

## How does it work?

Creative Commons (<http://creativecommons.org>) propose a set of licences and combinations of options so that the creator and copyright owner can decide how openly they want to share their work. The user then uses the work according to these rules.

BY = Attribution: means that the author has to be credited.

SA = Share Alike: if you modify the work, you need to share the new work under the same licence conditions as the original.

ND = Non-Derivative: no modifications allowed.

NC = Non-Commercial: no commercial use allowed.

CC0 = the creator waves their rights and chooses to put their work directly in the public domain.



For example, this image (left) is available under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial licence, which means that you can use it and even modify it as long as you credit the original author and do not make money from it.

Note: good practice on how to credit Creative Commons works can be found on the organisation's website, at:

[https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/Best\\_practices\\_for\\_attribution](https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/Best_practices_for_attribution)

Newcastle City Library signage by Richard Aird is licensed under [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) (Source: [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/richardaird/))

## Where can I find such material?

Here is a small selection of websites where you can find images in the public domain or under an open licence – i.e. it is free and legal to use them.

► Flickr [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

Contains both user-generated photographs and others uploaded by professionals and organisations.

Type your keywords in the search box at the top right. When the results appear, use the “Any license” drop down menu on the top left of the thumbnails to narrow down to the Creative Commons licence you need.

► morgueFile <http://www.morguefile.com>

MorgueFile has a set of free photos – no attribution is needed.

Warning: on the other tabs the site links to commercial image banks where you have to pay to use the pictures.

► Pixabay <https://pixabay.com/en/>

Contains images (including basic illustrations and vector graphics) under a CC0 licence. The top line of each results page always features commercial images from Shutterstock; the free ones are underneath.

► Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

All the content on Wikimedia Commons is either in the public domain or under an open licence. It is used to illustrate Wikipedia articles.

Type your keywords in the search box at the top right. You can narrow down by categories.

► Unsplash <https://unsplash.com>

A curated collection of professional-looking photographs - all placed directly in the public domain (under CC0) by their creators.

► The Noun Project <https://thenounproject.com>

Icons for everything you have ever imagined (or not). Register for free membership and use the icons under the terms of the CC licence chosen by their creators.

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