# Copyright Rules

In this lesson, students will learn what copyright laws are and how to avoid copyright infringement. They will explore how these laws relate to video game design and take a look at one of the first copyright law cases to involve video games.

Objective

Students will be able to:

* Explain what copyright laws are and why they are important
* Explain how copyright laws impact video game design
* Understand the importance of the Atari v North American Phillips case

[Video - Copyright Rules](https://youtu.be/I3RMBDmpMmQ)

## Copyright and Video Games

[Article - Copyright and Video Games](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QEPqrXle1dLVDV24iqqN3ChNscFcJfxr/view?usp=sharing)

As you can imagine, copyright rules play a big part in the video game industry. The attached article outlines some considerations for how copyright rules apply to video games. As you read through the article, consider the following questions:

* List 5 things that you can copyright in a video game
* List 2 things that you cannot copyright in a video game
* Describe the process needed to copyright a game.

\*Source: Wirtz, Bryan. “Video Game Design Copyright Law (What You Need to Know).” The Ultimate Resource for Video Game Design, 25 June 2021,

## Case Study: Atari v. North American Phillips

### Overview

In the previous activity, you looked at how copyright laws can apply to video games. One of the ways they can apply is by looking at the game elements and game concepts.

An early case of video game copyright infringement was the case between Atari and North American Phillips over the Pac-Man game.

## Objective

This [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1ItAYurjoo) shares a perspective of the legal battle between Atari and North American Phillips.

Watch the video and in the next activity, answer the following prompts:

1. What was at the core of the dispute between Atari and North American Phillips?
2. Based on what you learned about copyright, what aspects do you think were in violation of copyright laws? Why?
3. In the 1980s, there were very few video games, which would influence the decision as to whether the games were similar. Today, we see many variations on games that are very similar. How do you think the court would decide today? Would these games be too similar by today’s standards?

## Resources

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1ItAYurjoo>

Alternative Video Link: <https://video.link/w/viD5c>