**Unit 5 Extra Credit Bonus Question (12 Points)**

**Why does copyright law exist and why should we respect copyrighted materials?**

In a world where everyone has creativity, it is difficult for many creators to distinguish their works from those of others and even more so to receive proper credit when their work has been used. Copyright rules enforce protection on the intellectual properties of creators. They exist not to restrict our actions as artists but to expand the artist's dignity and freedom.

As students, giving proper credit where it is due makes readers aware of our credibility as well as our work's credibility. Citing works is not only a way for our assignments to avoid plagiarizing but it also serves to direct readers towards our source. In this way, original creators get more exposure from the public and their work is rightfully acknowledged.

In Music Appreciation, I've learned that being in the digital age has contributed to it being increasingly difficult to stop the piracy of music and other artworks. Copyrights exist to prevent the utter loss of profit to artists, who work very hard to produce their craft, but illegal means of downloading don't look like they'll stop anytime soon. Luckily, the number of patrons outweigh the number of freeloaders.

It's equally important to distinguish if something belongs in the public domain as well. It's worth it to determine whether a work truly belongs to a single person or if an idea has been so integrated into a culture that it should not have any copyright restrictions. The modern world demands a balance of both.

By respecting copyrighted materials, we extend our respect towards creators.