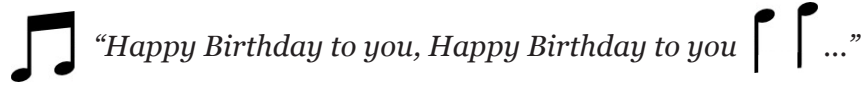


A Creator's Rights

Directions



Did you know the song “Happy Birthday” is copyrighted? That’s right! Two schoolteachers published the song in 1893, which was originally called “Good Morning To All” and had different lyrics. Later, the lyrics were changed to the song we all know. Over the years, the copyright of this song has been extended. Today, believe it or not, people who want to use the song in a movie or perform it in public are supposed to pay a license fee.

This can present a problem. Say you’re a filmmaker with barely any money to make your film. But you want to use the “Happy Birthday” song. You might have to pay thousands of dollars in license fees just to use the song in your movie!

Another option is to make a unique happy birthday song of your own.

Step 1: Pretend you are an independent movie producer who wants to avoid paying thousands of dollars in fees. In small groups, come up with original lyrics, melody, and beat. Write your song lyrics below. You could also record the song or make a video of it. Then perform your original song to the class. But remember, if it’s too close to the original, it could be considered plagiarism, and that’s against the law. So be original!

Song Title _____

Authors _____

Lyrics

Step 2: Congratulations! Now that you have put your song into recorded form, it's copyrighted. Have you thought about how you want other people to be able to use it? If you stick with a regular copyright license, people will have to get your permission before they can copy, share, or perform your song. If you choose a Creative Commons license, people can copy, share, and even change your song or make money from it, depending on your conditions. Look at this list and discuss with your song cowriters what you will allow others to do with your song.

Copy

Share

Perform

Change/Alter

Sell

Use Common Sense!

Take it one step further and commit to what kind of copyright license you will use for your song. If you want to use a Creative Commons copyright, you can create a license online for your song. Visit the Creative Commons website (<http://creativecommons.org/choose>) and answer the questions, and it will automatically create the right Creative Commons license for your song.