

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Program Summary

Intellectual Property (IP) is abstract. It's ambiguous and easy to ignore. Yet, IP and the rights that protect it are real. They are a cornerstone of creative freedom and crucial to understand and respect — particularly in a world of digitally delivered content that is easier to access than ever before. Students interact with music, movies, software, and digital content every day. But do they understand that these works are protected? Do they recognize how intellectual property rights affect them personally? Do you?

The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Education Curriculum program was developed to create awareness around the value of intellectual property, to foster a better understanding of the rights associated with creative content, and, ultimately, to instill in students a personal respect for IPR in a way that changes their behaviors and perceptions about digitally delivered content.

The program consists of both student and educator resources. For students, an interactive website will provide multiple opportunities to explore the topic of IPR and even experiment with some creativity of their own. They will have an opportunity to see what other artists, singers, songwriters, and the like think about the topic, and to create their own personal set of IPR guidelines. For teachers, a comprehensive set of cross-curricular classroom activities organized into thematic units provides a variety of ways to engage students in this learning experience. Supplemental resources will help with answers to basic questions around the topic of IPR, provide means for assessing student learning, and indicate how these materials align with national standards.

Target Audience: Middle and high school students in grades 8-10
(although materials may easily be adapted for use in grades 6-12.)

Subject Areas: Civics, Computer Science, Drama, Economics, Fine Arts, Government, Journalism, Language Arts, Video Production, Debate

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Unit Structure

There are four units that comprise the curriculum resources. Each unit consists of a set of standalone yet complementary lesson plans centered on and playing off of an IPR-related scenario presented through a case study. Each unit has 4–6 of these project-oriented activities, one of which serves as the culminating lesson for the unit. Guiding questions help set the expectation for what students will learn, and pre- and post assessments establish baseline knowledge and gauge student learning. Modification and Extension suggestions recommend ways to abridge or expand the activities within the unit, and provide tips for engaging parents and peers outside of the classroom.

Outline of Unit Ideas

Unit 1

Unit 1 explores the general topic of intellectual property. Using the scenario of a high school Battle of the Bands, it will help students define intellectual property by relating it to a common scenario they might encounter. Students will begin to recognize and internalize the importance of respecting intellectual property rights and will conduct their own research to help clear up misconceptions about the rights that apply to them and their peers.

Case Study 1:

A high school student council is sponsoring a school-wide Battle of the Bands. A student not involved in the production decides to videotape and sell copies of the show to students and family members.

Activity 1:

Students are assigned character roles of the cast and crew involved with a theater production. In character, they discover that their act has been “stolen,” and conduct a follow-up investigation to determine what intellectual property violations were committed and what actions can be taken.

Content Areas: Technology, Civics, Language Arts, Fine Arts

Activity 2:

In this activity, students listen to/watch man-on-the-street interviews about intellectual property on the student website. Then, they conduct their own interviews, posing the same questions to their peers, parents, and neighbors. (A sample question may include: “What is intellectual property?”) After compiling interviews, students write a paper summarizing public perceptions about intellectual property and offering suggestions for increased knowledge of the topic.

Content Areas: Technology, Journalism, Language Arts, Video Production

Activity 3:

Students research intellectual property laws to see who “owns the rights” to the school Battle of the Bands. They also research the following rights that a copyright owner has: reproduction, modification, distribution, public performance and public display. What happens if the video footage becomes a movie or TV show? If it is the impetus for a software game?

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Computer Science, Debate

▶ **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to intellectual property:

- What is Intellectual Property?
- Why is protecting Intellectual Property Rights important?
- Are all citizens protected equally by Intellectual Property Law?

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Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Activity 4:

Students collect intellectual property for a video presentation in honor of a member of the school family. Students look on the packaging and/or research the items further to determine who owns the copyright, whether they could use the work for the presentation, and what they would need to do to obtain those permissions.

Content Areas: Civics, Language Arts, Fine Arts, Journalism, Video Production

Culminating Activity:

Students research the laws in their own school district/country regarding the issue presented in the case study. This could include an interview with a school or district administrator. Students discuss the fairness of existing rules and/or suggest changes, and then draft a school/district-wide policy for this issue. In a follow-up activity, students could use the Make-Your-Own-Rules feature of the student website to create a policy for their own family.

Content Areas: Civics, Language Arts, Fine Arts

Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Unit 2

Using gaming software to set context, the second unit in the curriculum delves into the laws surrounding intellectual property rights. By exploring and analyzing laws in the US and elsewhere, students will begin to develop an appreciation of the laws that protect the creative process. They will also begin to form opinions about what's right, what's wrong, and how the laws affect them personally as creators and consumers.

Case Study 2:

A student creates his own Halo-type video game and gives a copy to his friend. The friend starts making copies of the game and selling the counterfeit software to others. The friend claims this is no big deal because the creator did not copyright his game. What does the game creator do? What are his rights?

Activity 1:

Students research and summarize current domestic laws that relate to this case study. They then write an opinion piece in support of one of these statements:

- Current laws are fair.
- Current laws are unfair.
- Downloading/selling a game illegally is the same as stealing one from a store.
- Downloading/selling a game illegally is not the same as stealing one from a store.

An extension with this activity has students writing their own laws/rules surrounding intellectual property rights for their school or their family, using the student website. An additional extension has students explore the rules around open source and discuss how IP relates to those environments.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts, Technology

Activity 2:

Students discuss their typical behavior when asked to read and commit to a software game or program's user agreement. Students then analyze several user agreements and summarize what the user is agreeing to in each one. Finally, students draft a teen-friendly user agreement for a popular software program that explains what the user is agreeing to and the penalty if the agreement is not upheld.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Technology, Computer Science

▶ **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to intellectual property:

- What are current Intellectual Property laws?
- What are the advantages of adhering to these laws?
- What are the penalties for infringing on these laws?
- How are laws different in other countries?

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Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Activity 3:

Students research the positive aspects of owning original software (e.g., upgrade rights, tech support, etc.) and compare those with the negatives of counterfeit or copied software. Then, they apply critical thinking skills to develop a set of guidelines for other software consumers.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Language Arts, Economics, Technology

Activity 4:

Students review the process of creating gaming software and create a flowchart to visualize this process. They then examine the costs involved at each step. This activity will focus on an appreciation of the creative process and what the law is protecting.

Content Areas: Economics, Computer Science

Activity 5:

Posing as policymakers, students conduct a scavenger hunt, looking for places where potential IP violations within their school and community might occur. (Ex: school spirit poster contest, remake of a well known play or musical by a local theatre production company, etc.) Then, they compare notes in class and discuss the types of policies to implement so that IP is better understood and infractions are avoided.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Civics, Debate

Culminating Activity:

Student groups select a country and research its intellectual property laws. They then represent their country in an imaginary international summit where the goal is standardizing these laws across the globe.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts, Fine Arts, Government

Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Unit 3

Unit 3 brings a personal angle to the topic of intellectual property by using music as a backdrop. Students explore questions such as, “What happens when the rights of someone I know are infringed upon?” and “How is that different from what would happen with a popular artist?”

Case Study 3:

A young, local band writes and records a song and publishes a low-budget music video for it on MySpace. The song is rejected by several record companies. A popular artist then gets the music/lyrics, alters the tempo and instrumentation, records/publishes it, and it becomes a big hit. (Explores the question of whether the song was altered enough to be considered original, even though the same lyrics and music were used.) The artist’s altered version then gets pirated and distributed illegally worldwide.

Activity 1:

Using an actual musician’s story, students trace the path of a song from initial idea to final recording to music video to determine the role of each person involved in the process. Students then determine how each stakeholder (e.g., record producer, songwriter, artist) is impacted socially and economically when his or her music is illegally obtained. An extension activity would involve students creating their own music clip on the Music Mixer feature of the student website.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts, Fine Arts, Career Education

Activity 2:

Students will debate the issues and penalties of song lifting from one of the following points of view:

- Famous recording artist
- Start-up band
- Teen music consumer
- Recording company
- Civil Rights attorney

Students write and present a Congressional testimony that supports their view. In an extension activity, students think about how the points of view might change if the “lifted” intellectual property were a movie, book, or piece of software.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts, Fine Arts

▶ **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Over the course of this unit, students will explore the following guiding questions related to intellectual property:

- Who is affected when Intellectual Property rights are infringed upon?
- Have I ever infringed on anyone’s Intellectual Property rights?
- Do I act any differently when no one is looking?

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Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Activity 3:

Student groups will research music sharing sites currently available on the Internet. Research will include cost of songs, number of songs in library, unique site features, how music is obtained, how artists and record companies are compensated, and how the site protects against song lifting. Once research is shared, student groups will use existing features and their own ideas to design a music sharing site that effectively meets the needs of consumers, recording artists and record executives.

Content Areas: Economics, Fine Arts, Language Arts, Computer Science

Culminating Activity:

Students work in pairs to create a video blog that shares their feelings, experiences, and ideas for the issue of song lifting. In their video journals, students will answer some or all of the following questions: Have (or would) I ever song-lifted? Why do kids my age download music illegally? What is my personal position on the issue? What are my rights as a music consumer? What is the solution to the problems faced by the music industry in relation to this issue?

Content Areas: Fine Arts, Civics, Language Arts, Video Production

Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Unit 4

This unit focuses on the creative process and the originality behind written works. Students explore how to protect themselves as creators of intellectual property, and how they can encourage their peers (and family members) to show the same respect for IP. In the culminating activity, students develop a PSA about intellectual property rights. By making their statements, they become the drivers of change.

Case Study 4:

Students submit their entries for a short story contest. The winner's story idea was stolen from another published book, and an outcry results among the students. The focus in this story is on the value of originality. Students are asked to consider: How much does existing content have to be changed in order to be considered unique? What is the value of originality?

Activity 1:

Student groups learn about and present to the class the legal process of copyright registration for different creative works such as novels, songs, software, movies, and photographs.

Content Areas: Civics, Economics, Language Arts

Activity 2:

Students select a photographic image, song, or literary excerpt that they'd like to put on their personal Web page/MySpace page. They then draft a letter requesting permission to use it to the owner of the content, explaining how the content would be used and how the owner would be credited. Students then research the actual requirements for obtaining the rights to this image and then modify their letter asking for permission according to what they find.

Content Areas: Computer Science, Language Arts, Fine Arts

Activity 3:

Students research current advertising and look for similarities in campaigns among different brands. They are asked to consider: Is it a crime to steal an idea vs. a tangible piece of art, music, or writing? At what point is it enough to make slight alterations in order to "make it yours?"

Content Areas: Language Arts, Fine Arts

▶ **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

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Outline of Unit Ideas, cont.

Activity 4:

Students will be given a mock court case that relates to the plagiarism in the case study. They will take on the roles of those involved and determine, based on law, the outcome of the case.

Content Areas: Civics, Language Arts

Culminating Activity:

Student groups write scripts and videotape a public service announcement about the protection of intellectual property rights. The PSAs are presented to the class/school, and students actively become agents of change.

Content Areas: Language Arts, Technology, Fine Arts, Video Production