

# Lesson Plan

I **made** it.

I **own** it.

Please don't **steal** it.

*Encouraging & Respecting Creative Work*

# Overview

Through the use of a short animated video, classroom discussion, and extension activities:

- Students will consider the role of the artistic creator in society and the importance of respecting creative property.
- Students will develop an understanding of what creativity and creative property are, how creators earn a living, and the importance to our society of new creative ideas and products.
- Students will develop a concept of fairness regarding use of creative property. The lesson can also be used to address morals and the principle of cause and effect – that what each of us does has an impact on the world.

*...your students will understand the importance of respecting creative property*

# Teacher's Background Guide

## **Our Constitution protects creators. The American Founders**

were strong believers in the principle that in order to encourage creativity and advancement in the arts and sciences, laws must be put in place to protect creators by giving them rights in their creations. James Madison, one of the most important framers of the U.S. Constitution and the fourth President of the United States, was among those most outspoken in his support for the inclusion in the Constitution of safeguards for the rights of creators (as indicated by his remarks in Federalist Paper Number 41). The U.S. Copyright Building in Washington, D.C. is named in honor of James Madison.

Article I, Section 8 of the US Constitution --the blueprint of American freedoms and law we officially celebrate each September-- grants Congress the authority "to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." Under this clause, starting in the earliest days of the Republic, Congress has enacted copyright and patent statutes to protect creators in order to encourage creativity for the benefit of all.

The First Amendment rights of free speech and of a free press, of which Madison was also the primary author and champion, is not in any way contradictory to the protection of the rights of creators. Following Madison's lead, the United States Supreme Court has ruled on several occasions that copyright protection is the very "engine of free expression," promoting a more robust marketplace of ideas, discussion and debate.

**Why is that so?** Because copyright law in the United States does not protect "ideas," only the "expression" of such ideas. Therefore, everyone is free to express ideas in his or her

own way without violating the copyright laws. The U.S. Copyright Act also includes provisions for the "fair use" of copyrighted works under certain circumstances, such as in the course of news reporting or commentary. This serves as a further safeguard to ensure that copyright laws promote free speech.

**It is a system that works.** Within this framework, creators and inventors ranging from Benjamin Franklin and Walt Whitman, to Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain, to Thomas Edison and Jonas Salk, to Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker, to Pearl Buck and Harper Lee, to John Steinbeck and Piri Thomas, to Ang Lee and Steve Jobs, to Bruce Springsteen and Jay-Z – all have been enabled to thrive.

**It is also a system under threat.** The easy ability of the public to digitally copy creative works without the permission of --or compensation to-- the creator has presented new and unique problems in the protection of creators in the 21st century. The purpose of this unit is to encourage students to understand the benefits of protecting creators in order to encourage creativity, the difficulties of doing so without public cooperation, and the advantages to the public of supporting the observance of copyright and patent laws. By denying creators the practical ability to earn a living and support their families through a system that compensates them for the use of their works, we risk severely diminishing the creative output and scientific advancement of our society. That is a trend that, if left unchecked, could ultimately destroy the amazing cultural legacy of music, art, literature, and science that we as a nation have built over the course of more than two centuries of combined free expression and creator protections. It is up to future generations to rise to the challenge of solving this dilemma.



## Grade Levels

## Learning Objectives

Elementary School, 3rd & 4th Grade Target

Students will complete a task in response to an animated film in order to demonstrate understanding of the concept of fairness and legal use of creative property. The students will illustrate the importance of respecting creative property in terms of:

## Content Categories

- General Music
- English Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Visual Arts
- Theater

The subject material addresses the following National Standards for Arts Education:

- Music Content Standard #8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
- Music Content Standard #9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.
- Visual Arts Content Standard #6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
- Theater Content Standard #2: Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations

- **Fairness** – Taking away a creator’s way to benefit from their creation isn’t fair
- **Opportunity** – Being able to earn a living as a creator/inventor creates opportunity for people
- **Society** – Society benefits from new inventions/creative property, and it is important to encourage people who are really good at creating to take the time to do it so we all benefit.

## CCLS Standards

Suggested extension tasks address CCLS Standards in English Language Arts and Social Studies. See that section for details.

*...the subject material addresses several National Standards*

## Materials

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- Flying Bicycle Animation ([www.IMadeIt.org](http://www.IMadeIt.org))
- Video monitor for class viewing
- Chalkboard, whiteboard, or overhead projector

## Supplemental Materials

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- Art Supplies for making posters
- Instruments for creating a song or rap
- Recording workstation for documenting a song/rap
- Legos for creative building activity

## Prior Knowledge

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- Students should have an awareness of what the internet is and the types of information/creative property it provides access to.

*...your students will understand the importance of encouraging people to take the time to create!*

# Procedures

Primary-level teachers introduce the class to the idea of inventions and creative property.

The class views a short video about the inventor of a flying bicycle who opens a store to sell them, only to find that a kid with a copy gun has zapped copies of the bicycle all over the neighborhood, giving them away for free.

## Guided Discussion:

What happened in the story?

Why did the creator make the flying bicycle?

- Wanted to fly

Why did he open a store?

- Wanted to be able to sell his invention to make money/support his family
- Wanted to be able to keep inventing new things

Was the Copy Kid wrong for copying the bicycles?

- Was it stealing from the guy who invented it, even if he didn't take the physical bicycle? (They didn't just take his idea, they copied his art and invention – his working model of the flying bicycle)
- Was there harm done? (Yes – he took away the inventor's way to earn a living)
- Was it fair?
- Would it have been okay if the boy had asked permission?

Have you ever made something you were really proud of?

- Drawings, painting, picture, a song, a poem
- Did it take work and effort?

How did you let people know it belonged to you?

What would you do, or how would you feel, if you created something that everyone wanted, and other people just took (copied) without asking?

Is music creative property? Is a movie or television show? Is a book?

How does society (all of us) benefit from these works?

When we use the internet and download or make copies of songs and shows, are we stealing? Are we hurting anyone?

## Concept Check:

**Introduce the word "copyright" and the concept of protecting the work of creators as discussed in the Teacher's Background Guide. Explain that there is legal copying and downloading, and illegal copying and downloading – the difference is if the creator gave permission!**

How can we be fair to creators and respect the work that they do?

# Extensions:

## Tasks / Assessment

- Use the Storyboard Guide for students to create a dialog or draw additional pictures to complete a storyboard that demonstrates understanding of fairness regarding creative property (CCLS: W3.3, W4.3)
- Working with a partner, or small group, students write, record and perform a song or rap in response to the animation and discussion about creative property (CCLS: SL3.5, SL4.5)
- Use the Poster Guide to have students create a poster to promote awareness of creative property rights. (A poster contest could be held in the class, across the grade, the prize being the winning posters printed and hung throughout the school.) (Visual Arts Content Standard #6)
- Ask students to describe, or build with Legos, a product or artwork that they would like to create and how it could provide them with a way of earning a living. (Teacher can also plant someone to 'steal' the idea in different ways to illustrate the lesson of the video.) (Visual Arts Content Standard #6)
- Using the story starter, "After school one day, Shakira, John and Erica were on the computer together at Shakira's house. John had heard about a site where you could download free music."
  - o Using dialogue, complete the story either by working independently or by completing a beginning, middle and ending story frame. (CCLS: W.3.3)
  - o Working in a small group with group roles defined, complete the story and act it out. (Theater Content Standard #2)



*...your students will understand the concept of fairness and legal use of creative property*



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MUSIC PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION *of the United States*

View animated video at: **IMadeIt.org**

Presented by the Music Creator Community of the United States

With support of: **The Music Publishers Association of the United States**  
and the **National Music Council**

Animation by: **Scrap Dog Productions**

Animation and Additional Designs by: **Pablo Smith**

Animation Design: **Bevin Carnes**

Research, writing, executive producer of animation: **Charles Sanders, David Sanders**

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