



## DIGITAL RULES RESOURCE CENTER

### Digital Rules Resource Center – The Starting Line

Whether you are working on your challenge for Meridian Stories or pursuing a creative project of your own, you may find yourself wanting to use material you find on the Internet, material that may be protected under copyright law. The Digital Rules Resource Center is designed to provide you with clear, thoughtful and uncomplicated guidance on how to legally utilize existing, copyrighted content, while you create your masterpiece.

Let's say you would like to use a(n)...

#### **Image:**

- Start by snooping around the website that you found the image on (if you are searching on Google Images, click on the picture and then click "visit site"). If the website says that the image can be used or is in the public domain, you are free to use the image.
- If the site does not say you can use the image, you should read *Guide to Working in the Public Domain*, looking specifically in the section about images, which will give you tools to find images that are in the Public Domain.
- Your next stop should be our *Guide to Creative Commons Licenses*, which provides you with ways to access images that are licensed for you to use for the purposes of projects like Meridian Stories.
- If you still cannot get the permission you need through the above steps, you may try to contact the owner of the image to obtain permission to use it.
- Finally, if you cannot contact the owner or are denied permission, and would still like to use the image, you must carefully read our section on fair use, starting with *Introduction and Essential Guide to the Doctrine of Fair Use*, which

clearly marks out the conditions under which you can make use of that copyrighted image.

- In all cases, be sure to check out our *Guide to Citing Sources* to ensure that proper credit is given. This is a matter of academic integrity and is required by Meridian Stories. This guide supplies detailed instructions for how to cite sources in all media.

### **Song or Sound:**

- Snoop around the site you found the song or sound on, and see if the audio is in the public domain or if the owner gives permission for the audio to be used (if you bought the song or sound on iTunes, this does **not** mean that you can use that song or sound for your own digital purposes).
- If the site does not say you can use the song or sound, you should read *Guide to Working in the Public Domain*, looking specifically in the section about music, which will provide you with tools for finding public domain music.
- Additionally, our *Guide to Royalty Free Music and Sound Effects* is another way to find music or sound that could work in your Meridian Stories piece.
- Your next stop should be our *Guide to Creative Commons Licenses*, which provides you with ways to access music and sound effects that are licensed for you to use for the purposes of projects like Meridian Stories.
- If you still cannot get the permission you need through the above steps, you may try to contact the owner of the music to obtain permission to use it.
- Finally, if you cannot contact the owner or are denied permission, and would still like to use the song or sound effect, you must carefully read our section on fair use, starting with *Introduction and Essential Guide on the Doctrine of Fair Use*, which clearly marks out the conditions under which you can make use of that copyrighted song or sound.
- In all cases, be sure to check out our *Guide to Citing Sources* to ensure that proper credit is given. This is a matter of academic integrity and is required by Meridian Stories. This guide supplies detailed instructions for how to cite sources in all media.

### **Video:**

- If the video is stock footage, look on the site you found it to see if the video is in the public domain or provided for use by the creator.
- If the clip is from a video, news story, YouTube video, DVD, or other digital delivery mechanism, proceed directly to and carefully read our section on fair

use, starting with *Introduction and Essential Guide on the Doctrine of Fair Use*, which clearly marks out the conditions under which you can make use of that copyrighted video.

- If you cannot find any information about the status of the footage on the site, you should read *Guide to Working in the Public Domain*, looking specifically in the section about video and stock footage.
- Your next stop should be our *Guide to Creative Commons Licenses*, which provides you with ways to access videos that are licensed for you to use for the purposes of projects like Meridian Stories.
- In all cases, be sure to check out our *Guide to Citing Sources* to ensure that proper credit is given. This is a matter of academic integrity and is required by Meridian Stories. This guide supplies detailed instructions for how to cite sources in all media.