

4565: Computing Foundations for a Digital Age

Unit 5

Day 7: Copyright, Patents, and Intellectual Property

Objective:

Students will explain the legal protection of creative and technological work and apply ethical reasoning to digital ownership.

Materials Needed:

- Internet-connected devices or printed examples of digital media
 - Remix challenge worksheet or prompt
 - Sticky notes or index cards
 - Optional: IP mini-slideshow or whiteboard visuals
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Warm-Up:

“Can I Legally Remix This?” Mini-Quiz

Students respond to a few quick scenarios:

- “Can I post a meme I didn’t make if I credit the artist?”
- “Can I use 10 seconds of a song in a school project?”
- “Can I print AI art and sell it?”

Discuss as a class after responses are collected.

Mini-Lesson: What Is IP and Why Does It Matter?

Hook Question:

Ask students:

- **“If you draw a cartoon and post it online, do you own it? Can someone else use it in their YouTube video?”**
- Let students share their reactions—this introduces the idea of **ownership** in the digital world.

Key Terms and Examples:

- **Copyright** – Protects creative work you make (songs, stories, code, memes).
→ *Example:* A student writes a song and posts it on SoundCloud—it’s automatically protected.
- **Patent** – Protects inventions or processes.
→ *Example:* A company patents a new phone design.
- **Intellectual Property (IP)** – Anything you create that is protected legally.
→ *Example:* A video game’s story and characters belong to its developer.
- **Fair Use** – Allows limited use of copyrighted content in specific contexts (education, commentary, parody).
→ *Example:* Using a short video clip in a class project.

Small Group Discussion:

- "Where have you seen people reuse or remix content online—was it fair? Was it legal?"

Bridge to Activity:

- “You’re creating content all the time—whether it’s code, photos, music, or videos.
- Today we’ll explore what it means to remix something legally and respectfully.
- You’re already a digital creator—let’s make sure you understand your rights and responsibilities.”

Activity: The Remix Challenge

Students choose a format:

- Modify a meme by adding their own twist
- Rewrite a few lyrics to a song in a school-friendly parody
- Combine two visual artworks to make something new

Guidelines:

- Must follow fair use or public domain guidelines
- Must explain their intent and how it qualifies as ethical/legal use

Optional Extension: Students present or display their remixed works with a short write-up or recorded explanation.

Exit Ticket:

- **“What surprised you most about IP laws?”**
(Or: “How will this affect how you post or share content online?”)

Project Connection:

Students add a section to their Ethical Case Study slides or journals:

- “Does your technology involve intellectual property or copyright? Who owns it—and how does that affect its use or fairness?”
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Word Bytes of the Day – Student Examples

Students add today’s key terms to their Word Bytes journals with examples in their own words:

- **Copyright** – “If I post my own song online, I automatically own it.”
- **Patent** – “A company can patent a new engine or tech idea.”
- **Intellectual Property** – “Creative stuff that you make and legally protect.”
- **Fair Use** – “I can use a small clip in my school video if it’s for class.”