

# **Easy Book Content:**

## **Module 2: Public Domain Content**

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## Introduction

### IN THIS WEBINAR...

#### **Public Domain Content:**

- Public Domain Basics
- Best New Sources for Content
- Working With Public Domain Content
- Changing Up Public Domain Content in Clever New Ways
- A Cookbook Case Study
- And Much More!



Welcome back to Easy Book Content! I am your host, Tony Laidig, and this is the second lesson of this course. I'm really excited about this lesson because it's on public domain content. It has been a long time since I have really dived into the public domain from a teaching perspective. I use it in my business, off and on, all the time. However, it's been a little while since I have taught on the subject.

I'm always looking for new avenues and sources for content. There's so much to choose from that it's kind of hard to figure out what makes the most sense to talk about. I decided that I wanted to cover some of the basics concerning the Public Domain. I really thought it would be helpful to spend a little time laying out the basics and then move on from there.

Next, I am going to discuss some of the best new sources for content. In fact, I'm going to tell you exactly where I am getting some of my best public domain content from these days. I have been coming up with some really awesome stuff lately, and it's going to surprise you where I am finding this stuff.

After that, you are going to learn how to work with this content and process it to mold it into what you need it to be. I will also show you some clever ways to change up your content, and perhaps some ways that you have never considered before. In addition to all of this, I'm going to share some insights on cookbooks because there are some really unique opportunities with

cookbooks when you utilize the Public Domain. To reiterate, the following will be covered in this presentation:

- Public Domain Basics
- Best New Sources for Content
- Working with Public Domain Content
- Changing Up Public Domain Content
- A Cookbook Case Study
- And Much More!

## Public Domain Basics

### PUBLIC DOMAIN BASICS...

#### What Is Available:

- 85+ Million Books (over 2 billion worldwide!)
- 200,000+ Magazines = Millions of Articles
- 6+ Million Patents
- 100+ Million Images (photographs, art, etc.)
- Plus Films, Audios, etc.



First of all, let's talk about what is available. There are over 85 million books in the Public Domain, and that's just in the U.S. Worldwide there are over 2 billion. Think about that. Number-wise, that is congruent to a third of the world's population.

Just a small fraction of all of these books can be found online. The last time I made a rough assessment of what was available online I found that there were around 4 million books that were in the public domain. As you can probably tell from this expectation, the opportunity for using public domain content is huge.

Obviously, there are a number of books that you just can't use. You would probably be hard-pressed creatively use some of the old readers that they used back in the day, and there's other texts out there that really have no relevance to current society and technology. Still, even if you set aside half of what was out there, you would still have over 42 million books to work with, which is a lot. That's just books!

There are currently over 200,000 magazines, and that's not just individual issues; that's magazine titles. Each of these titles varies from having only a couple of issues out to having hundreds of issues. So, there are millions upon millions of articles in the Public Domain. Currently there are also over 6 million patents in the Public Domain. Actually, the last time I checked this count was closer to 7 million. More and more is being added to the Public Domain

every single day, so we'll call it 7 million. That's great news because there is a lot of content to be derived from patents alone.

On top of everything else, there are over 100 million images in the Public Domain, and quite frankly, I think that's a conservative estimate. This number was derived from my own research, and I think that it's actually more like 500 million when you count all of the artwork, illustrations, and images to be found.

Several years ago, I went to the National Archives. There are a number of branches all around the United States. The primary one is in College Park, Maryland. This isn't very far from where I live, and this is the one that I went to. Each of the six floors in the building are dedicated to a different type of content. So, one is full of images, another is dedicated fully to books, another is just audio and video, and so on.

As you could probably guess, I was like a kid in a candy store. I got to go in there and scan some original photos of Ansel Adams, which he shot for the National Park Service. I was also looking for photos of P-51 Mustangs from WWII. I knew that I had to be specific, so in my research I narrowed it down to only P-51 that the Air Force had. I was also only looking for pictures that were taken to WWII during a certain period of time. So, I really narrowed down what I was looking for beforehand because I knew that there would most likely be a lot of records.

When I turned the call slip in to the librarian, she said "You realize that we have to keep all of the records under this call record together.", and I said "Yeah, I saw that in your instructions." Well, she replied saying "I don't think you understand. This all comes out in boxes on carts, and these boxes and carts have to be kept together in the group." I told her that I understood because I had seen all of the boxes and carts throughout the building, but she still said she didn't think I understood.

She told me that the request that I was making had something like 1.2 million photographs in it, and that was just a request for pictures of P-51 Mustangs taken within a very particular time period and only with the Air Force. So, you do the math. At this point, I really didn't know what to say other than "Um...I don't think I have time to go through that many photos right now."

On top of everything else, that was just at one of the national archives. That doesn't include the Library of Congress or the other national archives, and it doesn't count all the photographs in books and in museums. So, there's no question that there are just tons and tons of images in the public domain.

There are also tons of films, audios, and radio shows. Just think, radio was the center of people's world until the television came along. There's tens of thousands of hours of audio that can be adapted and used in a lot of different ways. The same can be said for films and TV

programs. Also, as I'm sure you know, there is an immense amount of music out there, written or otherwise. There is just a vastly immense amount of material available to be utilized in the Public Domain. Then there are things like posters, matchbooks, cards, etc. The list just goes on and on forever. The Public Domain is an inexhaustible source for content, and you will always be able to find any kind of material that you need there.

This is why I get excited about public domain material. It's like the content mother-load. Of course, in this course we will only be able to skim the surface of what you can do with the material available. There are some basic things that you do need to understand before you start working with public domain materials. First of all, you need to have a basic understanding of copyright law.

If you aren't in the U.S., by the way, don't worry; I've got you covered. I have information for you as well, but we are going to begin by discussing the U.S. laws. Some of this information applies globally as well. The most important thing for you to understand is that works that were created before copyright laws existed are in the Public Domain. The King James Bible would be one example.

The Public Domain also consists of works which are no longer protected by copyright because their copyrights have expired. In the U.S., any work that was published before 1923 is in the Public Domain, no questions asked. Works that were created between 1923 and 1964, the producer of that work would have had to renew the copyright 28 years after the work was produced for it to continue being protected.

Let's say that a book was produced in 1950. The creator of that book would have had to renew the copyright in 1978. If this person failed to do so, then this book would now be in the Public Domain. The cool thing about this is that only about 15% of the books published within this span of time actually renewed their copyright. It gets really fun whenever you talk about magazines because 99.4% of them have never had their copyrights renewed. That means that only .6% of magazines published in the U.S. prior to 1964 renewed their copyright, which only accounts for about 1,300 titles.

Any works created by the U.S. Federal Government workers in the course of their employment is in the Public Domain. This is actually changing a bit because the U.S. is starting to enter into joint ventures with private firms, and so some of that material is protected by copyright. However, for the most part, I would estimate that 85-90% of all the content that you would find on a U.S. Federal Government website is in the Public Domain.

The U.S. Federal Government is the largest producer of Public Domain material in the entire world. Everyday there are new books, new podcasts, new audios, new blogs posts, etc. going

into the Public Domain. These things are being produced everyday by some of the world's brightest minds. How incredible is that?

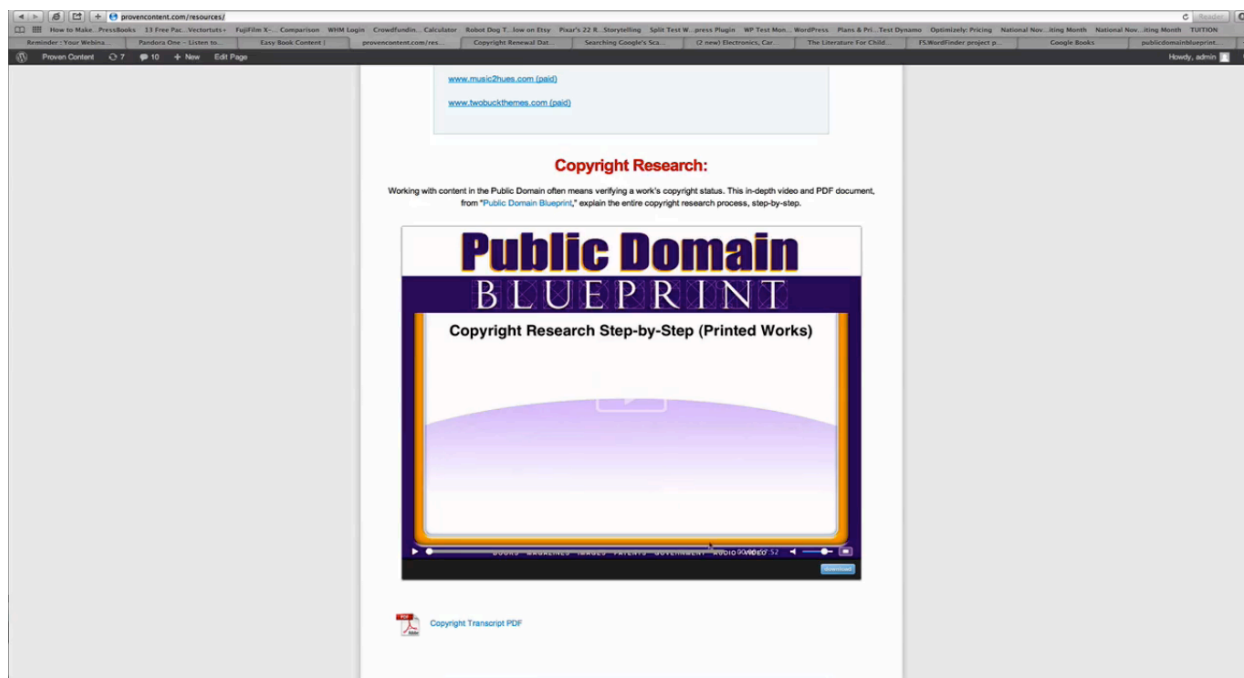
Sometimes there are works donated to the Public Domain. I have noticed over the years that this has become an up and coming trend. Many of the photos on Wikipedia are actually works that have been donated to the Public Domain. Once a work is donated to the Public Domain, it cannot be un-donated. So, you are able to use these materials for free. Any ideas, concepts, formulas, list, equations, etc. are in the Public Domain as well. This will be covered in a little more detail later on within this course recipes are being discussed.

Nature, believe it or not, is in the Public Domain. There are some exceptions, of course. There are no laws right now that say that if you grow roses in your yard you can't photograph them and use those photographs however you see fit. However, this is changing. For example, laws have been passed that say that you cannot legally photograph these genetically modified crops that a certain company has been producing because it's a violation of the company's patents. Now, I think this is insane, but stuff like that is happening.

Some national parks are starting to limit what you can photograph and what you can't. Whenever you are in cities, you often need permits in order to take photographs. A lot of times it depends on whether or not you plan to use your photographs commercially. So, the world is changing when it comes to what you can do and you can't do as an artist. For now, there's nothing stopping me from doing something like going out and photographing the sky. I don't have to worry about someone slapping me with a copyright infringement suit for now, but you never know what lies ahead.

To reiterate, in the U.S. works published with or without a copyright before 1923 are within the Public Domain. Also works published between 1923 and 1964 are in the Public Domain IF their copyright was not renewed in the 28<sup>th</sup> year after the work was first copyrighted. Furthermore, works that were published in the United States before 1989 without proper copyright notice are in the Public Domain. That means that the copyright symbol wasn't in the book. This is kind of a rare occurrence, but it does happen. This happens so rarely, however, that I usually just tell my students to completely ignore it.

The rules pertaining to copyrights usually remain the same regardless of what types of materials are involved. The only real exception is in regards to audio. The reason why this is different is because the copyright laws for recorded audio are determined at the state level, not at the national level. So, these rules vary from state to state.



There is a website that I have shared with my students many times before. It is [www.ProvenContent.com/resources](http://www.ProvenContent.com/resources). The site's homepage is shown in the screenshot above. The page contains some links to some of my favorite sites for finding public domain content, but what I really wanted to point out was the 'Copyright Research' video on this page. It is about an hour long, and it will take you through the entire process of researching books, magazines, images, etc. It's very comprehensive, and there is a PDF transcription of the video provided on this page as well.

Since the video is there, I'm not going to spend a huge amount of time telling you how to do research within this course because that's just going to distract us from doing better things. You can also go to Copyright.gov/records to research books published after 1950 but before 1964. Stanford has a simple search engine for books that were published prior to 1950. To use this search engine, you'll want to visit:

<http://collections.stanford.edu/copyrightrenewals/bin/search/simple>.

When you reach the search engine, all you have to do is type in an author or title and click on the 'Search' button. If it shows up it's not in the Public Domain, and if it doesn't show up then it is in the Public Domain most of the time. Now, I recommend that you research it in multiple ways.

I have a book called *Child Photography*, and it was published in the '30s. So, I would use the Stanford search engine to research this. Then, if nothing comes up, I will type in the author's last name; that is, unless the author has a really common name like Smith. If you get a lot of results just off of the last name then you may want to get more specific. Again, if you get no

results, then it's pretty safe to say that this book is in the Public Domain. The video referred to above explains all of this in more detail.

In most countries a work does not fall into the public domain until the life of the author plus seventy years has passed. Sometimes it's the life of the author plus fifty years, but in most cases it's the life of the author plus seventy years. In other words, if an author were to die today, their books would not be available in the Public Domain for another 70 years. So, if you were to do the math and go back 70 years, the works of all authors who died before 1944 would be in the Public Domain. That's one major difference between the copyright laws of other countries as opposed to those of the U.S.

You may be in a country where a work goes into the Public Domain after 50 years. So, in that case you would look for works where the author died in 1964. You can visit


[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries'\\_copyright\\_lengths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries'_copyright_lengths).

## Finding PD Content

### FINDING PD CONTENT...

#### The Sources I Currently Use (Offline):

- Antique Markets
- Used Book Stores
- Book Sales
  - <http://www.booksalefinder.com>

Chambersburg, PA <a href="#">Franklin County Legal Services</a> at Laird Hall, Wilson College 1015 Philadelphia Ave. 717-262-2326  <a href="#">Change the listing</a> (sale organizers only)	May 9 - 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fri 9-9, Sat 9-5, Sun noon-4</li><li>• 60,000+ books; 100% donated; 55% hardcover; sorted; not 'picked over'; no buyer restrictions; \$0-\$15</li><li>• Silent auction for special books</li><li>• Food available, free parking</li></ul>
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As previously stated, there is a lot of useful PD content out there. All of the best content that I have run across, I found offline. I hardly even look online anymore. I don't really have to look at all. What I need just has a tendency to show up and in some cool ways. There are several different books that I have recently found which absolutely blew my socks off.

Antique markets are my #1 favorite places to find books that are in the Public Domain. As a matter of fact, every public domain work that I have purchased in the last few years I found at antique markets. Used bookstores are another great place to find books like these, and so are book sales. BookSaleFinder.com is a great site to visit (<http://www.booksalefinder.com>). Every so often libraries like to get rid of their old books, and you can find sponsored events where people donate books and a library or other type of organization will sell the books to make proceeds.

There is a local book sale in my area that comes up every year. The next time this event is to take place, they will have over 60,000 books for sale. These are all donated, they are not picked over, and there are no buyer restrictions. Furthermore, these books are priced very cheaply; they are all priced between \$0.50 and \$15. I go to this event every year.

I do occasionally use some online sources to find books that are in the Public Domain. There are a couple of hundred online resources within my Public Domain Codebook, and again, I will

be providing this to you for free. Right now, I am going to share the ones that I am currently using. Really, out of the hundreds of sources that I will be providing you with, there are only a few that I use consistently. They are:

1. **Archive.org** – This site is pretty straightforward, and it clearly informs you of what is and isn't in the public domain. It contains a very simple search engine, which makes it a great resource as well.
2. **Books.Google.com** – Google Books is another great resource. This is probably the largest archive of public domain books that is available online.

There's a trick to using Google Books. When you visit the site, there will be a search bar that you can use to search on a specific topic. In most cases you are going to get a ton of results, and you will notice that each has a year-published date listed above its summary. In order to further filter your results, click on the 'Search Tools' button and then choose 'Any Books'. After that, choose 'Free Google eBooks'. When you do this, the results are resorted so that they only show books that are in the Public Domain. Well, once and a while there will be one or two which isn't, but for the most part you will find Public Domain content.

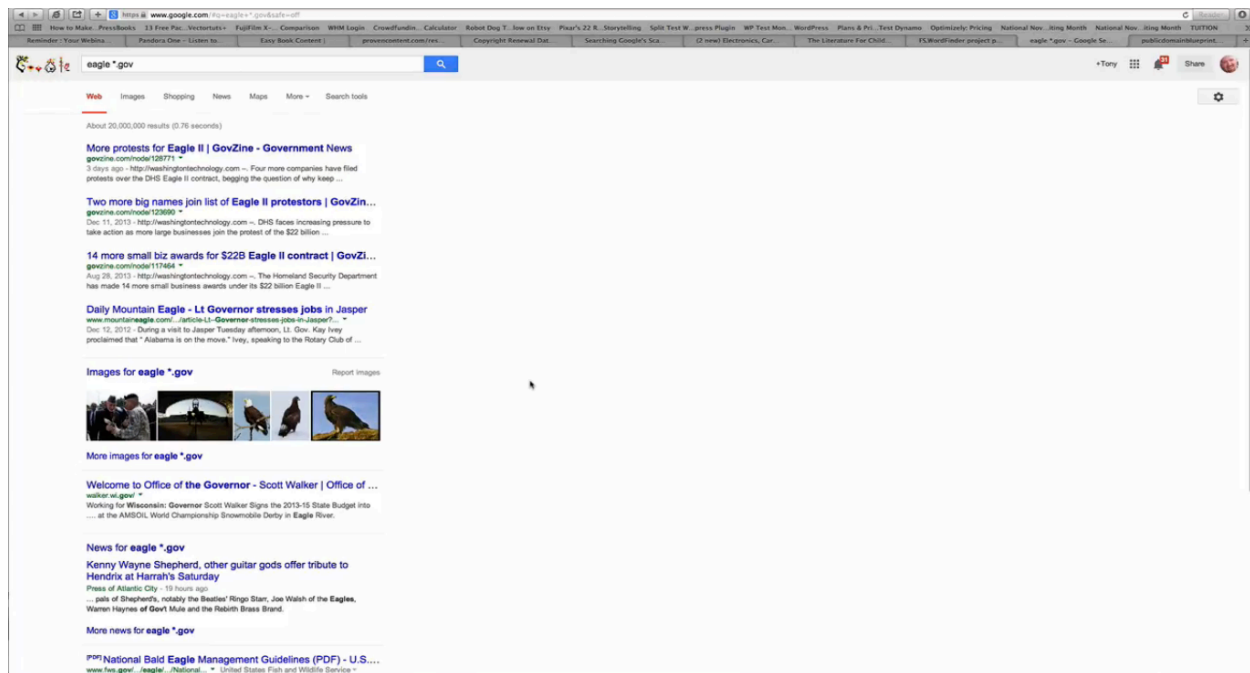
When you click on one of the books within the results, you will be led to a page where you can preview the book you have chosen. If you click on the gear symbol at the upper right-hand side of the page, you will find the option to convert the book to 'Plain Text'. This will turn the books content into editable text. That means that you can simply select this text, copy it, and paste it into a Word document. Another thing that you can do is download the PDF. Options for doing this can be found at the top-right of the page as well.

3. **Used.Addall.com** – To tell you the truth, I don't use this as much as I could or should. From this one page, you can search multiple sites at once.
4. **AbeBooks.com** – This is another search engine for books, but unlike Used.Addall.com, this site allows you to designate a time period for a book's publication date. The results that come up with on this site will also include magazines.

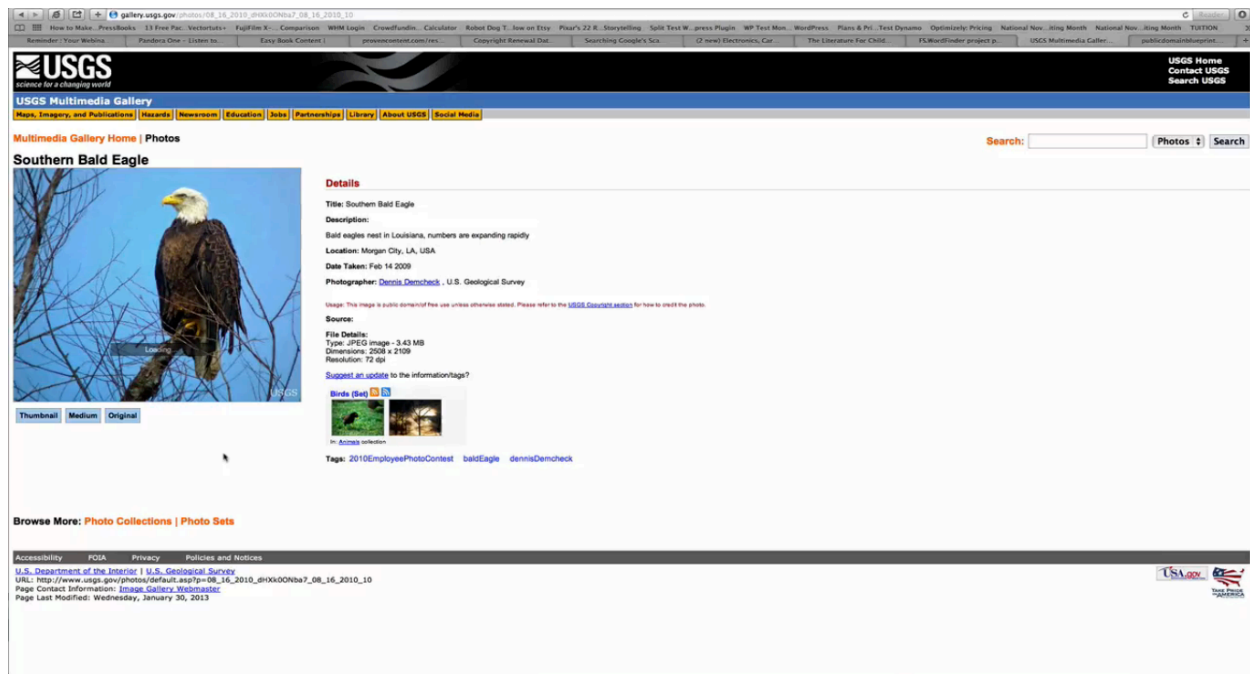
These last two sites aren't perfect, and sometimes they come up with a lot of results that don't matter, but all-in-all they work pretty well. If I am searching online, I usually spend most of my time on AbeBooks.com, and then when I find something, I will bounce it up against Google Books and Archive.org to see if it's available online.

Ultimately, this process is all about discovery. You just don't know what you don't know, or as I like to say "You can't find what you don't know what to look for." So, you use AbeBooks.com to help you to identify titles that are related to the subject matter of your book.

5. **Loc.gov** – There is an immense amount of content of all different types to be found here.
6. **USA.gov/Topics/Graphics.shtml** – This is the graphics hub for the entire US government. So, if you are looking for photographs or illustrations, this is where you want to go.



There are some other tricks that you can use to find the best content for what you're working on. Let's say that you were trying to write a book on Eagles, for example. You can go to Google and type in eagle\*.gov, as shown in the picture above, and hit 'Search'. When you do this, all the results that appear will contain .gov. You can also type in eagle site:\*.gov. This will limit the results to only include .gov in the actual URL. This, of course, means that only government sites will appear in the results. The problem is that it will also bring up state government websites, and therefore, not all of the content that comes up is in the Public Domain.



At this point, you can switch over to 'Images' and the majority of the images that come up will be from government sites. You can make sure that an image is within the Public Domain by clicking on it. Most of the time a page like the one above will appear, and you can see that on this page, next to the word 'Usage' it states clearly whether or not the image is in the Public Domain.

7. **Europeana.eu/portal/** - This another wonderful site to use, and they are constantly adding a lot of content from some of Europe's museums. So, this site contains a great deal of images and texts, which makes it a great site to explore.

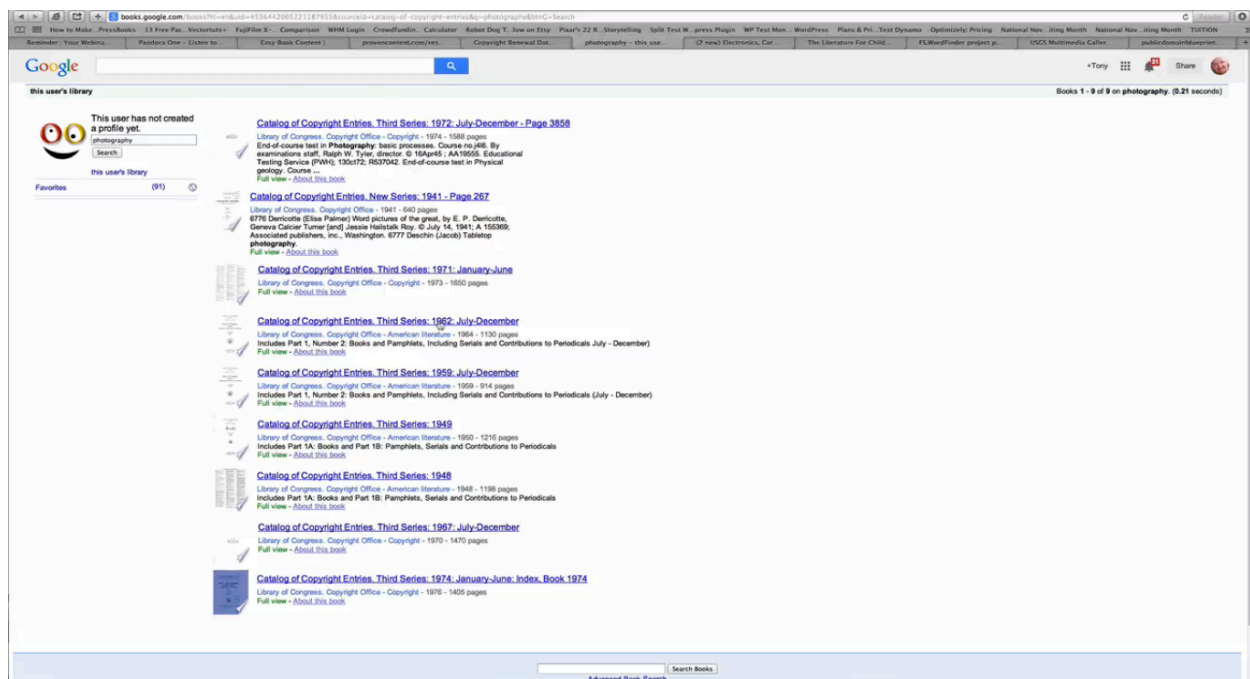
There's one more trick that I want to show you for finding content. You are going to love this; I have only revealed this trick one other time. As mentioned above, you can't find what you don't know to look for. Well, I have discovered a 'one-two' punch for finding content. As you know, books are being published in the U.S. all of the time and the majority of them end up lapsing into the Public Domain. Wouldn't it be cool if you had a resource that you could search which contained every book that was submitted to the copyright office?

This resource actually exists. It only recently has come onto the scene, courtesy of Google. The thing is that if you don't know where to find it, you won't. I happen to know where it is and now so do you; just click on the following link:

<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/copyrightsearch.html>

This tool gives you the ability to search all of the copyright records to see what books were actually submitted. You can search by author, title, or even by keyword. I have discovered some pretty amazing books; books that were published by certain authors which aren't normally listed. Once you know the title of the book that you want to look for, you can head over to AbeBooks.com or a similar site and search for it there.

When you open up this tool, you will find that they actually give you the ability to search in a couple of different ways. They have links which allow you to go through the various volumes one-by-one. You may also notice that they go through 1978. If you remember, 28 years after a work is copyrighted it has to be renewed or it falls in the Public Domain. That means that if a book was written in 1950, then its copyright would have had to be renewed in 1978. That's where this number comes from. So, if I wanted to find books on photography that were submitted prior to 1950, all I have to do is hit 'Search'.



Instead of books, your search results are going to yield a number of catalogs pertaining to different time periods, and if you click on one of them, a page such the one above will appear. The page will contain listings of the books which contain the keyword that you typed in. So, if you had typed in 'photography' then you would have gotten a listing of books that contain the word 'photography'. From this list, you simply choose a title that you think is promising. Again, these lists consist of copyright registrations that were submitted by publishers during various time periods. This opportunity did not exist a few years ago. Ever since I have discovered it, I have been utilizing this tool to help me find exactly what I am looking for.

## Working with PD Content

### WORKING WITH PD CONTENT...

#### **Creating Derivative Works:**

- Do NOT use as-is (text content)!
- Add your own value!
- There is not set amount it needs to be changed by.
- Give credit where due (not necessary).
- Use in different forms from the original.



When you are creating derivative works, you never want to use textual content in its original form. This is especially true when you are publishing to Amazon. Now, if you find a book that's in the Public Domain, but it's not available anywhere online (including Amazon), then you can publish it to Amazon with no questions asked. However, you would only be able to get the 35% royalty that is set aside for public domain books. That is why you are encouraged to add your own value to a work. That way you can make it your own and claim copyright on the derivative version. Then you will be receiving a 70% royalty from Amazon on your publication.

There's no set amount pertaining to how much you need to change a book up. My students constantly ask me "How much do I have to change the content of this book?" I usually tell people who ask this that they should try to change at least 40% of their book up, but really that number is completely arbitrary.

A lot of people that ask do so because they are trying to the least amount of work necessary and still use the content. Please don't take this approach. The content that you are working with is already saving you a lot of time and effort. Plus, chances are likely that you already have some grasp on the topic you are writing about, so all you would really need to do is 'fill in the blank' to make a work your own.

For me, I know the information already; public domain works just save me from having to sit down and write it all. I may tweak a few things to put it in my own words, but overall the work

is already done. I could write a book on child photography, for example, but who knows how long it would take me? It is just simpler to have my daughter scan the public domain Child Photography book that I have found and just rewrite the parts that I want to, throw out the parts that I don't need at all, add in my own photography, and bam! I have a book.

I always recommend giving credit where credit is due, but it's honestly not necessary. You can do whatever you want with the works that you find in the Public Domain. I do usually make an effort by saying something in the book like "based on the original work by..." I will typically put this in the copyright page or in the endnotes.

Always remember that you can change the form of the original work to something else if you like. Just because the work started out as a book doesn't mean that it has to stay that way. You may recall the example that I gave previously about how I took a photography book and turned it into an online presentation. There are other things you can do like turn an old text-based book into an audio book.

We have already talked about the presentation model of changing content, so there's no reason to go over this again. Just refer to the introduction section of this training if you need to learn how to do this again. I was fairly detailed in my explanation, and I'm sure that you get how to do it by now. However, this is one of my favorite methods for changing up public domain content because it's the easiest way I have found to get various materials into my own words.

Another thing that you can do is take public domain magazine articles and turn them into Kindle and print books. This is my second favorite method. So, I want you to know that I'm not keeping all of my sacred methods to myself and just handing out crumbs to my students. I am telling you about things that I am doing in my own business.

My third-favorite method is to take images from the Public Domain as well as textual content and using this material to create educational books for kids. I'm not talking about homeschooling books, although that would definitely be a viable market. I'm doing something a little different, and I think you are going to be very interested when I show you. Then the final method we'll be discussing is how to mix things up with recipes. So, let's get started.

You may have already heard me teach about this in other trainings of mine before, but it's such an amazing approach that I wanted to be sure and add it into this course. Some of you don't know about this method, and it's really too valuable of one not to mention. As previously mentioned, there are over 200,000 magazine titles in the Public Domain. That means that there is practically an endless amount of articles and other forms of magazine content that you can utilize for your own books.

It is recommended that you visit <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/cce/firstperiod.html>. Here you will find a list which includes nearly every magazine that did actually renew their copyright. That would be helpful right? If you find a magazine that you would like to use, and the title of the magazine isn't on the list in the webpage above, you can be fairly certain that it is a public domain work. I have never shared this resource before, by the way. This has been one of my best-kept secrets.

*Life Magazine*, for example, has been around forever and can be found everywhere. It is on this list, and you will see that they have been renewing each and every issue from the beginning. There are some magazines, however, that I have noticed renewed their first couple of issues and then suddenly stopped. So, you will want to pay attention to stuff like that as well. The resource given above will only inform you of the year that a particular magazine was first published and what year it was renewed.

I find most of the magazines that I use at antique markets, at auctions, and on eBay. Antique markets are useful, and there are always magazines to be found there. They are a rarer find at auctions, but I have made some pretty great scores at auctions before. One time, for example, I found 90 photography magazines for \$15 at an auction several years ago, and they were all in the Public Domain. I got a lot of content out of these, which was awesome.

I use eBay probably more than anything else, and that's probably because it's so simple to do so. All you have to do is perform an eBay search on a certain keyword and add the word 'magazine'. You can also narrow your search to a specific time period. There is an option that you can click which will allow you to search material dated pre-1964 and so on.

By the way, I compiled a list of 22 magazines that are related to writing. All of these magazines are in the Public Domain. I am going to provide this list to you because most of the students in this course are writers. Even if you don't use them for content, you are sure to find some great writing tips within them.

When you go to eBay to find magazines that are in the Public Domain, all you have to do is type your topic into the search bar followed by the word magazine. In my case, I typed in 'photography magazine'. When you do, you'll notice that over on the left-hand side of the page, there are some different search options. Under 'Publication Year', you'll want to mark '1900-1939'. You could also search '1940-1979', but since you need materials only prior to 1964, some of the results you would get if you chose this option would not be in the Public Domain.

The search will be limited to bring up items from only the times periods that you selected. One of the first magazines that came up was a Popular Photography magazine from 1937. Now, I know from previous research that this magazine is in the Public Domain. Another in the Public

Domain is Leica Photography, which also came up in the results. In fact, there were quite a few usable magazines that came up in my search. In fact, the first page of the results would provide enough material to create several books.

When I find magazines related to my topic, I compile 8-12 useful articles out of them. After that, I rewrite and tweak the language and content. The lapse of time always needs to be considered. Since I write on the topic of photography a lot, for example, I always have to change the information concerning the technology since it has changed so much. The thing is that they pretty much did the same things; they just do them better now. So, all I really have to do a lot of the time is change the name of the equipment being used.

A lot I can really leave the same though because certain techniques, such as those concerning lighting, perspective, and composition, work the same way as they did back then. Getting babies to smile and getting dogs to stay still are things that also examples of things that work the same way today as they did back then. Tactics that we use today like using the Rule of Thirds and lining up the horizon in a certain way were utilized back then as well. So, when it comes to my particular topic of choice, I really don't have to change that much.

Each article that you use should make a suitable chapter for your book. So, essentially the article titles become the chapter titles. You can change things up any way that you want to, of course, but I usually just use the original titles or a variation of them because usually the article title sums up what the article is about. It's always a good idea to add photos and illustrations to your book. You can get these from the public domain as well, or you can use your own. Not only do photographs and illustrations make your book more compelling to readers, but they also take up space. They can also add support to whatever it is you're saying.

# WORKING WITH PD CONTENT...

## Magazine Articles:

- Find articles related to your topic.
- Collect together 8 – 12 articles.
- Rewrite and tweak language and content.
- Article titles become chapter titles.
- Use photos and illustrations. (PD or yours).
- You can be author, edited by, etc.



You can choose to be the author, or you can have yourself listed as the editor. Above you can see a screenshot of a page from a book I created on photography. The picture on the page is not my own; it is from the Public Domain as was the text. Again, all I had to do was update the language, tweak the text a little, pop a few pictures in, and when I was done, this chapter was ready to publish.

Hopefully, you can see how simple this process is. It is one of the most effective ways that I have found to utilize public domain content. The amazing thing is that a lot of people don't even know about using magazines. It just never even occurs to most people that they can do so. Long articles are just perfect for creating chapters, and short ones work great as blog posts. Those are just a couple examples of the many different ways that you can utilize magazines.

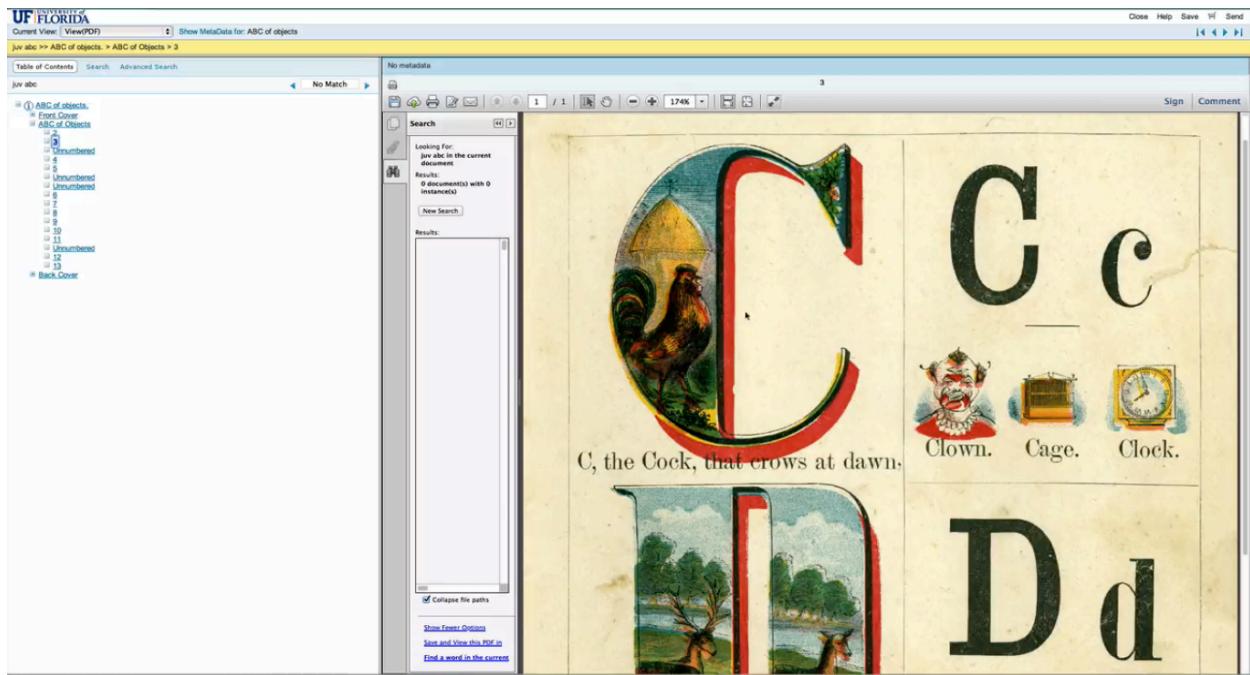
There are a lot of different kinds of educational books that can be created out of public domain content. There are a ton of you attending this course, and I realize that some of you aren't going to care. That's fine. At the same time some of you are going to be flipping out over this portion of the lesson. Some of the books that you will be able to create are:

**Topical books** – There is a huge market for topical book for kids. You can cover just about any topic (e.g. frogs, construction, trains, trees, etc.) to give children a simple understanding of the world around them.

**ABC Books** – It's not hard to find examples of things that represent the letters of the alphabet. In many cases, people will pick a certain category and find things within that category to represent each of the letters of the alphabet (e.g. Animals, Birds, Places, etc.).

**Learning Books** – These types of books help children to learn their basic concepts, such as when it comes time for them to learn about things like opposites, rhyming, and colors.

**Activity Books** – Children often enjoy activity books that include fun games like word searches and mazes.

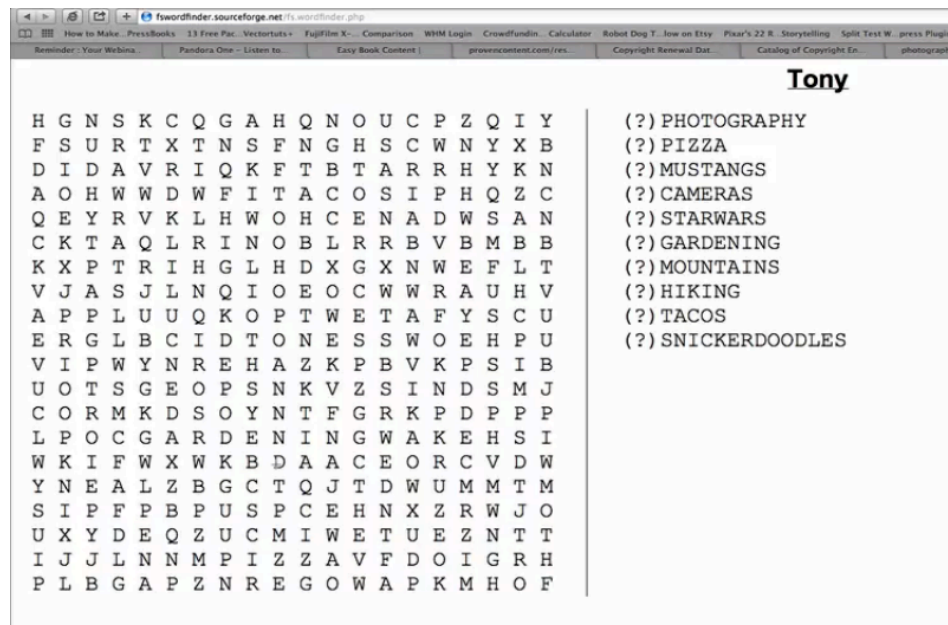


If you are interested in creating children's books, then I encourage you to visit <http://palmm.fcla.edu/juv>). This site is full of children's books that are in the Public Domain. If you were to type 'ABC' into the search bar of this site, a bunch of ABC books will show up. You can see a screenshot of one of these above. The preview of this book does show all of the individual pages. These aren't the only types of children's books included on this site, but take note that there are four pages of results when you search for ABC book. This is a really great resource for you to use.

Some of the book reviews on this site are Adobe Acrobat files and some are JPG2 files. So, accessing the content works in different ways on this site. In most cases you are able to save these files. You could use this content as-is. You could also easily recreate it using your own pictures and then republish it in its newly-modified form.

As far as activity books go, you may be thinking to yourself that you would be no good at creating mazes or word searches. You should know that there are resources online that will help you create stuff like this. For instance, you can visit <http://fswordfinder.sourceforge.net>. This site will help you create word searches that you can use in your books. You simply go to the site and click on the 'See script in action' link which is located on the top-left of the page.

After that, you will be brought to a page which allows you to enter in the words you want people to search for. When you're done, click on 'Create Puzzle' and your puzzle will be generated.



In the screenshot above you can see the puzzle that I was able to create. Over on the right-hand side of the puzzle, you can see the words that I entered in when setting up the puzzle. Please take note that when you enter your words, you cannot have any words with spaces between them. That is why I did not put a space in 'Starwars'. Anyway, all of the words that I entered can be found in the puzzle on the left which was generated by the website.

Once your puzzle is generated, you can either retype it or just take a screenshot of it and you can simply paste it into one of your book's pages. How cool is that? It did not take more than a minute to generate this puzzle, and now I have some great content for my book.

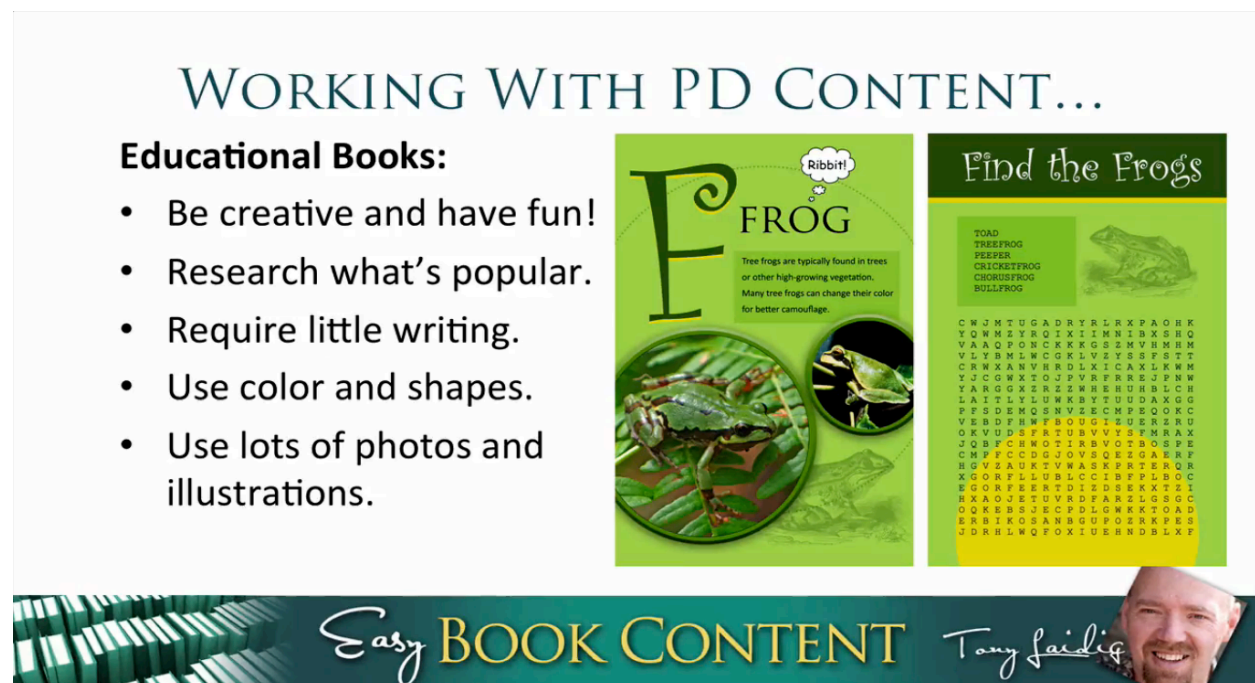
There are a lot of options provided by the site that you can use to customize your puzzle. For instance, the site allows you to choose whether or not you want some of the words to be diagonal in the puzzle. You can also do things like change the background color and your font size; I usually go with a setting of '8'.

Another option that you have is to download a higher-resolution version of your puzzle, which would be wise if you plan on using the puzzle for a book in print. The site that I provided to you for generating puzzles will allow you to use your puzzles commercially. Take heed that there are other generators out there that will not. So, if you decide to use a different site, be sure to use the terms of use.

When you are creating educational books for children, allow yourself to be creative and have fun. There is a ton of different ways that you can go about presenting your information. If your content isn't fun, your book isn't going to keep a child's interest and they aren't going to learn anything. That's why I buy so many children's books. I don't copy other people's ideas necessarily, but this gives me a frame of reference of what other authors have done and ideas about different things that I can do.

A lot of the books out right now present the information they contain in very creative ways. So, research what is popular. You'll quickly realize that these books require very little writing. The job of this type of author is more in being creative with the way that they present the information they share.

When you create books for kids you also want to include a lot of color and different shapes. Including different photos, graphics, and illustrations is a good idea as well. Look at the screenshot below, and you will see an example of what I am talking about. These are two pages that I created for one of my own children's books. They look pretty good, I think. Can you believe I only invested about 20 minutes in creating them both?



All of the images that I used were public domain images, and then of course, I generated the puzzle for free as well. The paragraph on the page contains some information that I found on Wikipedia. I basically just copied it, pasted it, and rewrote some of it. It didn't take much work at all.

You may notice that I didn't just use square and rectangular shapes, and there are all sorts of little graphics included all over the pages. I also tried to use fun fonts that would draw attention, and I even included a little talk bubble at the top of the page. Now, I do have a little more of an advantage over most people because of my background in graphic design. However, you shouldn't allow this to serve as an excuse not to do this on your own. I created this in PhotoShop and it didn't take me long at all to do so. You should be able to do the same fairly quickly and easily. Even if you don't have the money for Photoshop, you can do the exact same thing using Pixlr.com.

As far as the design and the use of content, the important thing to remember is to have fun with it and create pages that you think children would enjoy. Again, there are a lot of different ways to go about presenting the same information. Just think, if I were to send these pictures, the puzzle, and the words on this page out to 100 different people and asked them to create to book pages for me, every single one of the pages that I received back would be different. Isn't that amazing?

The sky really is the limit when it comes to creating stuff like this. Just keep an open mind and try to have as much fun with it as possible. Also, remember that if you have kids, it's great to get them involved. They are the ones that can give you the best insight into what kids like.

Take a look at the pages above once more. There are maybe 30-35 words within these two pages, and yet I was able to create two pages worth of content for my book. You can do this with anything. You don't have to include word searches and other types of puzzles either. There are lots of different types of content that you can fill your pages with aside from just words. In creating educational books for kids, the more creative content that you can fill your books with, the better.

## Recipes and Cookbooks

### WORKING WITH PD CONTENT...

#### Recipes and Cookbooks:

- Recipes cannot be protected by copyright:
  - **Listings of ingredients, as in recipes, labels, or formulas.** When a recipe or formula is accompanied by an explanation or directions, the text directions **may be copyrightable**, but the recipe or formula itself remains uncopyrightable.
  - Copyright law does not protect ideas, methods, or systems. Copyright protection is therefore not available for ideas or **procedures for doing, making, or building things.**



I like recipes. That's probably because I like eating; I don't know for sure. I am currently in the process of creating several different cookbooks. Another reason why I love recipes so much is because the list of ingredients within a recipe cannot be protected by copyright. If you are in doubt, don't be. The actual law states:

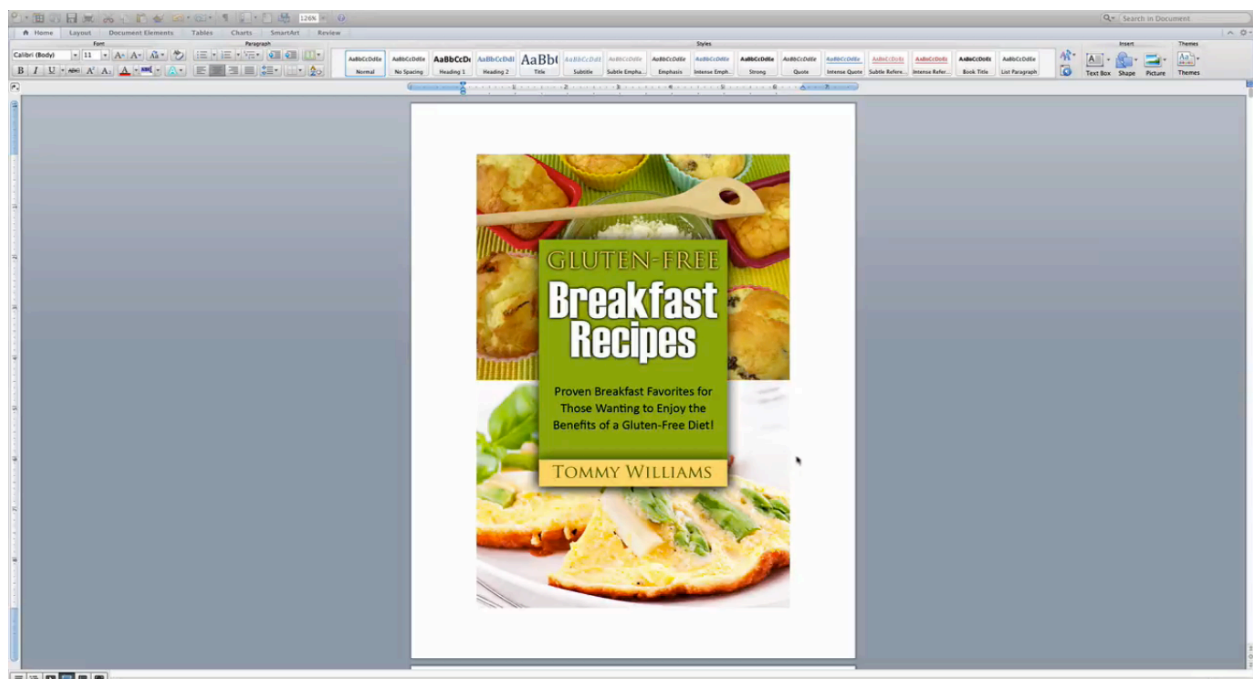
Listings of ingredients, as in recipes, labels, or formulas. When a recipe or formula is accompanied by an explanation or directions, the text directions **may be copyrightable**, but the recipe or formula itself remains uncopyrightable.

As I have previously mentioned, there are only so many ways that you can say something like "set oven to 400 degrees", but you may have to be a little more creative with some of your explanations because some of the content within a recipe is copyrightable. However, as stated above, the recipe or formula itself is not copyrightable. That means that you could head over to your local grocery store right now, pick up the latest copy of Taste of Home magazine, find a recipe that you absolutely love and copy down the list of ingredients for your own book. Then, all you have to do is rewrite the instructions, and you have a page of content for a cookbook of your own that is totally legal. The law also states:

Copyright law does not protect ideas, methods, or systems. Copyright protection is therefore not available for ideas or **procedures for doing, making, or building things**.

You may not have known this, but where what we are doing is concerned, this is huge. This is exactly what U.S. law states, that is the government's own words. Think about this for a second. How many how-to books are out there? This means that there are a lot of opportunities out there whether you are using public domain materials or not.

This opportunity is especially huge when it comes to using recipes, not only because there are so many out there to be utilized, but also because you can use them in many, many different ways. Just like with educational books, you need to be creative when using recipes. Have fun with it. It is recommended that you use photographs to help lead people through the process of cooking the food, and you can use them to show people what the final product is going to look like. You can even use photos from stock sites, or you can even take your own.



Above you can see a page from a book that I created for a client. It is titled *Gluten-Free Breakfast Recipes*. I did a Kindle and print version of this book. The book contains a copyright page, a table of contents, and an introduction. I wrote the introduction myself. The page above contains a list of gluten-free foods. This list, of course, isn't protected by copyright. This list came from a website, and so I didn't have to write it. Next, there is a list of foods to avoid, which also came from a website.

The next page contains a cooking measurements conversion chart, which is pretty handy to have in a cookbook, right? It takes up several pages of this book. Again, this is a list. Plus, conversion and measurement information can't be copyrighted either. All of this information is in the public domain. The page to follow contains a public domain photograph as well.

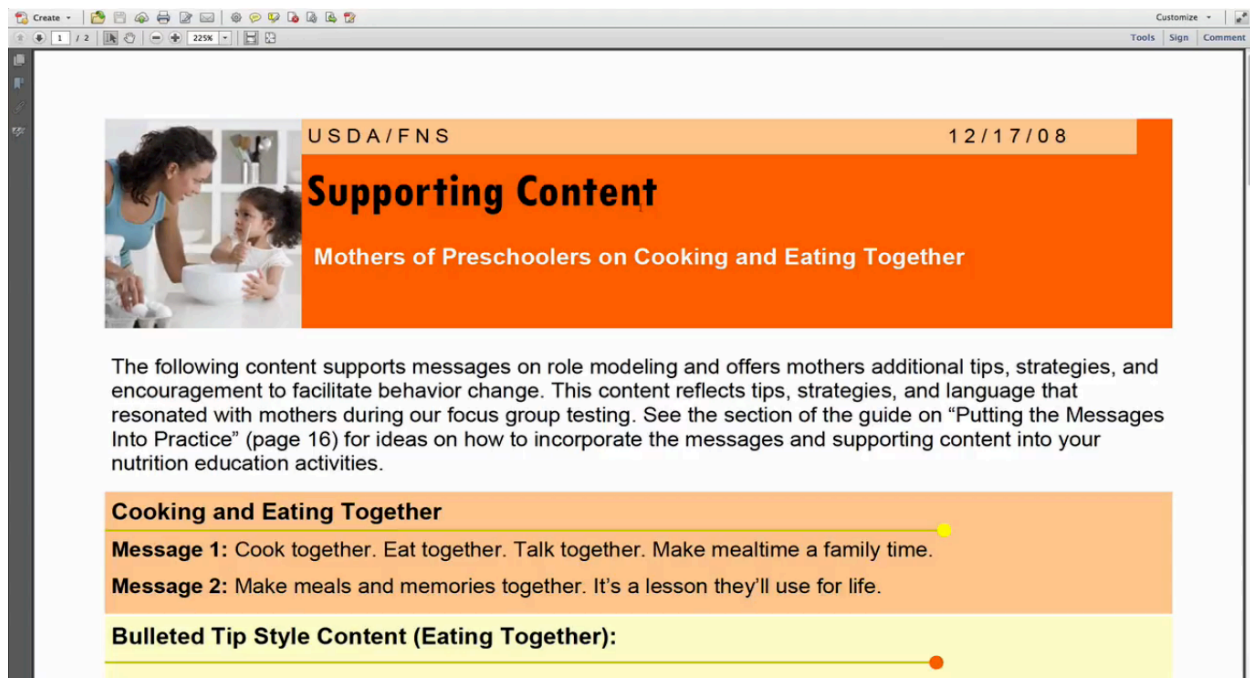
The recipes in this book also come from books in the Public Domain, and they also come from websites like Recipes.com. The descriptions were rewritten for the most part. There were of course lines within these that couldn't really be rewritten, like "Do not over mix." There just aren't that many different ways to say that.

This book is primarily a collection of different lists and rewritten directions from a variety of sources. Occasionally, a photograph is thrown on a page. I didn't make these dishes and shoot photographs of them. Most of the time when I searched for a particular dish, I found photographs of it. You would be really surprised to learn just how many food photos you can find on stock sites. In spite of this, I didn't include that many photos. I am a photographer, and I love food photography. However, I didn't take any of the photos for this book. I have tried out some of the recipes, and they are quite yummy.

When you do something like this, you do want to make sure that all of your ingredient lists are handled the same way. For instance, if you are abbreviating teaspoon 'tsp', make sure that the same abbreviation is used in all of your ingredient lists. It is important that you make all of your ingredient list uniform in this way.

At the end of this book, you'll find citations from the different sites where we got the information from. Again, in the back I have a list of safe gluten-free foods. It's a list, so it can't be copyrighted. I got this off of another website. It not only adds value to the book, but fills the pages with content that I didn't have to write. There's also another unsafe food list in the back.

So, the majority of this book is made up of content from public domain materials. There are a few things that are rewritten and from current websites. All of this material is completely legal to use if handled correctly. This book is available on Amazon right now, by the way.



Above is a screenshot of a PDF that I downloaded from a government website. As you can see, it's titled *Mothers of Preschoolers on Cooking and Eating Together*. This puts a completely different spin on how to handle recipes, and because this is a document from a government site, this whole document is in the Public Domain. This is really great content that could easily be added to a book. It would work really well inside of a cookbook. It includes topic like how to teach your children to prepare certain foods and how to make your meals more special. It also breaks down different activities that you can try into various age groups. Again, since this info is in the public domain, you could use this as supplemental information for your cookbooks.

## Questions & Answers

### **How can I change my public domain pictures to add value?**

You could technically sell it as-is if it's in the Public Domain, but there are a lot of different ways that you can handle stuff like this as well. Once I was visiting Garden of the Gods, which is in Colorado. I took some pictures there, and I did the same thing in Grand Canyon and some other places that I visited as well. Later, I went to the Library of Congress website and I found some old vintage pictures of some of these same places.

I used these pictures to create posters where my photographs were the main photos, but they were accompanied by smaller, black and white photos that I had found in the Public Domain. This provided a really cool contrast which accented my own photos well. I thought these posters turned out looking really cool. Anyway, that's an example of how you can use public domain photos to add a little spin to your own work.

Also, there are wonderful photo programs which allow you to convert photos into illustrations. I have been experimenting with this a lot lately, and there are many, many different options when it comes to programs that you can use. One of the least expensive programs for this is called GMX PhotoPainter. This program allows you to convert photographs into paintings. So, you could take a public domain image from a national park or something like that, convert it into a painting, and sell those prints. This is just one example of the many, many things that you can do.

### **What about government info for other countries?**

In a lot of other countries, their info is not in the public domain. If you live outside of the United States, you really should investigate your own countries before accessing content and trying to use it. I know that they started changing some of the rules in the UK, but not all of the information is available for use. So, you definitely want to review the laws before utilizing government works.

**What would 'limited commercial use' mean when the content is within a book with no identifier of each artist or creator? Would I need to seek the advice of an attorney before using the content from a book like this?**

I would advise you to do so, yes. I do want to address something since you brought this up. There are a lot of websites that try to claim the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, meaning that they will say something like “for non-commercial use only” in their terms of use. All of that is BS in regards to the law. It’s just put up there to try to keep people from using the content, but the law is very clear. An exact duplicate of something that is in the Public Domain, whether digital or otherwise, the copy is also in the Public Domain and they have no legal right to say that you can’t use it for commercial purposes. There are a number of court cases that stand in support of this.

There are also court cases in which people claim that they have put a lot of time and effort into scanning documents in to put the content up in their website and this should give them the right to limit the content’s use. Now, I’m not a copyright attorney, but I can read. The judgments made in these cases have stated that ‘sweat of the brow’ does not constitute copyright. In other words, they don’t really care how much hard work you have put into getting a book scanned and up online.

Just because you put some work into using this material, it doesn’t mean that you have copyrights over it or any type of control over it. The work is still in the Public Domain. The court’s opinion pretty much is that if you don’t want the world to download it, then don’t put it up there. So, I would say that it really doesn’t matter what they say; you can use any work that’s in the Public Domain. That is what I believe and what I live by, but again, I’m not a copyright attorney.

### **Are works by state governments and public universities in the Public Domain as well?**

In most cases they are not. There are a few exceptions, but I’m not really clear on what those are. However, I do know that most of this content is not in the Public Domain; that is, unless it was created before 1923.

### **What if a corporation has copyrighted a work, but it’s a corporation that has no lifespan?**

That’s an excellent observation, and quite frankly, I don’t have an answer to that. Here’s the thing, if it was just copyrighted today, we are going to be dead and gone before it becomes part of the Public Domain; so it’s a mute point anyway. I am sure, however, that if a corporation has no lifespan, there would have to be some kind of ruling or limit on that would apply.

### **When you purchase books at a book sale, how do you identify which ones to buy?**

I usually check the dates first. Sometimes I will take the time to research the copyright right there on the spot, but most of the time I just grab them up and research them later. There have been a few that turned out not to be in the Public Domain after I did a little research, but that doesn't happen very often.

**Can public domain photos be used as a logo or business symbol?**

Yes.

**When I'm using a public domain image, do I have to site the accreditation or can I just use it with no notification?**

It really depends on where you find the work. Some government sites prefer that you give some sort of accreditation to the work. It also may depend on how you're using it. For instance, if you are using an image on a poster, where exactly would you place this accreditation? I usually just copy the source information and keep it in a document somewhere. I do this in case I need it for this very scenario, and I do it so that I can find more material if I need to.

**If I pick a book off of the list that you showed us, do I still need to check to see if it's accurate?**

Yes, you will still need to double check to make sure that the book is in the Public Domain. The point of the list is to help you find content to look for. That's the real benefit of that process.

**What happens if by some chance two people create a derivative work out of the same Public Domain material? Could the latter one be subject to being deemed as infringing on the other?**

It wouldn't be infringement unless you used the first derivative work as your source material. However, if you both based your book on the same public domain material and they ended up being similar, it still wouldn't be copyright infringement because the foundational work is in the Public Domain. So, don't worry about this. Even if something did come of it, you wouldn't have done anything wrong.

**Can you recommend any OCR software?**

I don't use a lot of OCR software these days, but when I do I use a program called PDF OCR X. You basically just scan the pages and it converts them into a PDF, and then it performs the OCR on those PDF pages. This program is pretty accurate.

**Can you show how to find fiction books?**

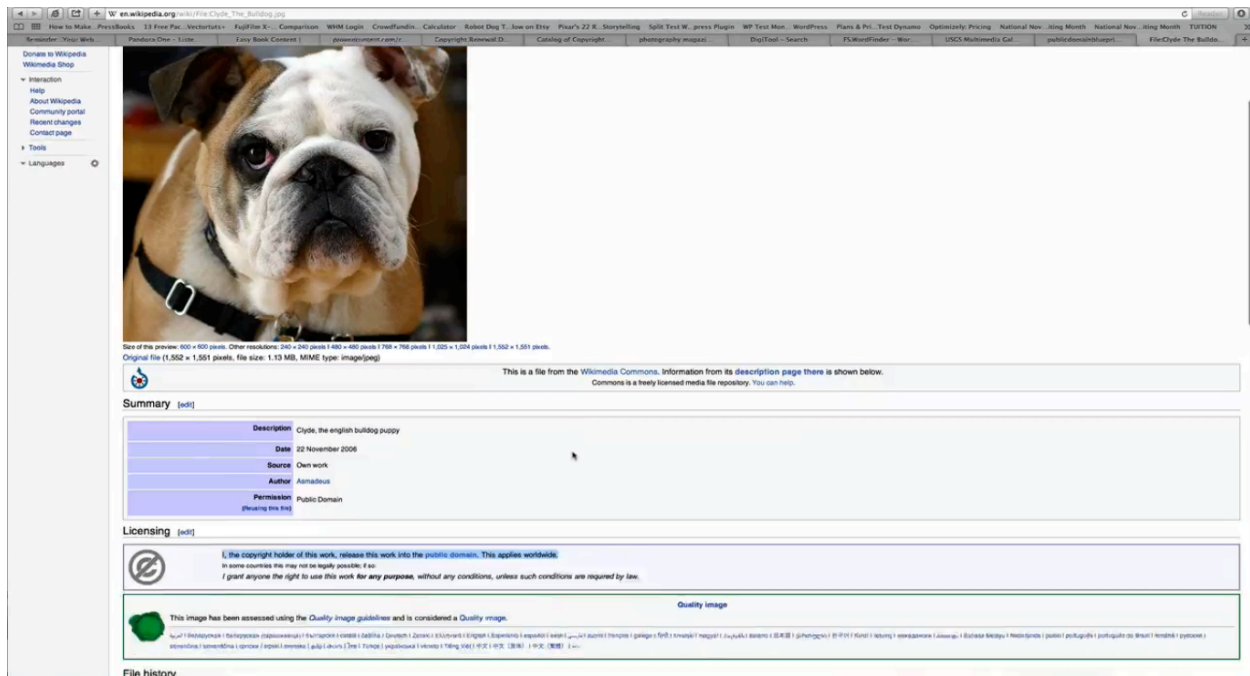
It works the exact same way no matter what type of material you are trying to find.

**Will you share with us your recent low-cost print source?**

I guess I promised you I would share it, so I will. It's called PrintNinja. They provide a lot of different options for print, but what's beautiful about this site is the low-cost. Now, you do have to order a certain quantity; it's not a print-on-demand service.

Let's say that you wanted to publish a hardcover children's book that was 40 pages long, and it had medium-weight gloss coated paper inside. You also wanted the book to have a dust-jacket, and you wanted it to be full-color throughout. So basically, you want a really nice book and you are sparing no expense. On PrintNinja, it would only cost about \$2,000 to get 500 printed. That may seem like a lot of money, but really it's just \$4 a book. Remember, that is for a high-end, full color book, with a hardcover, a dust-jacket, and nice glossed paper. That's really an insanely low price, especially for that much quality.

The reason why this site is so inexpensive is because the books are printed in China. So, if you do use this site, you need to allow some time for shipping. The more you buy the lower your price is going to be. So, if you were to purchase a couple of thousand, the price per unit would drop and you could end up getting these books printed for just a dollar or two apiece.



## How do you use Wikipedia?

Wikipedia is a really cool resource. The site mostly contains creative commons material, but there is some public domain material. Let's say that you went to Wikipedia.org looking for pictures of bulldogs. So, you find the picture above and you click on it. Well, if you look at the rights information in the center of the page, you will see that the guy who took this picture released it into the Public Domain. Give it a try sometime. You'll find that quite a few of the pictures on Wikipedia are actually in the Public Domain.

Another trick is to scroll down to the bottom of the page and look over on the right-hand side. There you will usually find a 'Common' button that will lead you to more royalty free content. You can also find more pictures by going into the translated pages, which is something a lot of people don't think of. Again, be sure and check the licensing before using any of these images commercially. A lot of time you can still use them even if they are not in the Public Domain; you just have to give attribution.

## Could I use the word search puzzles in my Kindle book?

I don't think that I would necessarily use them in a Kindle book, but print would definitely make sense. One thing that you could do is use this as a downloadable supplement. For instance, you could say something like "If you would like word searches that go along with this activity

book, you can download them for free at...” and get them to opt-in to your form or use it as a promotional tool to get people to buy your book.

**If my book is image based, how can I save money on KDP’s delivery fee?**

You will need to use JPG images and save them at a compression of 50.

**Do you have a list of stock photo sites?**

DepositPhotos.com and Dreamstime.com are the ones that I primarily use. I also use GraphicStock.com a lot. At GraphicStock you can pay an annual fee and get unlimited downloads after that. I like these kinds of deals.

**Why did you cite the websites in that book?**

Technically I didn’t have to, but I thought it would be good to provide people with the resources.

**What happens if you make a derivative product out of a non-digitized public domain book and then later it becomes digitized? Will Amazon later find your derivative product to be a violation?**

No. In fact, I have a verbatim public domain book on Amazon, and it sells very well every month. It wasn’t available online when I first published it, but now it is. It’s technically a derivative because I have added some stuff to it, but for the most part it’s verbatim. In spite of all of this, it’s never been booted out of Amazon.

**Can I use US government material even though I am a citizen of the UK?**

There are ways to do it. If you are selling products that are based on this material, and you use US-based payment processors and websites, then you can because technically your work has never left the US. That’s not a black hat method; it is completely legal.

### **Why can't I take pictures of painting in museums if they are in the Public Domain?**

This is a sketchy situation, and therefore it is recommended that you follow the museums rules and not take photographs. A painting may be in the Public Domain, but the canvas, the paint, and the wood can actually be owned. If a museum owns the physical object of the painting, then they can limit access to that.

### **How do I put something in the Public Domain?**

You just have to issue a statement that says "As the copyright holder of X I hereby place this into the Public Domain and release all ownership." or something like that. If you go to CreativeCommons.org, you can find the language that you need to release something into the Public Domain.

### **So, I can take screenshots of images in books to use in my books?**

Yes you can, but only if they are in the Public Domain.

### **Is it okay to have an outsourcer create a derivative work for me?**

Yes. You just need to make sure that you have some sort of contract which states that they are a work for hire and you retain ownership over anything that they create.

I am not trying to sell you anything, but there are a lot more questions remaining on how to use Public Domain content. Unfortunately, I can't go into any greater detail than I have already in this course. I do offer extensive training on the Public Domain, however. So, if you want to learn more, you can take advantage of this training by visiting [PublicDomainBlueprint.com](http://PublicDomainBlueprint.com).