

# A Short Guide to Using Pictures from the Web

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 [practicaledtech.com/2022/12/06/a-short-guide-to-using-pictures-from-the-web/](https://practicaledtech.com/2022/12/06/a-short-guide-to-using-pictures-from-the-web/)

By Richard Byrne

December 6, 2022

# Can I Use That Picture?

## **YES, BUT, MAYBE**

A Guide for Students and Teachers



### **YES!**

#### **Pictures You've Taken**

If you took the picture, you can use the picture in your projects.



### **YES!**

#### **Public Domain**

Pictures funded by government projects, pictures with expired copyright, pictures photographers released to the public domain.



### **BUT...**

#### **Creative Commons**


You can use pictures that have a Creative Commons license if you follow the use and attribution rules <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>



### **MAYBE...**

#### **Copyrighted Pictures**

You might be able to use the picture if you use it in a way that qualifies as a Fair Use.



**MAYBE...**  
**Fair Use**

Using the picture for a school project doesn't automatically qualify it as a Fair Use. Use it in a critique, a parody, or instructional aid when nothing else will do. Read guidelines at <https://fairuse.stanford.edu/overview/fair-use/what-is-fair-use/>

Disclaimers: This guide is based on U.S. law. I'm not an attorney.

Richard Byrne - [PracticalEdTech.com](http://PracticalEdTech.com)

This week's newsletter topic was inspired by a question that a participant in one of [my online classes](#) asked last week. That question was "can I use the pictures I find on Google Images?"

## Yes, But, Maybe

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The question of "can I use the pictures I find on Google Images?" is a fairly common one. And the answer to it is "yes, but, maybe." Of course, there's a bit of context and nuance to go along with that answer. That's why I put together a little visual guide to figuring out which pictures found online can be used in your classroom projects.

An image of the guide is included below, the guide can be [seen here as a simple website](#), and people who are subscribed to my newsletter received an email earlier this week with a PDF copy of the guide.

Of course, a bit of context can go a long way in helping to understand the nuance of using pictures found on the web.

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## Yes:

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Obviously, pictures that you captured and that you own can be used in your projects. Pictures that are in the public domain can also be used in your projects. Generally speaking, those are pictures that were taken as part of a government-funded project, pictures for which the copyright has expired, and pictures that the photographer released into the public domain (like most of those found on sites like [Unsplash](https://www.unsplash.com)).

## But:

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Pictures that have a Creative Commons license can be used in your projects if you follow the rules that correspond to the Creative Commons licenses attached to the pictures. The rules vary from license to license and you can find them all [here](#). But at a minimum you will need to give proper attribution to the photographer and host of the image.

## Maybe:

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You may be able to use a picture that is copyrighted if you can legitimately claim a Fair Use of it. It's important to keep in mind that using it for a classroom project doesn't automatically qualify it for a Fair Use exemption (at least under U.S. law). Richard Stim at Stanford University offers some [good advice about determining if your use is a Fair Use](#). He also has recently updated [his book on the same topic](#).

## How to Correctly Use Google Images

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The first thing that all students and teachers should know about Google Images is that it's an image search engine, it is not a host of the images that it displays. Second, by default, Google Images serves up results from any website that hosts an image that matches your search term (sometimes it's a very loose match). Third, while you can use the filters in Google Images to refine results to only Creative Commons licensed images, you still need to click through to the image source to verify whether or not you can actually use the image. For a visual explanation of this, watch [How to Correctly Use Google Images](#).

# How to Correctly Use Google Images



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/mfMNy64XKyo>

After last week's newsletter a lot of folks asked if they could still take my Animated Explanations course. The course is now set-up so that you can start it at any time. [Learn more and register here!](#)