

We use cookies on our website to provide you with the best possible user experience. Disabling these cookies may prevent our site from working efficiently. To find out more about our cookies read our [privacy policy](#).



How long does copyright protection last?

Copyright protection for literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work lasts for the life of the author and continues after the author's death for **70 years** from the end of the calendar year in which the author died with the exception that where such works are computer generated, the protection only lasts for **50 years** from the end of the year in which they are made.

In this context, computer generated means works generated by a computer in circumstances such that no human author was responsible. For example, it does not cover works created using word processing software, but is likely to cover systems for which the user merely needs to hit "Start" to have the computer create the work.

Copyright protection for a typographical arrangement of a published edition expires **25 years** from the end of the calendar year in which the edition was first published.

For films, copyright expires **70 years** from the end of the calendar year in which the last to die of the principal director, the author of the screenplay, the author of the dialogue, and the composer of the music (created for and used in the film) dies.

For sound recordings, copyright lasts for **50 years** from the end of the calendar year in which it was (1) made, (2) published or (3) made available for the public.

For broadcasts, copyright lasts for **50 years** from the end of the calendar year in which the broadcast was made.

Copyright in unpublished archives and manuscripts is complex and the rights one has vary depending upon when the work in question was made.

©2011 Jane Secker, adapted for use at York St. John University