

COPYRIGHT

IN A NUTSHELL FOR BEGINNERS

1. DEFINITION OF COPYRIGHT

Intellectual property protection is divided into two areas: **copyright** and **industrial property protection**. A common feature of both branches is that they protect the creator of a creative, unique intellectual work. Within the field of intellectual property, copyright fundamentally ensures the protection of individual, original creations in literature, science, and art ("works"). Copyright is regulated by the Copyright Act (<https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99900076.tv>).

According to the [Hungarian Intellectual Property Office](#): "Copyright protects literary, scientific, and artistic creations, as well as—through so-called related rights—performances associated with their use."

One of the fundamental goals of copyright is to encourage intellectual creation. In this spirit, it recognizes moral and economic rights in favor of the author."

2. NATURE AND DURATION OF COPYRIGHT

Copyright belongs to the **natural person** who created the work (the **author**)—that is, the person whose activity resulted in the creation of the work. If a work is the result of the creative efforts of multiple people, the copyright associated with that work belongs to all of them jointly.

Copyright consists of moral rights, which are **non-transferable** to any other person. However, the right of **reproduction**—and thus the right of **publication**—can be licensed or transferred for a specific period.

A work is protected by copyright until **December 31st of the 70th year** following the author's death. After the author passes away, the copyright belongs to their natural or designated heirs until this 70-year period expires. The 70-year protection period is calculated from the first day of the year following the author's death (or in the case of joint works, from the first day of the year following the death of the last surviving co-author). After this, the work enters the **public property**, meaning it can be published freely by anyone, including via **Open Access**. However, the work remains the author's intellectual product and **cannot be published under another author's name**.

On certain works—or even on photos and diagrams used within them—the copyright holder and the starting year are indicated by the **copyright © symbol**. Such works may only be used with the **permission** of the **rights holder**, to the extent specified in the agreement made with them.

3. COPYRIGHT IN SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING

Scientific publications are typically the joint **intellectual products of multiple authors**. Authorship is divided based on their agreement—usually equally. In the life sciences, the first, last, and **corresponding authors** hold high-priority roles.

Every author holds copyright protections, including the right to withdraw from publication, leave the author group, or retract the paper. The **corresponding author** manages the publication's copyright matters.

Contributors who participate in the research but do not meet the criteria for authorship (and thus hold no copyright) are mentioned in the **Acknowledgements** section.

Upon publication, authors **sign a contract with the publisher**, granting it exclusive publication rights for a specific period. This agreement may **restrict** the authors' right to make manuscript versions available via Open Access for a certain time and may specify the platforms where this is permitted.

A **patent** is a unique type of publication that falls under both copyright and **industrial property protection**.

4. USE OF OTHERS' WORKS

A key characteristic of scientific publications is **citation** (referencing). By citing, authors indicate that a specific scientific result, idea, or content (e.g., a figure) has been adopted from another author's work. In scientific publishing, such adoption and citation **do not require the original authors' permission**, except for specific content marked with a separate copyright notice.

5. PLAGIARISM AND OTHER COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENTS

Plagiarism is the **theft of ideas**: presenting another author's work, excerpt, idea, or result as one's own. It is condemned by the scientific community and strictly sanctioned by the university according to the [Code of Studies and Examinations](#). To detect it, universities increasingly use specialized databases and **plagiarism-detection software**.

It is also considered plagiarism if a work does not appear under the actual author's name (**ghostwriting**). This occurs when an author agrees, typically for payment, to let another person claim their work. In Hungary, misconduct related to thesis writing can lead to **criminal charges**.

Plagiarism also occurs if a **citation is accidentally omitted**. There are numerous other types of plagiarism; for more details, see the figure below.



Source: <https://www.turnitin.co.uk/instructional-resources/plagiarism-spectrum-2-0>
(Accessed: 2026.01.30.)

A **crucial requirement for citation** is that the referenced work must be closely related to the specific context of the citing text. Citing in the wrong place or referencing an inappropriate work also violates copyright, as the original work is being misused. In cases of erroneous, faulty, misplaced, or redundant citations (**padding**), the author of the cited work may request a rectification.

This category also includes **manipulation**: when a citing author **changes** parts of the adopted data or ideas—whether through accidental error or intentional falsification—even if the source is otherwise correctly cited.