

## WHAT IS THE PUBLIC DOMAIN?

The Public Domain is the repository of all works that, for whatever reason, are not protected by copyright. As such, they are free for all to use without permission. These include:

### Originally Non-copyrightable

Items include: Ideas, Facts, Titles, Names, Short phrases, Blank forms

### Lost Copyright

Works that previously had copyright protection, but lost that protection due to pilot error. While it is all but impossible to lose copyright protection under today's laws, previous statutory schemes have not been so generous. For example, all works published before January 1, 1978, that did not contain a valid copyright notice may be considered to be in the public domain. Example: *Night of the Living Dead*.

### Expired Copyright

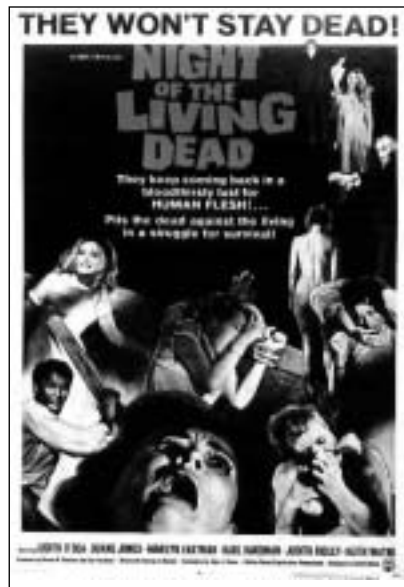
Examples: Shakespeare's plays, folk tales such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and many, many more classic works of literature and art: works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Dickens, the Brontes, Thoreau, Virginia Wolfe, etc.

### Government Documents

Federal documents and publications are not copyrighted, and therefore are considered to be in the Public Domain. If you obtain a government document from the net, you are free to copy or distribute the document.

### Works Granted to the Public Domain

Copyrightable works may also enter the public domain if the copyright owner grants the work to the public domain.



*Night of the Living Dead* fell into the public domain after its producer-director forgot to include a copyright notice. Since 1978, however, works no longer need to include such a notice to merit copyright protection.