

What Goes on a Copyright Page?

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/what-goes-on-a-copyright-page/>

This entry is part 4 of 5 in the series [Writing Terms](#)

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Every manuscript and every storybook mock-up requires a copyright page of one particular sort or another. So let's take a look at what manner of information should go there, when it should or shouldn't and why.

Every week, a handful of writers send me copies of their manuscripts or storybooks to either give feedback or request a review. What I very often find missing is the copyright page, something that should really never happen.

Now that many people are starting to self-publish their stories without knowing much about the publishing business, there are even published books on the market with no demarcation for story or artwork ownership.

To be absolutely clear, a copyright notice isn't actually necessary from a legal point of view. It's simply understood by law that any story is automatically copyrighted as soon as it comes into existence. But – there is a but.

(For specifics on the [Types of Copyrights, go here.](#))

If someone should claim that your story infringes upon a product they have put on the market, then formally dating your copyrighted material becomes important. **It's important if you want to protect**

your right to continue selling copies of your own work, and to do so without paying someone else any fees for compensation.

Getting in Trouble: it could happen to anyone.

This sort of legal nightmare isn't likely to happen, but it could happen. Several years ago, I created a small line of products on Cafepress. I still sell through that portal, because every so often I make another sale. It's nice.

One day, I got a letter from a lawyer, instructing me that I must remove this one particular product line from my shop or they would sue me. I was initially indignant and offended. "How ridiculous!" I couldn't believe anyone would claim that I had ripped-off their work.

I did not knowingly create an image that was similar to someone else's, but - well, I did. Their work was formally protected and mine wasn't. I had no alternative, no choice. I deleted my product line and that was that. Fortunately, I wasn't forced to pay over any royalties I had made.

About Manuscripts: don't forget to be professional.

Even if for no other reason than to be more professional in the way you present your work, you should note that your work is protected by copyright and that it belongs to you.

In a manuscript, one that you submit to an editor or agent, the copyright is simply noted on the Title Page, usually at the lower right end of that page.

If your manuscript is only a few pages long and doesn't warrant a formal title page, then the copyright is something you can have noted down in the footer.

For an illustrated storybook mock-up?

If you're preparing for a pitch session or a meeting with someone in the publishing business, your mock-up requires a copyright page. It won't have absolutely everything that a published book should have, but enough.

Either on the front of the first page or on the backside of the first page is where your copyright information should be. It's the first bit of information in your mock-up and it should include this information:

Copyright © The Year Your Full Name.

All rights reserved.

Also by Your Full Name:

A Title in italics, the publisher's name, year it was released. (Keep adding to this list!)

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The Full Mailing Address of the author
Including zip code and country
Author's website(s)
Author's phone number
Author's email address.

Notice that this almost looks like a CV, or the first page of a Resume.

What about self-publishing?

If you're publishing your own story, you should include this paragraph or some variant of it:

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

This simple paragraph, which we so often see in books, makes it very clear that no one should photocopy or voice record or distribute your book without permission first. But **that means you also need to make it possible for people to ask for your permission**. Provide a mailing address and other methods of being reached.

Instead of listing the author's address (as you would for a mock-up), you should list the address you wish to use for your publishing business. It could be a P.O. Box.

You don't need to provide a phone number, but you should absolutely provide a website and email address.

Another Bit of Something Important

If there are certain things in the storybook that are [Hot Objects](#), any sort of visuals that will be used throughout your book series, then you should probably include small panels with these special items along the bottom of your Copyright Page.

It underscores your intention to protect the story and the iconic images you've created for that story.

Your Copyright Page shouldn't be scary – at least, not for an illustrated storybook. But it should be clear and informative. If you want more ideas about what to include on that page, just look at what you've got on your own bookshelves. There are plenty of examples there.

What about you? Are you working on a storybook and aren't sure if you want to self-publish or not? What are your concerns/reservations? Write below, let me know – or just send me an email. I'm here to help.

If you're interested in finding out more about creating and crafting storybooks, sign up for my newsletter. I'll send high quality information right to you, every week.

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Keep creating, no matter what.

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