

How to Find Royalty-Free Images (and other kinds of free-to-use content) Using Your Search Engine

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(These instructions reference the Google search engine)

1. Select “Settings” (on the bottom right corner of the main Google search page).
2. Select “Advanced Search.”
3. Enter the description of the kind of work you want to search for. (For example, if you wanted to find a picture of a monkey, you’d search for the term “monkey.” The advanced search gives you more options for refining your search terms but you can also make it as general as you would in a typical Google search.)
4. Find the “usage rights” menu option (towards the bottom of the page) and choose the one that best suits your purpose. (For a high school student publication when you are intending to use the work as is, “free to use or share” is probably a sufficient. Obviously, if you are intending to alter the work, you’d want to choose “free to use share or modify.” There is some debate about whether using works in a non-profit school publication that includes paid advertising is a “commercial” use. If your publication accepts ads, the safest bet is to search for works that are “free to use or share, even commercially”)
5. Hit the “Advanced Search” button, and voila! If you want only images, select the images results only. Or if you only want video, select video results only.

Remember that once you find a work you would like to use as a result of this search process, **you must go to the page the work appears on and read carefully the terms of the license the copyright owner has given.** If the owner requires attribution, for example, you must attribute it in the way the owner requests. If you don’t follow the terms of the license, you could end up infringing the copyright and be held accountable.

Do you have more questions about how copyright applies to you as a student journalist or student media adviser? Contact the Student Press Law Center (www.splc.org) for more information.