



# In answer to your query

DRAMATIC WORKS: SCRIPTS, PANTOMIMES, AND CHOREOGRAPHY

FL-119

Types of published or unpublished dramatic works that may be submitted for registration include choreography, pantomimes, plays, treatments, and scripts prepared for cinema, radio, and television. These works may be with or without music.

Generally, dramatic works such as plays and radio or television scripts are works intended to be performed. Dramatic works usually include spoken text, plot, and directions for action. Because of misconceptions about copyright registration for radio and television presentations, the following points require emphasis:

- The title of a program or series of programs cannot be copyrighted.
- The general idea or concept for a program is not copyrightable. Copyright will protect the literary or dramatic expression of an author's idea but not the idea itself.
- Registration for a particular script applies only to the copyrightable material in that script; "blanket" registration for future scripts or for a series as a whole is not available. (However, an unpublished collection of material may be registered with one application.)

Choreography and pantomimes are also copyrightable dramatic works. Choreography is the composition and arrangement of dance movements and patterns usually intended to be accompanied by music. As distinct from choreography, pantomime is the art of imitating or acting out situations, characters, or other events. To be protected by copyright, pantomimes and choreography need not tell a story or be presented before an audience. Each work, however, must be fixed in a tangible medium of expression from which the work can be performed.

To register a claim in a dramatic work, submit the following to the Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20559-6000:

- 1 A completed and signed Form PA;
- 2 A nonrefundable filing fee of \$30\* made payable to the Register of Copyrights; and
- 3 If unpublished, one copy of the work; if published, two complete copies of the best edition of the work:
  - for a script, the copy may be a manuscript, printed copy, a film video recording, or a phonorecord;
  - for a pantomime, the work may be embodied in a film or video recording or be precisely described in text or on a phonorecord;
  - for choreography, the work may be embodied in a film or video recording or be precisely described on any phonorecord or in written text or in any dance notation system such as Labanotation, Sutton Movement Shorthand, or Benesh Notation.

All the elements must be submitted **in the same package or envelope**. Registration of the work is normally effective on the day all the material is received in the Copyright Office in acceptable form, although your certificate of registration may not be mailed until 4–5 months after receipt of your submission.

Sincerely yours,

Register of Copyrights

\* Copyright Office fees are subject to change. For current fees, please check the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov), write the Copyright Office, or call (202) 707-3000.

## How Long Does Copyright Registration Take?

A copyright registration is effective on the date the Copyright Office receives all required elements in acceptable form, regardless of the length of time it takes to process the application and mail the certificate of registration. The length of time required to process an application varies, depending on the amount of material received.

You will receive no acknowledgment that your application for copyright registration has been received (the Office receives more than 500,000 applications annually), but you may expect:

- A letter, telephone, or email call from a Copyright Office staff member if further information is needed; *and*

- A certificate of registration to indicate the work has been registered, or if the application cannot be accepted, a letter explaining why it has been rejected.

You might not receive either of these until approximately 4–5 months after submission.

If you want to know when the Copyright Office received your material, send it via registered or certified mail and request a return receipt.

For further information, write:

*Library of Congress  
Copyright Office  
Information Section, LM-401  
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000*

## Application Forms

If you need additional application forms for copyright registration, call (202) 707-9100 at any time. Leave your request as a recorded message on the Copyright Office Forms and Publications Hotline. Please specify the kind and number of forms you need. If you have general information questions and wish to talk to an information specialist, call (202) 707-3000, TTY (202) 707-6737.

You may also photocopy blank application forms; *however*, photocopied forms submitted to the Copyright Office must be clear, legible, on a good grade of 8½-inch by 11-inch white paper suitable for automatic feeding through a scanner/photocopier. The forms should be printed, preferably in black ink, head-to-head so that when you turn the sheet over, the top of page 2 is directly behind the top of page 1. **Forms not meeting these requirements will be returned.**

All Copyright Office application forms are available from the Copyright Office Website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov). They may be downloaded and printed for use in registering or renewing a claim to copyright.

You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer to view and print the forms. The free Adobe Acrobat Reader may be downloaded from Adobe Systems Incorporated through links from the same Internet site at which the forms are available.

Print application forms head-to-head (top of page 2 is directly behind the top of page 1) on a single piece of good quality, 8½-inch by 11-inch white paper. To achieve the best quality copies, use a laser printer.

Copyright Office circulars, forms, and other information are also available from the Copyright Office website.

Copyright Office circulars and announcements are available via fax. Call (202) 707-2600 from any touchtone telephone. Key in your fax number at the prompt and the document number of the item(s) you want to receive by fax. The item(s) will be transmitted to your fax machine. If you do not know the document number of the item(s) you want, request that a menu be faxed to you. You may order up to three items at a time. Note that copyright application forms are *not* available by fax.