



Unpublished Works in the U.S

Type of Work	Copyright Term	What was in the public domain in the U.S. as of January, 2006 ²
Unpublished works	<i>Life of the author + 70 years.</i>	Works from authors who died before 1936
Unpublished anonymous and pseudonymous works and works made for hire (corporate authorship)	<i>120 years from date of creation.</i>	Works created before 1886.
Unpublished works created before 1978 that were published after 1977 but before 2003	<i>Life of the author + 70 years of 31 December 2047, whichever is greater.</i>	Nothing. The soonest the works can enter the public domain is 1 January 2048.
Unpublished works created before 1978 that were published after 31 December 2002	<i>Life of the author + 70 years.</i>	Works of authors who died before 1935.
Unpublished works when the death date of the author is not known	<i>120 years from date of creation.</i>	Works created before 1886.

² A 1961 Copyright study found that fewer than 15% of all registered copyrights were renewed, and for books the figure was even lower - only 7%. A good guide to investigating the copyright and renewal status of published work is Samuel Demas and Jennie L. Brogdon's "Determining Copyright Status for Preservation and Access: Defining Reasonable Effort" in the October 1997 issue of Library Resources and Technical Services, volume 41, issue 4.