

The idea for a game is not protected by copyright. The same is true of the name or title given to the game and of the method or methods for playing it.

Copyright protects only the particular manner of an author's expression in literary, artistic, or musical form. Copyright protection does not extend to any idea, system, method, device, or trademark material involved in the development, merchandising, or playing of a game. Once a game has been made public, nothing in the copyright law prevents others from developing another game based on similar principles.

Some material prepared in connection with a game may be subject to copyright if it contains a sufficient amount of literary or pictorial expression. For example, the text matter describing the rules of the game, or the pictorial matter appearing on the gameboard or container, may be registrable.

To register the copyrightable portions of a game, you must send the Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 101 Independence Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20559-6000, the following elements *in the same envelope or package*:

1. A completed application form. If your game includes any written element, such as instructions or directions, we recommend indicating "Literary work," which can be used to register all copyrightable parts of the game, including any pictorial elements. When the copyrightable elements of the game consist predominantly of pictorial matter, we recommend indicating "Visual arts work."
2. A nonrefundable filing fee ([Current Fees](#))
3. A deposit of the material to be registered. The deposit requirements will vary depending on whether the work has been published at the time of registration.

If the game is *published*, the proper deposit is one complete copy of the work. If, however, the game is published in a box larger than 12 x 24 x 6 inches (or a total of 1,728 cubic inches) then identifying material must be submitted in lieu of the entire game. (See "identifying material" below). If the game is published and contains fewer than three 3-dimensional elements, then identifying material for those parts must be submitted in lieu of those parts.

If the game is *unpublished*, either one copy of the game or identifying material should be deposited.

*Identifying material* deposited to represent the game or its 3-dimensional parts shall usually consist of photographs, photostats, slides, drawings, or other 2-dimensional representations of the work. The identifying material shall include as many pieces as necessary to show the entire copyrightable content of the work, including the copyright notice if it appears on the work. All pieces of identifying material other than transparencies must be no less than 3 x 3 inches in size, and not more than 9 x 12 inches, but preferably 8 x 10 inches. At least one piece of identifying material must, on its front, back, or mount, indicate the title of the work and an exact measurement of one or more dimensions of the work.

For further information on registration, see [SL-35](#). For further information on copyright, deposit requirements, and registration procedures, see Circular 1, [Copyright Basics](#).