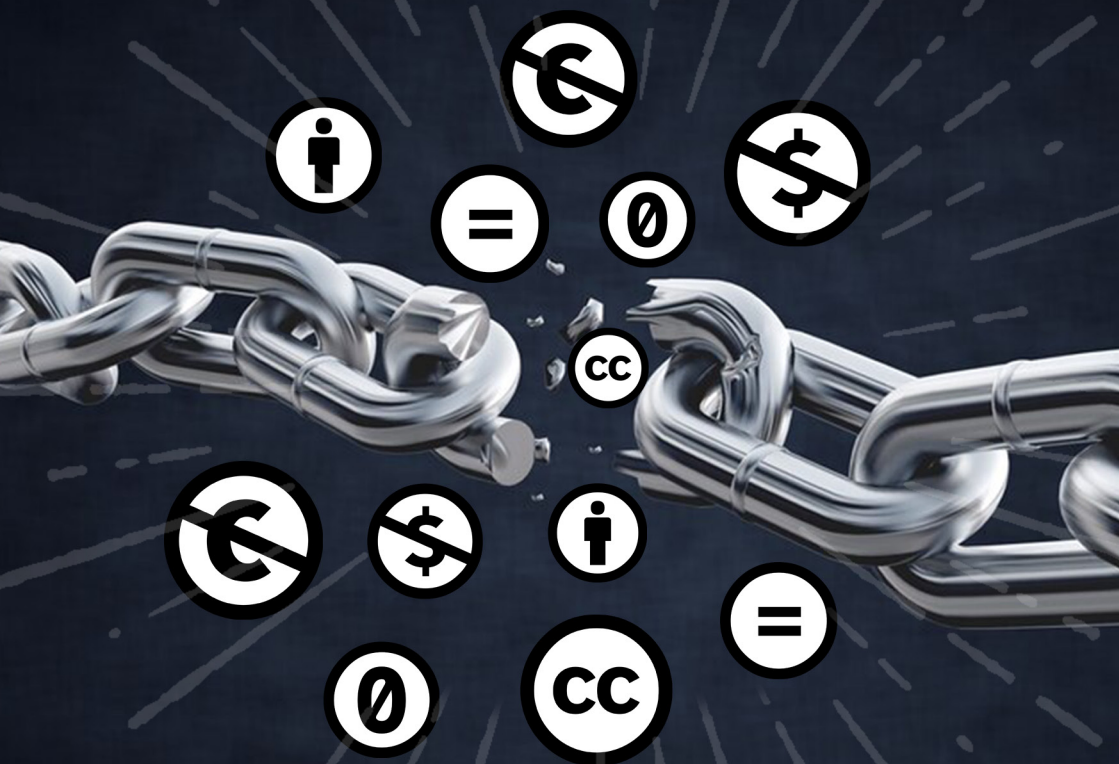


# LEARNING ABOUT OPEN LICENSING



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[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0  
International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



# Introduction

The AfLIA / OER Africa WhatsApp was created on 27th July, 2021 by Dr. Tony Lelliot of OER Africa. The group was initially meant to be a platform where participants (librarians) of a pilot training on Open content could interact and engage one another on the three Learning Pathways taught them by OER Africa. Gradually, the group has been transforming into a growing Community of Practice (CoP) on OER where resources are shared on open knowledge and how to advocate for, promote, and drive the concept and practice in the African library sector.

The participants understand that discussions about OER in the continent have largely excluded librarians. They are gearing up not just to be part of the discussions in Africa but globally, too, and, if possible, to get seats at the table on issues concerning OER. They are also aware that librarians in other climes are stretching librarianship as a profession and now occupy positions such as Scholarly Communications Librarian, OER Liaison Librarian, etc. The group is interested in getting African librarians ready to occupy such positions and more.

The personas in the comic strip do not all have names. It was debated in the Group whether to name them or not. Some opined that it was not important to give them names. Others were of the view that anonymity breeds 'naughtiness'! A hybrid approach was agreed on – some of the personas are named, while some are not. The Group had translated the UNESCO OER logo into their local languages from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. It was thus natural to use names from these countries in the strip. Amani is a female name and means 'Peace' in Kiswahili which is spoken in most parts of East Africa with slight variations. Kofi is a male name from Ghana and means a son born on Friday. Adebimpe is a female Yoruba name from Nigeria. It is a name associated with royalty and means 'the crown gave birth to me perfectly/completely'.

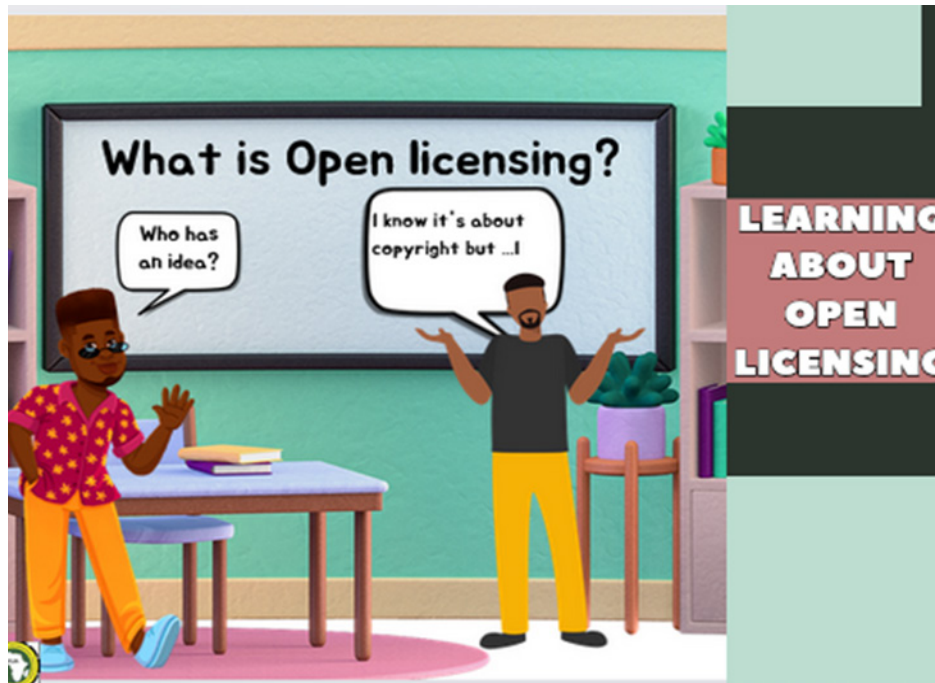
This comic strip was first shared in the AfLIA/OER Africa WhatsApp group. The strip on Open Licensing uses personas in a classroom – the instructor and the students, who are adults and probably attending part-time classes as part of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD), programme. It was meant to break down Open licensing for them as librarians who may need to understand the concept layer by layer so that they can easily explain it to their user communities who wish to know about the concept and then drive the practice in their different institutions and communities. The strip is also meant to serve as background information that will lead librarians to a better understanding of ***The UNESCO OER Recommendation and Open Knowledge: An Overview for African Librarians***

Nkem E. Osuigwe PhD  
Human Capacity Development & Training,  
AfLIA  
10th July, 2023

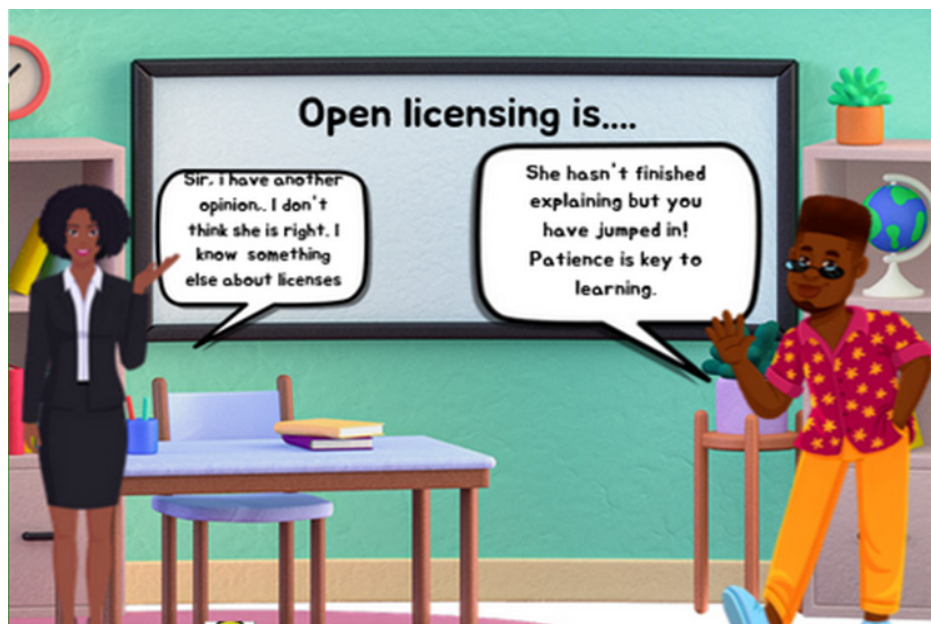


# THE FIRST LESSON...



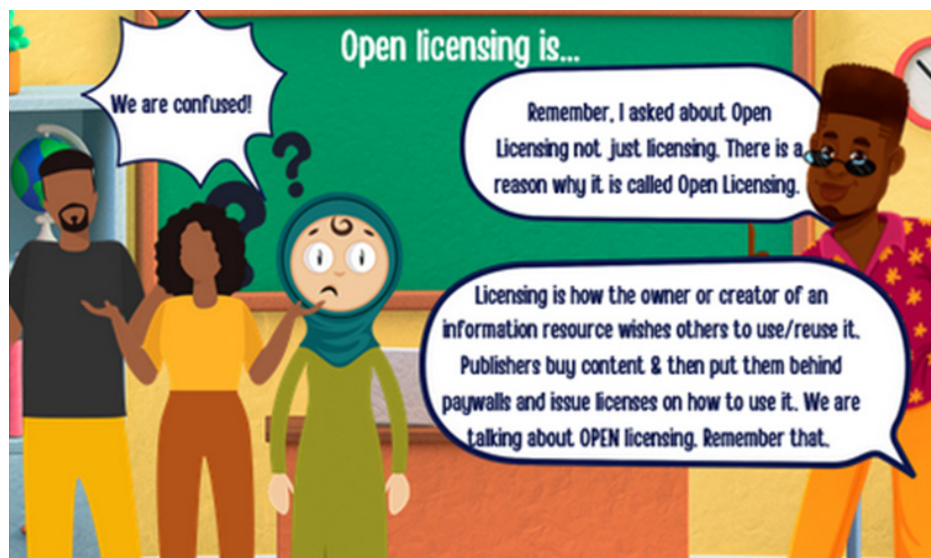


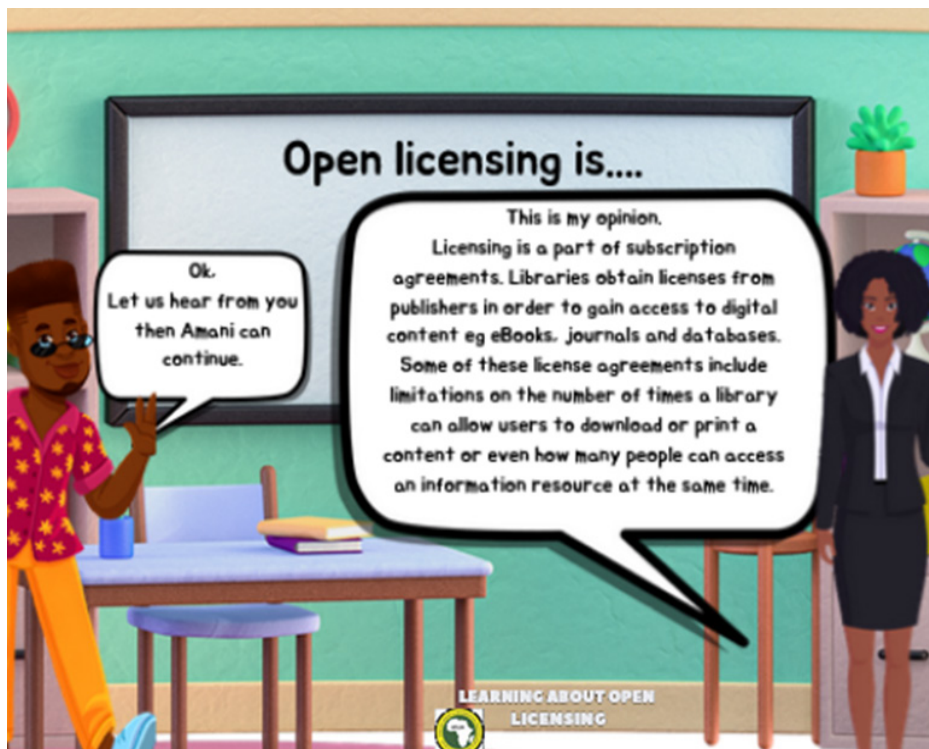






**Note:** Everyone has a right to express their opinions especially when learning. Asking questions or expressing our thoughts helps to 'out' the 'wrong ideas' about what is being taught. It is part of the unlearning process that will drive learning and/or unlearning.





**Note:** There is a critical point here. Licenses are how the owner or creator of an information resource or an artwork, in whatever format, wishes the content he/she created to be used or reused. When publishers buy or take over the intellectual work of an author/creator, it now becomes theirs and they issue licenses that stipulate out how such content can be used or distributed. The licenses may be highly restrictive and may include conditions about simultaneous use of the resources, photocopying etc.

This is vastly different from open licensing.

The important thing is to understand that licenses within the knowledge ecosystem are all about permissions/restrictions from the author/creator of an information resource on how to use their intellectual or artistic work.





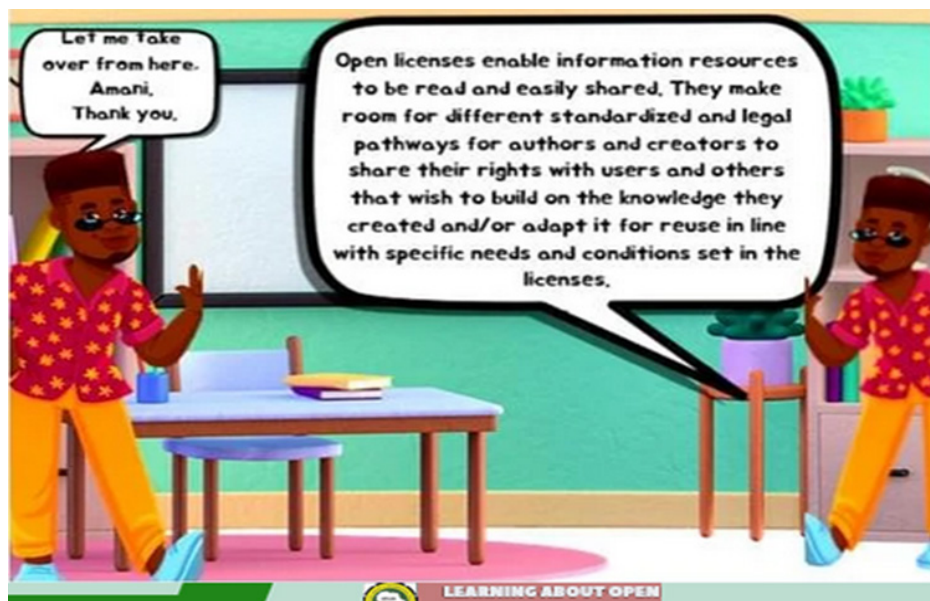




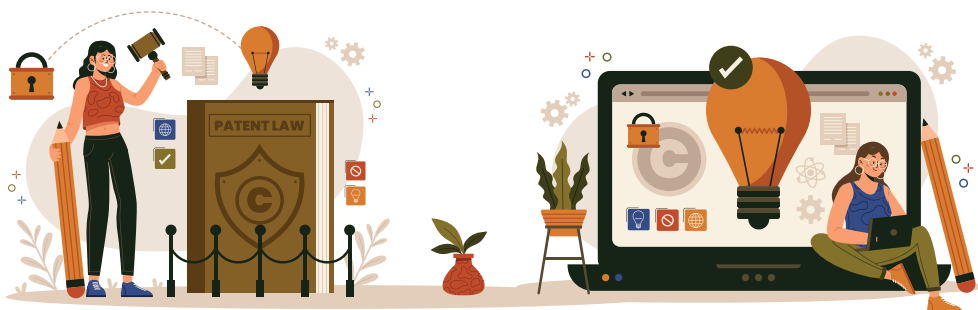
**Note:** Copyright? Open Licenses? What's the connection?

Open licenses do not replace copyright, rather they provide flexibility and standardized legal pathways for people to use the intellectual property of others in different ways other than just to access or read the resources.

The core principle behind open licenses may be 'knowledge as a public good'. When people understand that knowledge is necessary for sustainable development, that altruism should underpin intellectual 'property' rather than pecuniary gratification, then open licenses are the way to go. Open licenses also help build the intellectual capital of creators/authors as more people gain access and use the knowledge created to bring forth more knowledge.



**Note:** Open licenses have different permissions and conditions.



**ANOTHER  
DAY IN CLASS,  
AFTER THE  
SALLAH  
BREAK...**



## AFTER THE SALLAH BREAK...

It's been a long Sallah break!

Can someone remind us where we stopped the last time?

You taught us how Open licenses enable information resources to be read and easily shared.

Can I say something, Sir?

## AFTER THE SALLAH BREAK...

Thanks, Kofi.  
Yes, Amani, please go on.

You also said that they open licenses have conditions attached to them and that they do not take away the rights of the authors.

You also said that they are pathways for authors and creators to share their rights with users and other authors/creators



I am going to start writing on the board now. Pay close attention. Raise your hand if you need to ask a question

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Let's get some general things settled first.

- Copyright is applied automatically to any original work so far as it possesses a 'minimal degree of creativity'.
- The original work must be "fixed in [a] tangible medium, of expression". This implies that the work must be perceivable and recorded in a format (paper, audio, video, painting, DVD, computer file etc)
- Ideas, titles, names, short phrases or slogans, procedures, methods, processes and works in the public domain cannot be copyrighted

**LEARNING ABOUT OPEN LICENSING**

The comic panel shows the same man from the previous panel speaking to the group. A speech bubble says: "I am going to start writing on the board now. Pay close attention. Raise your hand if you need to ask a question". To the right, a dark purple box titled "GENERAL INFORMATION" contains the text: "Let's get some general things settled first." followed by a bulleted list of copyright facts. At the bottom left, there is a small graphic of a bookshelf and the text "LEARNING ABOUT OPEN LICENSING" next to a circular logo.

**Note:** We are concentrating on Creative Commons as Open Licenses that are mostly used for educational resources and literary works. There are many other types of open licenses especially those used for software programmes that enable them to be used, modified and built on, and also shared.





## Types of Open licenses

Creative Commons (CC) range of licenses are the most widely used open licenses for educational information resources and literary works. The licenses allow the authors or creators as copyright holders (licensors) to still retain their rights and then grant varying usage rights to the public.



LEARNING ABOUT OPEN  
LICENSING

### A little bit of background...

Creative Commons (CC) is a not-for-profit organization. It was founded in 2001.

The main goal of the organization is to assist people to benefit fully from knowledge in order *"to address the world's most pressing challenges and create a brighter future for all"*. This can be achieved through *"better sharing: sharing that is contextual, inclusive, just, equitable, reciprocal, and sustainable"*.

It released its first group of Open licenses in December 2002.

Today, more than 2 billion works including literary works, videos, pictures, audios, educational resources, scientific report and more carry CC licenses.



LEARNING ABOUT OPEN  
LICENSING

## Creative Commons Licenses

There are six different CC license types.

**1. CC BY:** This license allows you to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the information resource in any medium or format, BUT you must give attribution to the author/creator. It also does not restrict commercial use.

Note the logo. BY - is the sign for attribution. We will look for it in all the licenses.



Imagine having educational resources with this type of license! That means that if a teacher in South Africa uploads a lesson note on information literacy, another teacher in Kenya can build on it by adding more examples from her experience and yet another teacher in Gambia can use it as well as add to it or translate it into a local language. **HOWEVER**, the condition is that you must always give attribution to the creator of the resource.



LEARNING ABOUT OPEN  
LICENSING

Please note that CC stands for Creative Commons. Anywhere you see a license that starts with CC, then it is in the suite of licenses from that organization.

BY – stands for attribution. It means that the license requires that you must acknowledge the original author/creator of the intellectual content.

This license is the most permissive of all CC licenses. For instance, if a teacher in Cape Town, South Africa writes a lesson note on information literacy and uses this license to share it online, it has several implications.

- It means another teacher in Kenya can translate the lesson note into Kiswahili or that a teacher in Kumasi, Ghana can build on it and add more examples from his experience or that another teacher from Nigeria can add an audio clip or even a video explaining the concepts in the lesson note.
- The only condition is that the teachers in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria must acknowledge the original author.
- This license does not have any restrictions on whether the content can be used commercially or the license that the adaptations will use. Take note of this.



Open licenses have the potential of making available more quality and current learning materials. It also makes collaborations and the creating of new knowledge possible. This is crucial as the world continues to face daunting development problems. Knowledge is a critical component for developing innovative solutions including technologies for driving development. However, the Global South continues to be shortchanged in this as knowledge of all types is locked behind pay-walls and restrictive technologies. Our teachers continue to recycle old lesson notes created years and years ago as they do not have full access to current best practices, practical processes and research findings in their various disciplines. Thus, young people graduate from tertiary institutions with outdated ideas and almost zero practical skills. For example, electrical engineering graduates in Africa may find it difficult to manufacture chips for fans, computers and phones. Why? No one taught them in school. Again, you may ask, why? The teachers / instructors do not have access to practical knowledge of how it is done! Open license is not a magic bullet, but it can make huge differences in access to knowledge for development in Africa.

A question had arisen when the poster above was shared in the AfLIA/OER Africa WhatsApp group – ***“What does it mean that the author must be attributed?”***

The following answer was given with an example from a book on [www.storyweaver.org.in](http://www.storyweaver.org.in), a site that houses openly licensed storybooks for children.



## Ahuru m onwe m n'anya

Original story [I Love Me](#) by [Pratham Books](#)

Written by [Menaka Raman](#)

Illustrated by [Ekta Bharti](#)

Translated by [Nkem Osuigwe](#) for AfLIA

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#### Story Attribution:

This story: Ahuru m onwe m n'anya is translated by **Nkem Osuigwe**. The © for this translation lies with AFLIA, 2023. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Based on Original story: 'I Love Me', by **Menaka Raman**. © Pratham Books, 2019. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

#### Images Attributions:

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Disclaimer: [https://www.storyweaver.org/terms\\_and\\_conditions](https://www.storyweaver.org/terms_and_conditions)



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Imagine how African authors/creators can become known and acknowledged all over the world as they begin to share their content using open licenses. Think of how libraries can increase their e-resources stock when they tap into the practice of open licensing! Nevertheless, always remember that attribution is a must!





## 2. CC BY-SA

**Creative Commons Licenses**

**2. CC BY-SA:** This license also gives users the same rights as the CC BY but there's a difference in how you can share the work.

**CC BY-SA**  
BY – Credit must be given to the creator  
SA – Adaptations must be shared under the same terms

So if all the teachers in different countries create new versions of the lesson note by the South African teacher & this license was used, it means that as they are sharing it, it must be with the same license too - SA- Share Alike. Remember, the first license CC BY did not stipulate this!

CC BY SA

LEARNING ABOUT OPEN LICENSING

This license is almost the same with CC BY but an additional condition has been added.

Notice the new acronym..

**CC** – Creative Commons

**BY** – Must be attributed to the original author/creator

**SA** – Share Alike

If an author in Sierra Leone shares his book online and inputs the license as CC BY-SA, another author in Senegal can translate it into French, another one in Malawi can add a video clip while another author can download it and turn into a screen play. The condition? The new adaptation must be shared under the same license of CC BY-SA and must be attributed to the original author. That is a clear restriction.

Remember, each license has its own characteristics and condition(s). Once you understand the acronyms then you can tell the different restrictions/permissions.

### 3. CC BY-SA-NC

Notice the different acronym - NC. It means that any information resource with this license can not be used for commercial purposes. That means you cannot adapt or remix the resource and then publish to sell!

**Creative Commons Licenses**

3. **CC BY-NC:** This license introduces something else. Look at the logo. The 1st 2 licenses do not have it. It means you cannot use the information resource for commercial purposes.

**BY** - Credit must be given to the creator

**NC** - Only noncommercial uses of the work are permitted

CC BY NC

LEARNING ABOUT OPEN LICENSING

A new acronym has been introduced in this license – NC.

**NC** – Non-Commercial

The first two licenses CC BY and CC BY-SA did not specify on commercial usage of information resources. However, this one specifies that first;

**CC** – it is a Creative Commons license

**BY** – attribution is necessary

**NC** – the original work and any adaptations or derivatives must not be used for commercial purposes or for pecuniary benefits.

This is a specific restriction and the licensor of an information resource with this license, that is the copyright owner, as indicated in the license has legal rights to seek legal redress if perchance one uses his/her work for commercial purposes. Always look at the logo of each Creative Commons license. The icons in the different licenses point to the permissions and restrictions.

#### 4. CC BY-NC-SA

**Creative Commons Licenses**

**4. CC BY-NC-SA:** This license allows users to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, but it has more restrictions

- BY** – Credit must be given to the creator (attribution)
- NC** – Only noncommercial uses of the work are permitted
- SA** – Adaptations must be shared under the same terms

One extra restriction is added in this CC BY-NC-SA. It means that any adaptation from an information resource with this license can not be used for commercial purposes, rather such adaptation must be shared under the same license - CC BY-NC-SA

LEARNING ABOUT OPEN LICENSING

It's getting progressively restrictive! More conditions are being introduced into the open licenses.

This license combines two restrictions/conditions;

**CC** – It is a creative Commons license

**BY** – You must give attribution

**NC** – It is not for commercial purposes

**SA** – Share Alike, that is any derivative and/or adaptations made from the original information resource that has this license must be shared.

Remember, the 4 we have listed so far...

1. CC BY

2. CC BY-SA

3. CC BY-NC

4. CC BY-NC-SA



The common condition of all the CC licenses is that of attribution (BY). Then they have other different characteristics...

SA - Share Alike - that is, any adaptations you make from a book with a license that has SA means that you must use the same license as is in the original book.

NC -Not for commercial purposes

## 5. CC BY-ND

**Creative Commons Licenses**

**5. CC BY-ND:** This license allows people to copy and distribute an information resource only in the original form and attribution must be given to the author/creator. This means that one can use the information resource for commercial or non-commercial purposes, pass it along in the original form but cannot translate such a work or remix it by adding audio or video.

CC BY-ND has the following conditions:

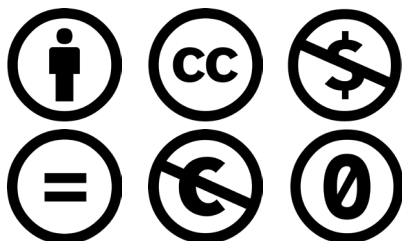
- BY – Credit must be given to the author/creator
- ND – Derivatives or adaptations of the work are not permitted

One extra restriction is added in this CC BY-ND. It means that no adaptation from an information resource with this license is allowed

The infographic includes a visual representation of the CC BY-ND license logo, which consists of the CC logo, a person icon (BY), and an equals sign icon (ND). A cartoon character is shown next to the logo, and a speech bubble explains the ND condition.

This is a tough one! It is an open license but yet one cannot make any adaptation to it. Is it really open then?

It is important to keep your eyes on the icons in the logos.






## 6. CC BY-NC-ND


**Creative Commons Licenses**

6. CC BY-NC-ND: This license allows people to copy and share the information resource with this license but...

- It cannot be used for commercial purposes
- No derivatives or adaptations can be made from the original work
- Attribution must be made to the author

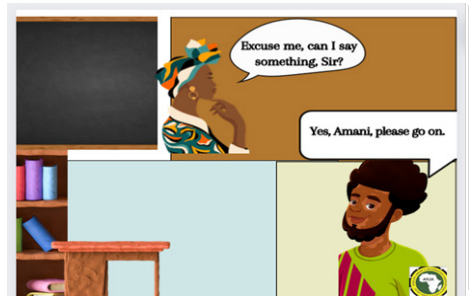
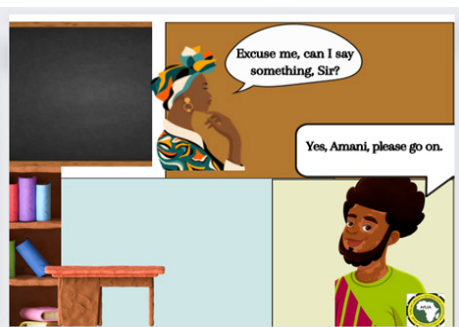
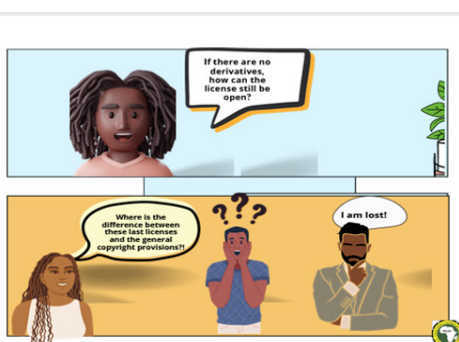


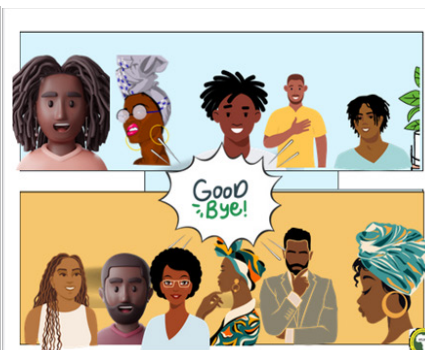
This is the most restrictive CC open license !  
Any questions?



This is the most restrictive CC open license. You cannot remix or adapt or translate any information resource with this license neither can you use it commercially!







## Further Reading

1. Open Definition: Defining Open in Open Data, Open Content And Open Knowledge [<https://opendefinition.org/guide/>]
2. CC: Frequently Asked Questions [<https://creativecommons.org/faq/>]
3. OER Background: Creative Commons (CC) - Licensing and OER [<https://library.fvvc.edu/CreativeCommons/Licenses>]
4. What are Creative Commons and Open Licences? [<https://open.bccampus.ca/what-is-open-education/what-are-creative-commons-and-open-licences/>]
5. What are Open Licenses? [<https://www.yearofopen.org/what-are-open-licenses/>]
6. Creative Commons Version 3.0 Licenses — A Brief Explanation [[https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/Version\\_3](https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/Version_3)]
7. No copyright [ <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/>]
8. Welcome to the Public Domain [<https://fairuse.stanford.edu/overview/public-domain/welcome/>]

## Acknowledgement

All the images of the CC licenses were taken from <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

All the posters were designed with Canva app and is available here - <https://www.canva.com/> Subscription to Canva PRO was made possible by Access Now (<https://www.accessnow.org/>) as part of the package for presenters at the 2023 RightsCon

The question asked on page 15 was raised at the AfLIA/OER WhatsApp group.

The storyline was inspired by the MoU signed by OER Africa and AfLIA to develop a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework for African librarians that will lead them into being the major drivers of the practice of OER in Africa.







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