

Resolution Observing Public Domain Day on January 1, 2019

Whereas for the first time in over 20 years, on January 1, 2019, published works entered the public domain in the United States;

Whereas works published in the United States from 1923, including books, films, and music are now free for all to re-publish, repurpose, and build upon, without permission or fee;

Whereas public domain materials are more available in more editions and formats, cost less, and more likely to be available in print than protected works;

Whereas all creators and authors build on existing culture and knowledge to create new works protected by copyright, thereby advancing the Constitutional purpose of the copyright law to “promote the progress of science and useful arts;

Whereas the U.S. Constitution directs Congress to create a copyright law “for limited times,”

Whereas learning, teaching, and research depend on a robust public domain;

Whereas libraries, archives, museums, historical societies and others can preserve content in the public domain without authorization, ensuring that the cultural record is secured;

Whereas libraries, archives, museums, historical societies and others can rescue public domain materials on the verge of being lost to future generations due to deterioration;

Whereas digitization of public domain works further expands access to content;

Whereas legislation to extend to copyright term was not introduced; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. will celebrate annually Public Domain Day, which places thousands of works published in 1923 in the public domain this year;
2. marks the end of the additional twenty years of protection that retroactively prevented works from entering the public domain; and
3. welcomes the entry of thousands of works to the public domain with each passing year.