



Dramatic Works: Choreography, Pantomimes, and Scripts

FL-119

Types of published or unpublished dramatic works that can be submitted for registration include choreography, pantomimes, plays, treatments, and scripts prepared for cinema, radio, and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 intended to be performed. Dramatic works usually include spoken text, plot, and directions for action.

Choreography and Pantomimes

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.

Categories of dance and nondance movements and sport activities that do not meet subject matter requirements of “choreography” include simple social dances (ballroom, swing, salsa, etc.), exercise routines (aerobic dance, etc.), fight sequences, sport movements (including football plays, soccer positions and movements, karate movements), yoga positions or routines, and cheerleading routines.

Radio and Television Presentations

If you apply to register radio or television presentations, keep the following points in mind:

- The title of a program or a 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 However, an unpublished collection of material can be registered on one application.

Deposit Requirements

Deposit requirements depend on whether a work has been published at the time of registration. If the work is unpublished, send one copy of the work. If the work is published, send two complete copies of the best edition of the work.

- **CHOREOGRAPHY** can be embodied in a film or video recording or be precisely described on a phonorecord, in written text, or in a dance notation system such as Labanotation, Sutton Movement Shorthand, or Benesh Notation.
- **PANTOMIMES** can be embodied in a film or video recording or be precisely described in text or on a phonorecord.
- **SCRIPTS** can be in the form of a manuscript, a printed copy, a film or video recording, or a phonorecord. ©

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