

Generally, if something was published before 1923, it is in the public domain.  
 If it was an unpublished work and the author died over 70 years ago, it is in the public domain.  
 If it was written by an anonymous author over 120 years ago, it is in the public domain. Below are some criteria for different publication years to help you determine whether or not the work you wish to use is in the public domain.

Works created after March 1, 1989 and works created earlier but never published follow the same guidelines. Works published prior to March 1, 1989 are subject to specific rules.

**Works Created After 3/1/1989 and Unpublished Works**

**Author Known or Unknown?**

Known author: copyright lasts 70 years after the author's death. Works from authors who died over 70 years ago are in the public domain.

Anonymous, pseudonymous works & corporate works: copyright lasts for 120 years from the date of creation. Works created over 120 years ago are in the public domain.

Death Date of Author unknown: 120 years from the date of creation. Works created over 120 years ago are in the public domain.

**Works Published Prior to 3/1/1989**

**When was it published?**

**Before 1923**

→ Work is in the public domain due to expired copyrights.

**1923-1963**

→ Published with notice but not renewed: Work is in public domain due to © expiration.

→ Published with notice and was renewed: © expires 95 years after publication date.

**1923-1977**

→ Published without © notice: Work is in the public domain due to failure to comply with required formalities.

**1964-1977**

→ Published with notice: © expires 95 years after publication date.

**1978-3/1/1989**

→ Published without © notice and without registration within 5 years: Work is in the public domain due to failure to comply with required formalities.

→ Published without © notice and with registration within 5 years: © expires 70 years after the death of the author, or (for corporate works) 95 years after the publication or 120 years from the date of creation, whichever expires first.

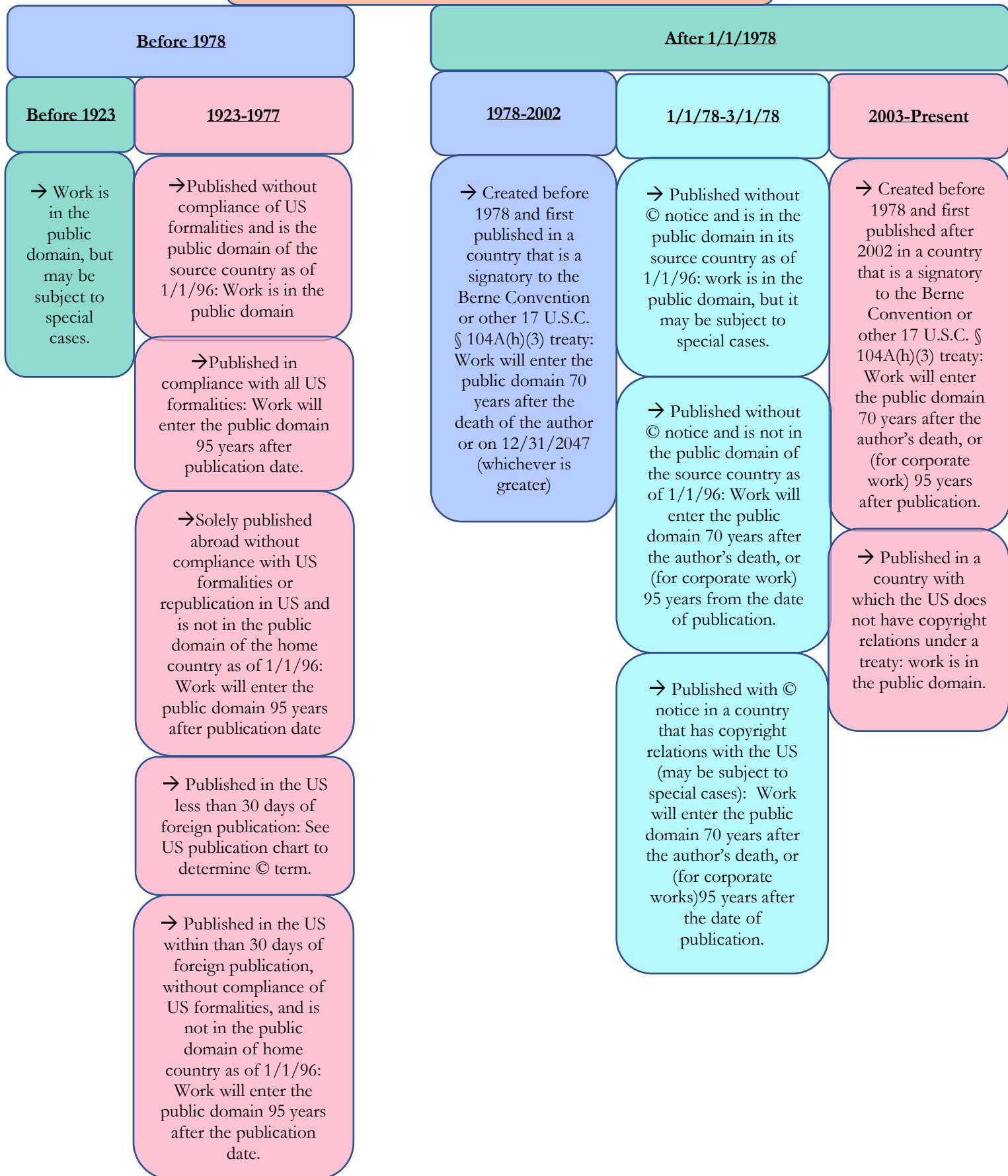
→ Created after 1977 and published with notice: © expires 70 years after the author's death, or (for corporate works) 95 years from publication or 120 years from date of creation, whichever expires first

→ Created before 1978 and 1<sup>st</sup> published with notice: Work will enter the public domain after the term specified above or 12/31/2049, whichever is greater.

**Governmental Works**

→ Works prepared by an officer or employee of the US Government as part of that person's official duties are always in the public domain.

**What if the work I want to use was published outside of the US?**



\*\*\* This chart is intended to be an overview to guide you through determining whether or not the work you wish to use is in the public domain. This is not intended as legal advice nor an exhaustive list. For example, if the work you are wanting to use is printed in a language other than English, there may be other criteria to determine whether or not the work is located in the public domain. The Office of Administration and University Counsel is available for guidance on the use of copyrighted material.