

# The Free Curriculum Project Primer

Peter J. Hutnick

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## 1 What is the Free Curriculum Project?

We want to tell you what the Free Curriculum Project (FCP) is, but we have to explain copyleft first. Copyleft serves as the core idea of the project.

### 1.1 Copyleft

The Free Software Foundation, the author of the license we use, says the following about copyleft (at <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/copyleft.html>):

To copyleft a program, we first state that it is copyrighted; then we add distribution terms, which are a legal instrument that gives everyone the rights to use, modify, and redistribute the program's code or any program derived from it but only if the distribution terms are unchanged. Thus, the code and the freedoms become legally inseparable.

Proprietary software developers use copyright to take away the users' freedom; we use copyright to guarantee their freedom. That's why we reverse the name, changing "copyright" into "copyleft."

This refers specifically to software, but the concepts all translate directly to any copyrighted work.

It is important to understand that all materials contributed to the FCP remain the copyrighted work of the *original author*.

### 1.2 Our Vision

FCP aims to create a truly first rate curriculum and accompanying course materials, and distribute it Freely under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. So the FCP consists of people who spend some time creating a Free set of Kindergarten through High School course materials.

## 1.3 Free?

You might have noticed the unusual capitalization of Free in the previous section. The Free Software community has adopted this colloquialism to mean free as in freedom.

When you see Free, think *liber*, when you see free, think *gratis*. Sometimes we say, “free as in freedom.” We often illustrate the difference by saying, “free as in free speech” as differentiated from “free as in free beer.” We often drop the second free, like:

“Is Internet Explorer<sup>tm</sup> free as in speech?”

“No, but it is free as in beer.”

In speech we often pronounce Free as, “Capital ‘f’ free.”

## 2 How Can I Help?

### 2.1 Time

Anyone with a reasonable command of the English language and even a passing interest in education can help the FCP.

Proofreading has the lowest barriers to entry. We actively seek advice from teachers and parents who homeschool. Anyone who knows (or is willing to learn) L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X and is willing to donate some time can help with assembling documents from unformatted submissions.

We hope to find sources of public domain materials we can use to kick-start the project. We need researchers to track such materials down.

### 2.2 Texts

The single biggest task we face is writing textbooks. Everyone has some topic in which they are particularly interested or skilled. We gladly accept submissions of any scale. If you only have time to write a treatment or an outline, or if you only have the expertise to write a single chapter we will gratefully accept it. You needn’t have a master’s degree. We don’t reject submissions that aren’t masterpieces.

### 2.3 Join Us

If this sounds interesting please visit us at <http://www.nongnu.org/fcp> where you can get the latest information about our project. Becoming a member is easy; subscribe to the mailing list and introduce yourself.

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