CALIFORNIA CURRICULUM COLLABORATIVE

OER 101

What is OER?

"OER" (Open Educational Resources) are licensed text, media, and digital assets that are in the public domain. This means they are freely available to the public, so any user can change and adapt from the original design. This allows for sharing knowledge at a large scale because OER is free. Copyright cancels out the possibilities of sharing knowledge on a large scale because the original content creator controls who can use the content and how they can use it. That's where open licensing on comes in and allows for greater distribution and use of OER content.

How does open licensing work?

To balance the increase of online intellectual property ownership, Creative Commons (CC), a non-profit, developed a set of open copyright licenses. Using these licenses, digital material content creators communicate which rights they reserve and which rights they waive. Open licenses range from the most accommodating, CC-BY, to the most restrictive, no derivatives.

The **CC-BY** license allows the greatest possibility for peer collaboration and the "Five Rs" (see below). CC-BY lets the creator maintain his or her copyright, but allows others to download and use the materials as they see fit. CC-BY is best suited for learning communities that emphasize peer interaction and the sharing of information and knowledge.

The **Share-alike** license allows anyone to distribute the original version, but requires that the user give the creator appropriate credit, indicate if any changes were made, and use the same license.

The **Non-commercial** license requires users to obtain permission if they intend to profit from the materials.

The **No derivatives** license allows anyone to copy, distribute, and display original copies of the work. However, if a user wants to modify the original, they must first obtain the creator's permission.

OER's openness allows users to collaboratively create educational resources in online communities through **The 5Rs.** Users have the right to:

- **Retain** – make, own, and control copies of the content
- **Reuse** – use the content in a wide range of ways
- **Revise** – adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself
- **Remix** – combine the original or revised content with other open content
- **Redistribute** – share copies of the original content or revisions or remixes with other people (e.g., give a copy of the content to a colleague)