



F12.3 Computer misuse and the law

Technology and society · GCSE · OCR J277 1.6.1, AQA 8525 3.8, Edexcel
1CP2 5.2.3 · about 15 min

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

What this lesson is about

The Computer Misuse Act 1990, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

- The Computer Misuse Act 1990
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Which law applies?

Questions

5 marks in all

1. Guessing someone's password to read their email breaks which law? [1 mark]
☐ A The Computer Misuse Act 1990
☐ B The Data Protection Act 2018
☐ C The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
☐ D No law
2. Which word is central to the Computer Misuse Act? [1 mark]
☐ A Unauthorised
☐ B Accidental
☐ C Commercial
☐ D Encrypted
3. Copying and selling someone else's program breaks which law? [1 mark]
☐ A The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
☐ B The Computer Misuse Act 1990
☐ C The Data Protection Act 2018
☐ D No law
4. How do you get copyright on a program you wrote? [1 mark]
☐ A It is automatic as soon as you write it
☐ B You must apply and pay a fee
☐ C You must publish it first
☐ D You must register a trademark
5. A penetration tester attacks a company's systems with written permission. Is that an offence? [1 mark]
☐ A No, because the access is authorised
☐ B Yes, all hacking is illegal
☐ C Only if they find a weakness
☐ D Only if they are paid

The task: which law?

Write `which_law(action)` using the rules in the lesson: an action mentioning `password`, `hack` or `malware` is the **Computer Misuse Act 1990**; one mentioning `personal` or `customer details` is the **Data Protection Act 2018**; one mentioning `copy` or `pirate` is the **Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988**; anything else is `no law matched`. Check each action in `actions`, ignoring capital letters, and print `<action>: <law>`. At the end print `unmatched: <n>`.

```
# the two lines every program starts with: the commands, then the robot
from bugbot import *
connect()

actions = [
    "Guessing a teacher's password",
    "Selling customer details to an advertiser",
    "Sharing a pirate copy of a game",
    "Writing your own program",
    "Installing malware on a school PC",
]
```

Plan your program here, then type it in and press Run.



Do it on the robot

www.bugbotlab.com/learn/f12-3-computer-misuse-and-the-law/

The simulator checks it and tells you when it passes. Nothing to install, no account.

Challenges

1. Some actions break two laws. Change the function to return every law that matches, joined by `and`.
2. Is penetration testing illegal? Explain your answer using the word `*unauthorised*`.
3. Why does copyright not need to be applied for, when a patent does?