

Critical Thinking Task – example text and preparation questions 1

EXAMPLE TEXT	EXAMPLE PREPARATION QUESTIONS
<p>In 1964, the French singer and songwriter Serge Gainsbourg released his sixth album entitled 'Gainsbourg Percussions'1. By that time, he was already established as a leading singer and songwriter in France and in Europe and was famous for his beautiful lyrics and for his melodies. He was also starting to be famous for using and mixing different musical styles, such as jazz, mambo, rock and roll and reggae.</p> <p>In this specific album he used Latino, African and Cuban influences. When the album came out, people were amazed by the mix of styles and applauded his creativity. Many even thought he was a genius. The critic Denise Glaser wrote: "The rhythms are not new, but the marriage of the music and words is new. The texts are all his and absolutely fit the music – that is extremely rare."</p> <p>What is less known about this album is that Gainsbourg had in fact stolen three entire songs from another artist, the Nigerian drummer Babatunde Olatunji, who had released an album, 'Drums of Passion', in 1959. He kept the entire melodies of three of Olatunji's songs, copying and recording them note by note and only adding French lyrics. He signed the entire album as his, and Olatunji was never even credited.</p> <p>Whilst Gainsbourg's actions may appal some people, who think taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own is wrong, there are many of us who believe that it is perfectly fair to use other people's work or ideas if you make them your own. A good idea does not belong to anybody. Some also think that all art is copied, and that artists never really invent anything new, but just present it differently. Others point out that when you put something in the public domain, it is bound to be plagiarised, so you should not complain about it. Also, if Gainsbourg used Olatunji's music, surely it means that his music was excellent – so, again, why complain?</p> <p>Since his death, Gainsbourg's music has reached legendary status in France and in the entire world. Nobody really cares anymore that he 'stole' some music from other artists. Indeed, there is no such thing as 'bad' plagiarism in art; the only thing that matters is the success of the songs and the talent of the artist.</p>	<p>Before you start thinking about these questions, make sure you have read through the text carefully and understood it well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Who do you think wrote this passage? Why? Give examples from the text to support your idea.<input type="checkbox"/> Is the author biased? Support your answer by giving 3 specific examples from the text, which illustrate bias or lack of bias.<input type="checkbox"/> What does "legendary status" mean?<input type="checkbox"/> Plagiarism is defined as 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own'. In the last paragraph, the author gives several arguments that people who do not believe that plagiarism is wrong use to support their view. What are they?<input type="checkbox"/> What in your view is the difference between copying and stealing an idea?<input type="checkbox"/> We know that Olatunji later took legal action against Gainsbourg about his songs, and that Gainsbourg eventually lost the trial. Build an argument to defend Olatunji's claim. Give at least 2 arguments.<input type="checkbox"/> Some people say that all new ideas are inspired by previous innovation. Discuss to what extent the prevention of free exchange and use of ideas may inhibit future creativity. Give examples to illustrate your argument.