

BA (Hons) Creative Writing



PCA-1-1CW

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

become what you want to be

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1. UNIT DETAILS

Unit Title:	Text and Context
Unit Level:	1
Unit Reference Number:	AME-4-TCN
Credit Value:	20
Student Study Hours:	150
Contact Hours:	44
Private Study Hours:	105
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):	None
Co-requisite Units (If applicable):	None
Course(s):	
Year and Semester	Year 1, Semester 1
Unit Coordinator:	Dr Karlien van den Beukel
UC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	Room 28B Caxton House vbeukelk@lsbu.ac.uk
Subject Area:	BA (Hons) Creative Writing and BA (Hons) Creative Writing & English
Summary of Assessment Method:	Individual Presentation 30% in Weeks 7/8 Essay worth 70% in Week 13

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

In **Text and Context** we'll introduce you to a variety of literary forms by different writers and explore these writers' varying approaches to the production of creative work. Week by week the unit will explore a particular writer and a literary form – including novels, short stories, poetry, film scripts, graphic novels and plays – and examine the contexts in which specific aspects of their work took place and was critically received. Throughout, you'll be encouraged to reflect upon your own creative practice in relation to the specific writer under discussion.

3. AIMS OF THE UNIT

The aims of this unit are to:

- Help you place your work and the work of established writers in the appropriate critical context
- Introduce relevant critical and theoretical concepts appropriate to analysing literary work
- Explore the construction of an academic essay and introduce conventions of referencing
- Outline appropriate and effective writing strategies

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this unit, you'll be able to:

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate an awareness of different writers' work

- Show an understanding of a variety of critical approaches to creative writing and the context and environment in which writing takes place
- Illustrate an awareness of the critical reception to different writers' work

4.2 Intellectual Skills

- Identify the chief characteristics of specific writers' work
- Place specific writers in a wider cultural and critical context
- Recognise the specific attributes of particular mediums such as television writing, prose, poetry and stage writing and examine the ways in which the writer under discussion exploited those specific attributes

4.3 Practical Skills

- Demonstrate an understanding of proof-reading skills, and offer the ability to apply them

4.4 Transferable Skills

- Demonstrate a critical vocabulary and analytical skills
- Illustrate effective verbal and written communication skills
- Understand practices for composing and evaluating writing

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The pass mark for this unit is 40% overall.

Assessment 1

Presentations. Individually we want you to present a ten-minute reflective explanation of how you write, drawing on the themes and ideas discussed in the course of the **Text and Context** unit (as well as the other two first year units). You can use audiovisual material if you choose, and you can read some of your own material out (but not too much – remember, this is meant to be a *reflective* presentation). The presentations will take place in Weeks 7 and 8 of the unit – you'll be allocated a week for your presentation early in the unit. The presentation is worth 30% of the mark for **Text and Context**.

Assessment 2

Essay. We want you to write a 3,000 word essay exploring one of the writers discussed in the course of the unit. As well as your own critical insights, you should utilise insights from professional commentators (70%). You will clearly need to research your subject in addition to the material covered in the unit and incorporate that material using appropriate referencing and a Bibliography. Assessment 2 is due in Week 13.

6. FEEDBACK

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Portfolios will be returned with feedback and a percentage grade between 0% and 100%. The grade remains provisional until confirmed by the July Examination Board. Any student who would like to discuss their coursework in more detail should make an appointment to see the Unit Co-ordinator.

After your work has been marked by the Lecturer, it is internally moderated by a second member of the teaching team to check that the marking is fair and consistent.

Feedback will normally be given to students 15 working days after the submission of an assignment.

COURSEWORK EXTENSIONS

If you are unable to complete the portfolio by the deadline due to extenuating circumstances, you must follow the following procedure:

- Talk to Dr Colin Harvey Course Director, based in B404, email harveycb@lsbu.ac.uk. If Colin agrees the Extension go to the next stage:
- Get a Late Submission Coursework Form from the Student Information Centre on the 2nd Floor of Borough Road (or download from the web site), complete Part A and ask the Course Director to sign the form agreeing to the extension
- Hand in the form with the coursework on the agreed extension deadline

If you request an extension for medical reasons you must supply a medical certificate. Applying for an extension does not guarantee getting one. The maximum extension of the deadline date is two calendar weeks. Coursework submitted within this extended deadline will be marked in the normal way.

MARKS FOR COURSEWORK SUBMITTED LATE

The maximum marks for any coursework submitted up to two weeks after the deadline date or after an agreed extension is 40%. Coursework submitted more than two weeks after the deadline will be **failed**. The July Examination Board will decide whether the student is to be given the opportunity to redeem failure, provided that the student has submitted a claim for extenuating circumstances which has been accepted by the Board.

Refer to your Course Guide for more information on extenuating circumstances.

7. STUDENT FEEDBACK AND UNIT EVALUATIONS

Students are strongly advised to speak to the lecturer as soon as possible if they have any concerns about the unit. This is the best way to ensure that the lecturer is aware of your concerns immediately and can address them as best as possible. Alternatively, students can see their Course Director.

Once a term, students may ask the student representative to raise specific issues regarding units at the Course Board meetings.

Students will be asked to complete an anonymous unit evaluation in Week 10, 11 or 12. Unit evaluations are an important part of the University's quality assurance systems and provide a valuable mechanism for obtaining student feedback and identifying ways in which the unit can be improved and updated. Unit evaluations are distributed to the Unit Coordinator, Course Director, Head of Department and the Dean of the Faculty.

8. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

8.1 Overview of the Main Content

Text and Context explores the links between creativity and the context in which writers produce their work, be it cultural, social or economic. In the course of twelve weeks we'll look at a disparate group of poets, playwrights, screenwriters and prose writers, and use a variety of critical methodologies to explore their work. The majority of weeks are devoted to a writer and the context in which their writing took place, and what enabled (and hindered) that process.

8.2 Overview of Types of Classes

Most classes will commence with an informal discussion of a given topic. Some time will then be given to writing exercises or to the setting of assignments. This will be followed by a group discussion of students' work.

This unit will use a range of teaching and learning methods, summarised below:

8.3 Seminars - Seminars are a place for learning through the discussion and analysis of texts, which enable students to explore key issues in detail. Seminars are also used for the development of core skills such as effective reading and discussion. Seminars are student-led and all students are expected to participate fully and to come prepared each week with questions and comments on the readings and subject matter. All students will be expected to present individual and group research in seminars. Although not formally assessed, the work done in preparing for seminar presentations is essential for successful completion of the coursework and portfolio.

8.4 Lectures – Lectures provide a critical overview of the subject. Students are expected to take notes.

8.5 Blackboard - This Unit Guide is also available online through Blackboard. To access Blackboard you will need a University IT account. You can register for this as soon as you have your student ID number. All students who have an LSBU computer account will have a Blackboard account automatically. Usernames and passwords for Blackboard will be the same as for other LSBU computer resources. To find out how to activate your IT account and use Blackboard, go to the New Student Checklist at www.lsbu.ac.uk.

8.6 Self managed study - It is essential for the successful completion of this unit that all students acknowledge the responsibility they have for their self-managed learning. Students will be given independent reading, research and other seminar preparation each week. You should aim to spend about 5-6 hours a week reading and preparing for this unit. The more you read, the more substance you can bring to an issue or topic under discussion. **You should always read the core texts and any other material that is given out by the lecturer.** You should also try to seek out secondary works on the core texts and issues and build a foundation of material on which your written work can be based.

It is very easy to procrastinate when it comes to self managed learning. Just thinking about work is wasteful and miserable, and getting stuck in straight away creates genuinely 'free' time when you finish early. To be successful at university, and later in your career, you need to set deadlines for yourself and stick to them. Break tasks up into manageable chunks and make good use of short time slots. Make sure you prioritise your tasks – they could be:

Urgent but not important	Urgent and important
Neither urgent nor important	Important but not urgent

8.7 Effective learners complete tasks from all four boxes every day. If you only complete the urgent tasks, you will create a backlog for the future. In addition, tasks are often done more easily when they are not urgent and can be approached in a more relaxed and creative way. Remember to multi-task – it is often better to start several jobs, even if you don't finish them all, that out all your time and energy into one job.

8.8 For more information on study skills, refer to

- LSBU Learning and Development Centre Core Skills Survival Guide, available online
- LSBU Learning and Development Centre Level 1 book, Don't Panic, available online
- The LSBU Learning and Development Centre online Study Skills materials
- Or visit the Learning Development Centre in Caxton House on Borough Road.

8.9 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

It is vital all students should read the assignments before class, and the core materials are compulsory for this course. Reading leads to well

informed and more provocative discussion. Students are encouraged to write and re-write material for their portfolios throughout the semester rather than leaving it to the last minute. Students are strongly encouraged to submit work for group discussion, to share their own work; receive constructive feedback; and learn from the diverse work they are exposed to.

7.9 Presentation of Portfolios

- Portfolios must be word-processed using one side of the paper only.
- Font size should be 11 or 12 pt.
- All work should be line spaced at 1.5 with enough space in the left and right margins for comments and corrections.
- Carefully proof your work before submission. Make sure that you have answered the question, you have identified the key issues clearly, you have used sufficient examples and references to support your points, the essay is well structured and ideas are appropriately linked, and the style is not too colloquial or flippant. Check the grammar and spelling carefully as errors make your work appear careless and will reduce your overall mark.
- Include a cover page which states your student identity number, your course, the name of the unit, the name of the lecturer, the title of the assignment and the due date.

8.10 Submission of Portfolios

All work must be handed in to the Student Information Centre, Room 266, on the 2nd Floor of Borough Road by the deadline. When you hand in your work you will be asked to fill out a cover sheet and be given a receipt which you must keep. If the office or the lecturer loses your essay, your receipt is proof that you handed it in. It is a good idea to keep your work on disk and as a hard copy.

8.0 Employability

This unit is designed to extend undergraduates' knowledge of professional writing, to explore the processes under which pieces of writing were produced and examine the wider context in which such writing occurred. For individuals seeking jobs in the media, publishing or education such contextual knowledge will make them more marketable as potential employees.

8.11 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PDP)

What is Personal Development Planning (PDP)?

PDP is a structured and supported process undertaken by a student to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational, and career development.

Personal Development Planning is a way of articulating existing principles and practices. Academic tutors have always encouraged students to make progress towards intellectual independence, to become more self-aware, and to plan for and take responsibility for their own development. PDP makes explicit the

presence and value of established processes that are central to learning in Higher Education, and the concept that the dialogue between tutor and tutee supports not only the student's deepening understanding of their subject, but also the student's growing ability to think critically about their own performance and how to improve it.

Why is PDP important?

There are good reasons why you should do PDP, other than the fact that you are required to do so. University is not like school or college as students are expected to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Examining what is expected of you on your programme, and reflecting on where you are in relation to this, increases your chances of success. Participating in PDP can also help you gain an advantage in a competitive job market and equip you with transferable skills for lifelong learning and your chosen career.

The main aims of PDP are, therefore, to help students:

- Become more effective, independent and confident self-directed learners
- Understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context
- Improve their general skills for study and career management
- Articulate their personal, education and career development goals
- Evaluate their progress towards the achievement of their goals
- Develop a positive attitude to learning throughout life

WHAT RESULTS FROM THE PDP PROCESS?

PDP RESULTS IN TWO MAIN OUTCOMES:

- The first is enhanced self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and directions for change. The process is intended to help you understand the value added through learning, that is above and beyond attainment in the subjects you have studied. It is holistic and relates to your development as a whole person.
- The second outcome is a **Personal Development Record (PDR)**. The information in the record is owned by you and its maintenance, authenticity and use is your responsibility. Your PDR is the product of the PDP process. It is your property and will only be seen by yourself and your personal tutor. Your PDR is the place where you keep evidence of:
 - Your personal growth and achievements
 - Areas you have identified for improvement
 - Plans of action to achieve your goals
 - The actions taken to achieve improvement
 - Reflections on your progress

You can maintain your Personal Development Record in any electronic or paper-based format that works for you, but it is probably best assembled as a collection of documents, notes, reports, reflective statements, feedback etc in a 3-ring binder. It is a portfolio of materials that you will use as evidence of your personal development.

What is reflection?

PDP can involve different forms of reflection and reflective learning. Reflection involves more than consideration of what we have achieved; it looks in more depth at how and why we achieve. If you can recognise this 'how' and 'why', you can capitalise on it to maximise your efficiency in many ways. Reflection is not just an add-on extra to academic learning but is an essential component of good quality learning and the representation of that learning. Reflection supports learning by providing the right conditions for learning.

A useful way to approach the process of structured self-reflection is to think about the skills you have used to succeed in certain tasks and to analyse how competent or confident you feel in using those skills. You can find more information on how to do this in the **Personal Development Planning booklet, Don't Panic**, published by the Learning Development Centre, which can be obtained from Caxton House or online at www.lsbu.ac.uk/caxton. The guide provides really useful information on surface learning and deep learning, learning strategies and principles, carrying out skills and diagnostic audits, personal development planning tools, SMART goals, SWOT analysis as well as templates you can adapt.

PDP in this unit

In this unit, knowledge, understanding and skills will be developed through a range of teaching and learning methods, specific exercises in class seminars, in private study time, and through discussion with your Personal Tutor. During the unit you will be asked to prepare notes and a short reflective statement about yourself and your development during your first semester at LSBU. The purpose is to help you focus on your own goals and ambitions, and to help you discover areas in which you feel you need to build on your present abilities. It will also show you the areas in which you are making progress, and there will be many. You should keep all your notes in your Personal Development Record.

The Palgrave Study Guide, **Skills for Success: The Personal Development Planning Handbook** by Stella Cottrell, available in the Perry Library, is an excellent resource and highly recommended.

9. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

	Date	Author/Text	Seminar	Workshop	Preparation
1	28 Sept		In the first week we'll introduce the unit and take an overview of what we'll be looking at week-by-week. We'll explore the rationale for the unit and the assessment criteria for Text and Context .	Discussion: How each of us approaches the process of writing, and look at some approaches to theorising narrative. Practical writing exercises	Unit Guide
2	5 Oct	Daniel Clowes Graphic Novel	The graphic novel in relation to the theory of narratology; the historical development of the medium.	Discussion Story vs. Plot Characterisation Practical writing exercises	Reader: Roland Barthes's "Soap-powders and Detergents" Clowes, Daniel, <i>Ghost World</i> (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000)
3	12 Oct	Joseph Conrad The Novella	What are the cultural, political and economic implications of <i>Heart of Darkness</i> ? What do we mean with 'the literary Canon'?	Discussion: Delayed decoding; frame narrative; the novella as a form Practical writing exercises	Joseph Conrad <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (1902)
4	19 Oct	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Short Stories	Postcolonial literature, the politics of voice and writing.	Discussion: Narrative (First, Second and Third Person) and Point of View Short stories – beginnings and endings. Practical writing exercises	Reader: Chinua Achebe's essay "An Image of Africa". Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. (2009) <i>The Thing around Your Neck</i> .
5	26 Oct	Angela Carter Writing for the screen	The fairy tale, its adult subversion and its Freudian film adaptation. The stages of bringing a (post-) modern 'Little Red Riding Hood' to the screen.	Discussion: narrative techniques in the fairy tale and in Carter's short stories. Narrative techniques used in the film; the subversion of the purpose of the fairy tale narrative. Practical writing exercises	Angela Carter, 'The Werewolf' and 'The Company of Wolves' from <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> . Film: <i>The Company of Wolves</i> (Neil Jordan, 1994).
6	2 Nov	The sixth week of Text and Context is dedicated to self-managed study, so there's no formal session in this week. Instead, you should use the time to ready yourself for your presentation in Weeks Seven and Eight as indicated.			

THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

	Date	Text	Seminar	Workshop	Preparation
7	9 Nov		Individual presentations. All members of the group to attend	. Q&A session	Individual preparation for the presentation
8	16 Nov		Individual presentations. All members of the group to attend. Q&A session	Q&A sessions	Individual preparation for the presentation
9	23 Nov	Samuel Beckett Play/Radio Drama/Television	Samuel Beckett and the avant-garde; the autotelic work in relation to the medium.	Discussion: writing for performance. Drama and narrative. Practical writing exercises	Beckett, Samuel. (2006) <i>Collected Shorter Plays</i> .
10	30 Nov	Michael Chabon Genre Fiction	Genre fiction and postmodernity in Michael Chabon's in <i>The Yiddish Policemen's Union</i>	Discussion: categories of genre fiction, narrative plotting and style.	Michael Chabon's in <i>The Yiddish Policemen's Union</i>
11	7 Dec	The New York School Poetry	Discussion of the New York poets. What is meant by a 'school' of poetry? How do we identify the work of a 'school' – history, aesthetics, theory, collaboration?	Discussion: Poetry and society; the subjective voice. Practical writing exercises	Unit Reader: "Personism – A manifesto" by Frank O'Hara, the essay by Edwin Denby and a selection of poems.
12	14 Dec		In the final week of the unit you'll have an opportunity to feedback on Text and Context and we'll also spend some time recapping what's required of you in terms of the essay, due after the Christmas break.	Structuring and referencing academic essays.	LSBU Library Guide to Correct Referencing
13	13 Jan		ESSAY DEADLINE: Monday 10 January 2011, no later than 5pm.		

10. LEARNING RESOURCES

10.1 Core Materials

Set Texts:

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. (2009) *The Thing around Your Neck*. London: Fourth Estate.

Beckett, Samuel. (2006) *Collected Shorter Plays*. London: Faber.

Carter, Angela. (1979) *The Bloody Chamber*. London: Vintage.

Chabon, Michael. (2007) *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*. London: Fourth Estate.

Clowes, Daniel (2000) *Ghost World*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Conrad, Joseph. (1902) *Heart of Darkness*. Any Penguin or Norton edition.

Set films:

The Company of Wolves (1984) Film drama directed by Neil Jordan. Adapted from her own story by Angela Carter. Shepperton: ITC Entertainment.

Reader:

A Reader containing key texts for the unit "Text and Context" will be handed out in Week 1.

10.2 Optional Materials

General

Barthes, Roland (1957) *Mythologies*. Trans. by Annette Lavers. London: Jonathan Cape, 1972.

Hall, Sean (2007) *This means this, this means that: a user's guide to semiotics* London : L. King Pub.

Lacey, Nick (2000) *Narrative and Genre: Key Concepts in Media Studies* London: Macmillan.

Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith (2002) *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

Schneider, Pat. (2003) *Writing Alone and with Others*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Douglas Wolk (2007) *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean* London: Da Capo Press.

Further reading

Further specific reading suggestions will be provided during each session and posted on Blackboard.

Additional Resources on Essay-Writing, Literary Theory and Grammar

Carey, Gary and Snodgrass, Mary Ellen (1999). *A Multicultural Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co.

Fabb, N and Durant, A. (1993). *How to Write Essays, Dissertations and Theses in Literary Studies*, London: Longman

Foley, Mark and Hall, Diane (2003.) *Longman Advanced Learners' Grammar*. Harlow: Longman.

Hawthorn, J. (1998.) *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, London: Arnold.

PLAGIARISM

What exactly is PLAGIARISM ?

The act of plagiarism is to pass off as your own work, the ideas or thoughts of someone else, without giving credit to that other person by quoting the reference to the original. There is no standard definition and dictionaries will vary slightly, but put simply, it is a form of **CHEATING** and **THEFT**.

- **Plagiarism is** presenting another student's course work or project as your own work.
- **Plagiarism is** putting into your own words commentary or ideas from another source without giving the reference(s).
- **Plagiarism is** quoting phrases, sentences, complete paragraphs or more, from an existing published source without using quotation marks and full references.
- **Plagiarism is** cutting and pasting from a website, electronic journal article etc. without indicating where your information has come from.
- **Plagiarism is** buying your course work essays from an internet service and hoping your tutor will not notice.

What you should be aware of:

- **Intentional Plagiarism** is the deliberate failure to reference anything. Lack of time is not an excuse.
- **Unintentional Plagiarism** can happen if you have correctly paraphrased the originals but not acknowledged the sources. It will NOT occur if you fully understand the rules of referencing. There is NO excuse for "unintentional plagiarism". You are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.
- **Collaboration.** If you have received considerable help from other people you should give credit to them for this and if you were in a group project make it clear which section each member contributed.
- **Collusion.** This occurs if you knowingly plan with other students to gain an unfair advantage, e.g. by allowing your coursework to be copied, or by accepting a mark for a group project to which you did not actually contribute.

THE SOLUTION = CORRECT REFERENCING, or CITING

The method of referencing used by most, but not all, departments in the University is called the Harvard system. Make sure you know which one your department uses. Referencing using the Harvard system involves giving the name of the contributor(s) to any journal article, book (or chapter within) plus the date of publication, in the text of your work, and listing full details at the end of your essay or project.

You must list all the sources of information you use if they are not your own. Sources of "Information" in this context include : music, photos, DVD or video clips, computer programs, maps, cartoons etc., as well as written texts either from an original print source or any electronic source. It covers anything produced as a result of someone's creative and original work.

Full details are in the **Help Sheet no. 30 – Referencing Using the Harvard System : Frequently Asked Questions** and also **Help Sheet no. 31 –**

Referencing Electronic Sources. These are available in all the libraries and can be copied from our web site LISA (<http://www.lisa.lsbu.ac.uk>) (Help Sheets section of Services for Students)

Why is referencing so important?

In a university, you need to present your work in an acceptable academic style. This includes research which makes reference to the existing works of other people and knowing when you need to reference (or “ cite”) your sources. By following the recognised guidelines and respecting and building upon the existing work of other people you will get higher marks for attributing these ideas.

Your tutors appreciate that your first piece of course work may be your first as an independent learner. If you are having problems, mention it to them. Think about how your own work will then be seen by others. By acknowledging the sources of the material you have used and quoted from, you are providing evidence of your extensive research, protecting the originality of your work, and enabling your reader to follow up any references given. This will also show your achievement in the context of individualised learning and the development of your critical abilities.

DO

- Always check what is required of you for each assignment, project, or dissertation. Ask the responsible member of staff – your tutor, Course Director, or Unit Co-ordinator.
- Paraphrase the original work or summarise it in your OWN WORDS. Remember that you will still need to reference the original.
- Put any phrase or sentence which you have used word for word into “quotation marks”
- Use quotes sparingly – or the text may not be easy to read.
- Give yourself time to do all the references IN FULL
- Reference anything you are not sure about – just in case.
- Make a note of the full reference AT THE TIME of reading the original, especially if it is a chapter from a book or a document from the Internet.
- Try to read the ORIGINAL work you are using, rather than someone else’s comments on it. YOUR interpretations and additions are what your tutor wants to read.
- If you can’t find the original, make reference to it, AND to the source material in which you read about it.
- Evaluate carefully any information found from a random internet search where you have not linked from a reputable web page or database.

DON'T

- EVER CONSIDER using any of the essay writing or document purchasing services available on the internet. Credit your tutor with the ability to recognise a “cut and paste job”, especially if the bottom line says “from Essays-R-Us.com.” or similar. This is “Cyberplagiarism”.
- Assume information on the Internet is exempt from the need to reference.
- Let your own work be used without getting credit for it. Plagiarism is by no means unique to LSBU and students elsewhere may be using YOUR work.

WHERE YOU DON'T NEED TO USE REFERENCES

- If you are writing up your own genuine experiences, observations, experimental data, fieldwork, etc.
- You are mentioning something which is “common knowledge”, i.e. well-known facts like historical dates, something well documented elsewhere.

FURTHER MEASURES TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

- If English is not your first language and you are worried that your style is not good then consult LSBU's Learning Development Centre. You may think that copying material from the internet will help solve your written English problem but your tutor will notice a change in style at once. !!
 - Your tutor will also be suspicious if your text starts to include very specialised words (e.g. outside your usual knowledge) or wonder why your style suddenly changes. Differences in layout and format will also be a give-away.
 - It is also unwise to attempt a discussion of someone else's ideas without fully understanding the argument they are making. If such material is not fully referenced your tutor will suspect that you have not read the original. A good technique is to include just enough quotes to support your case.
 - Make time to develop skills in paraphrasing (re-writing, putting into different words) not just to avoid obvious copying but to help clarify the meaning of your statement and to “add value” to your research.
 - We KNOW it can take as long to do a correct reference as it does to write up the actual information researched. However, if you do run out of time, a poor mark is always better than a penalty for plagiarism.
- You may also be breaking copyright rules if you reproduce material not covered by the licensing agreement, e.g. music scores, maps, illustrations.