CREATING TEXTS
Theft or Creative Inspiration

Listen to the song 'Meet Me in the Middle of the Air' and examine the structure of the music used to support the lyrics and intent of the song.

As a class, have a go at listening to, then singing this song with others. Experiment with different interpretations to understand how the personal delivery can influence the intent of the song.

In representing the emotion and meaning of text and the story that often hides in the lyric of the song, different performers elicit different emotions as they sing.

- Listen to the TWO contrasting representations of this song and create your own interpretation of the intent and meaning behind each performance.
- As you watch each performance, list any words that come to mind in the boxes below, trying to find similarities and differences in the quality of vocal delivery.

Paul Kelly	Megan Washington

- Describe why the melody is so haunting yet memorable? Describe the way that pitch has been used to create such an effective song.

- Megan Washington sings this live and unaccompanied at the link below. Go to this link and watch performance. Why does the song work so well unaccompanied?
  http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/media/s2821389.htm

Melody – In music, melody refers to the way that the tune is delivered and the range of different pitched (high or low notes) that the instrument uses.
Tone – refers to the quality of the sound and is often dependent upon the instrumental type and the control of the performance.

- As you listen to Megan Washington's performance what are some of the additional things that she does as she sings to create and develop the emotion attached to the text?

Class discussion: How original is "originality"?
- Is creativity only about doing something no one else has done or is it about taking a spark from somewhere else and changing it in an original way?

- On the other hand does borrowing lines, words or ideas mean that you breach copyright?

The exchange in the film about thieving may be delivered as a joke and it may be that we expect creative people to borrow but the reality is that plagiarism breaches copyright law.

In 2011 the band Men at Work was accused of breaching copyright in their song *Down Under*[1] which partly used the tune of *Kookaburra sits in an Old Gum Tree*. Was this a fair decision[2]? Or was the song so well known that it had gone "public"?

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[1] Official video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhnn6yb4Mmc
[2] Sydney Morning Herald, February 4, 2010, *Men at Work's* Down Under *ripped off Kookaburra:court*. http://www.smh.com.au/small-business/men-at-works-down-under-ripped-off-kookaburra-court-20100204-nfiq.html

Student activity: On the shoulders of giants

In the documentary there are many associations established between Paul Kelly and iconic literary authors and musicians. The documentary establishes a strong link between key male figures drawn from popular culture and canonical literary contexts.

- In groups, take a section of the documentary and track through it to find references to canonical musicians and authors, noting who they are, what they have created and what discernible influence they have had on Paul Kelly's work. You may find it helpful to organise your notes in a table such as the one below.

Musician/ author	Work	Influence on Paul Kelly's work.

- Why do you think the documentary places the work of Paul Kelly within the textual network that makes up a cultural tradition?

- How do these references add to the cultural value of Paul Kelly's work?

Student activity: think, pair, share…and think again.

1. Respond to the comment by Paul Kelly from the documentary where Kelly states:

   Yeah well I yeah we all steal a lot. Well yeah if you borrow something it's quite obvious that you've borrowed it but if you steal something, a good thief will, will hide it, or you know absorb it somehow. (16:40)

   What does this tell you about his process of composition? To what extent does it shed light on your own? You may want to draw connections between the challenges you face when creating your own texts, especially the desire to create *original texts* of your own.

2. Write a brief reflection on how you approach "creative" writing. What helps you get ideas and how do you try to develop them?