

Authentic Listening

“Make Good Art”

Video source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plWexCID-kA>

This speech was delivered by Neil Gaiman as the keynote address for the May 17, 2012 commencement ceremony at The University of the Arts.

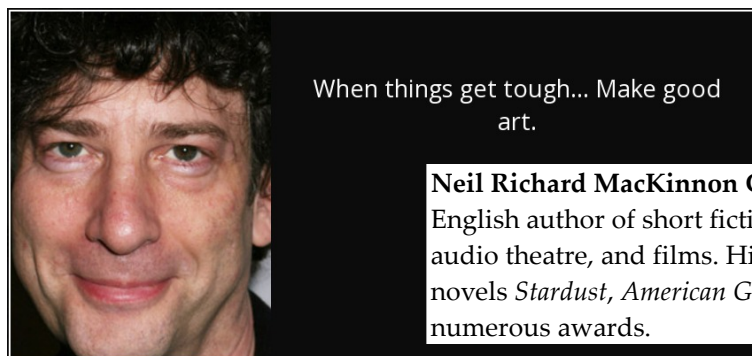


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Neil Richard MacKinnon Gaiman (/ˈɡeɪmən/; born 10 November 1960) is an English author of short fiction, novels, comic books, graphic novels, nonfiction, audio theatre, and films. His works include the comic book series *The Sandman* and novels *Stardust*, *American Gods*, *Coraline*, and *The Graveyard Book*. He has won numerous awards.

1. In the opening part of his speech, Neil Gaiman states that he ‘escaped from school’ as soon as he could. Why didn’t he go to a university?
2. When Neil Gaiman was 15 he already knew what he wanted to do in life. Which 2 that were not part of this list?
 - a) Write a children’s book
 - b) Write song lyrics
 - c) Write an adult novel
 - d) Record an audiobook
 - e) Write a libretto for an opera

Questions 3–8. Listen and take notes.

Neil Gaiman proceeds with six pieces of advice for the graduates.

3. ‘First of all. When you start out on a career in the arts, you have no idea what you are doing.’
4. ‘Secondly. If you have an idea of what you want to make, what you were put here to do, then just go and do that.’
5. ‘Thirdly. When you start off, you have to deal with the problems of failure.’
6. ‘Fourthly. I hope you’ll make mistakes. If you’re making mistakes, it means you’re out there doing something.’
7. ‘Fifthly. While you are at it, make your art. Do the stuff that only you can do.’

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8. 'Sixthly, I will pass on some secret freelancer knowledge. Secret knowledge is always good.'

Questions 9– 11. Neil Gaiman admits that the best advice ever given to him was 20 years ago.

9. Who gave him the best piece of advice ever?

- a) Kurt Vonnegut
- b) Stephen King
- c) Stephen Hawking
- d) Terry Pratchett

10. What was the advice?

- a) Write great books
- b) Write a sequel to Sandman
- c) Enjoy your success
- d) Never stop thinking about the next deadline or the next idea.
- e) Always remember things can go wrong

11. Did Neil Gaiman follow this advice?

12. Neil Gaiman believes that 'we're in a transitional world right now'. He thinks it is hugely beneficial to the arts community. Why is so? Choose 2 reasons.

- a) The distribution channels are in flux
- b) People in publishing or in bookselling are fairly certain of the landscape.
- c) There is no limit set to creativity anymore.
- d) It is liberating.
- e) The gates are opening.