


## Activity 1: A Calendar of Tales by Neil Gaiman and you – 2

1  When might crowdsourcing be useful? Brainstorm ideas with your neighbour.

In 2013 Neil Gaiman started an experimental, multimedia storytelling project, sponsored by Blackberry. He began by asking twelve questions and inviting people to tweet their answers to them. Then he chose the best one in each case and wrote a short story based on it – writing all twelve stories in three days! Following this, he asked people to create artwork for each story. He wrote on his blog, “I made stories inspired by replies, now I want the stories to inspire art.” Having made audio recordings of himself reading the stories, he then invited people to create short films that included the audio. Gaiman chose a few favourite illustrations and videos to feature in his digital book, “A Calendar of Tales”, that was released on the Blackberry website.

- 2 a) Go to the website <http://acalendaroftales.com/> and read the short story Neil wrote for December.  
b) Now listen to the audio recording of Neil Gaiman reading it. To what extent does his reading enhance your experience?
- 3 Look at the illustration Neil Gaiman chose to accompany this story. Describe it in detail and then say whether you think it is fitting or not. Be prepared to justify your answer!
- 4 On Gaiman’s own website, <http://journal.neilgaiman.com>, you can find five short videos about the project. In small groups, each of you should watch one of the videos and share what you learn about the stories, the creative process and the Calendar of Tales with the rest of the class. Say whether anything surprises you, or not.
- 5 What do you think of this project? Do you think that crowdsourcing is a good way to produce literature? Find another example of an author who has used crowdsourcing.
- 6 a)  In small groups, think of four questions, one for each of the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter).  
b) Give your questions to the other groups and ask them to ‘tweet’ a reply to each of them.  
c) In your groups, decide which tweet you like best and write a short tale based on it.  
d) Give your short story to the other groups and ask them to illustrate it. Choose the illustration you think best fits your story and give reasons why.  
e) Present your story and the illustration on a poster and do a gallery walk.

### TIP

#### Crowdsourcing

Increasingly, companies and individuals are using the expertise and talents of members of the general public to work on their projects and to solve tasks. This usually happens via the internet and the help is often given free-of-charge. It is a popular marketing tool.

### VIP FILE

Neil Gaiman was born in the UK in 1960 and is the author of short stories, novels, comics, graphic novels as well as screenplays for TV and films. He regularly uses Twitter, Facebook, and his own blog to communicate with his fans and to try out new ideas, although at the end of 2013 he announced he was taking a six-month break from social media “so I can concentrate on my day job: making things up”.

