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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Fahrenheit 451

by Ray Bradbury

Written by Elizabeth Osborne

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Fahrenheit 451

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. explain the significance of the Allegory of the Cave to *Fahrenheit 451*
2. explain what *parable* and *allegory* are and how *Fahrenheit 451* is related to those forms
3. analyze significance of the symbolism of fire, light, and related images to the book
4. trace Montag's development as a dynamic character
5. discuss the distinction the book makes between pleasure and happiness
6. understand the references to the Bible in the book, including:
 - the Garden of Eden
 - the Book of Ecclesiastes
 - the story of Sodom and Gomorrah
7. analyze the state of families and interpersonal relationships in the book and explain what the author is saying about them
8. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam
9. respond to multiple-choice items similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam
10. offer a close reading of *Fahrenheit 451* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

Fahrenheit 451

Lecture Notes

Fahrenheit 451 is a science fiction novella set in a future version of the United States. It was first published in 1953, a time of great prosperity for a large group of Americans. World War II had brought the country out of the Depression. Manufacturing and production increased. Two things that were produced in large numbers, and that changed the face of America, were the television and the automobile.

As more people entered the middle class, they were able to afford televisions. Before World War II, only about 7,000–8,000 television sets had been made in the U.S. Production was halted during the war and resumed in August of 1945. In 1946, only one half of one per cent of United States households had a television set. By 1954 (the year after the release of *Fahrenheit 451*), 55% of United States households had televisions. By 1962, television sets could be found in 90% of United States homes.

Men worked during the day, but women generally stayed home and raised the children. Women, therefore, were a captive audience for television programs broadcast during the day. Children were also a desirable audience. Television changed the way people interacted. Rather than talking to neighbors as a form of entertainment, people began to stay in their homes and watch their favorite television programs.

The 1950s were also a time in which the automobile became extremely important to America. In 1947, still in the aftermath of World War II and industry's retooling for peacetime, 3,300,000 automobiles were produced in the United States. By 1953 (the year of *Fahrenheit 451*'s release), production had more than doubled.

The year 1949 also witnessed the introduction of the high-compression V8 engine, allowing for faster and more powerful automobiles, and setting off America's decades-long love affair with speed and power.

Coincident with the rise of the automobile was the building of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System (originally called the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways). While the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (popularly known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act) was not signed into law until three years after the release of *Fahrenheit 451*, variations of Eisenhower's plan had been circulating since 1921 and had been lobbied for by automobile manufacturers since the end of World War II.

New cities and suburbs were planned around the new roads and plentiful, cheap automobiles. Areas that had formerly been wilderness or parks were transformed into residential or business areas. Walking became more rare; the automobile was the preferred method of getting from one place to another.

Ray Bradbury, a noted science fiction author, became concerned about the dangers he felt television and automobiles presented to a stable society. *Fahrenheit 451* is the book that came out of Bradbury's vision of the future.

The Allegory of the Cave:

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato authored a dialogue (philosophical discussion between characters) that we now know as *The Republic*. In this work, Plato describes the difference between ideals and reality. There are, he says, ideal forms of things which exist only as abstract concepts, but which are the most true and perfect things. Human beings, however, live in a shadow world; they see imperfect reflections of these true forms. In his famous allegory, Plato imagines people sitting in a cave, watching shadows play on a wall. Because the cave is all they know, the people think the shadows are real. When one person is somehow taken from the cave and placed in the Real World, he or she is unable to convince the others of the truth.

Like biblical prophets, persons who have been “out of the Cave” and know True Reality, are considered foolish or insane by those who still accept the shadow figures on the wall of the Cave as reality. Out-of-Cave prophets are dismissed, ridiculed, discredited, and—often—destroyed.

Genre:

Fahrenheit 451 is a work of science fiction. Unlike fantasy, science fiction describes things that are plausible, based on the best scientific knowledge at the time. Science fiction often considers the effect that technology might have on society. In *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury speculates that things intended to make life easier and more pleasant—cars, mass media—may actually rob people of the ability to think and relate to one another.

Themes:

Look out for the following themes in *Fahrenheit 451*:

- Progress can actually be dangerous or harmful.
- The thinking man or woman will always be at odds with society.
- Reason can be used as a weapon to defend wrong as well as right. People should make their own choices and be careful about accepting what they hear.

Motifs:

- Good and Bad Fire

Fire and burning are important symbols in *Fahrenheit 451*. Fire can be life-saving; after all, people need warmth to survive. According to one ancient Greek myth, Prometheus (his name literally means “forethought”), a son of Zeus, made human beings out of clay. He then stole fire from the gods for his new creation, allowing people enlightenment and knowledge.

As a symbol, fire has long been associated with technology—the Roman god Vulcan is the god of metalworking, and his forge is under the volcano Mt. Etna. The god Apollo is god of the sun and the god of knowledge—both physical and mental light.

Of course, fire can also destroy. The Prometheus myth contains the warning that if people try to know too much—to steal too much of the gods’ fire—they will pay the price. Prometheus himself was severely punished for his theft on behalf of humankind.

Among other associations of fire, life, and death are the phoenix and the salamander. The phoenix is a bird that destroys itself in a fire and then rises again from its own ashes. The lizard-like salamander was once thought to be generated by fire. (This belief is thought to have originated in the fact that many salamanders live in rotted logs. When the log is thrown onto a fire, the salamander flees, thus giving the appearance that it originated in the fire.)

- The Hearth

The first section of *Fahrenheit 451* is entitled “The Hearth and the Salamander.” The hearth is an ancient symbol of home and family. A warm fireplace symbolizes comfort, familiarity and affection. It is one of the places that contain the nurturing, non-destructive fire.

- Light and Vision

Fire brings not only physical warmth, but light, which is a symbol of wisdom. Look for the following symbols related to light:

- Eyes – Eyes have been called “windows to the soul”; they show a person’s mental or spiritual illumination. For example, Clarisse, a visionary character, watches Montag carefully; the feature of hers that strikes him the most is her eyes. Mildred’s eyes, on the other hand, are compared to stones or glass; there is no light behind them.
- Looking vs. Seeing – In Montag’s society, people experience constant visual stimulation, but do not actually see. As in Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, they mistake the things they are watching for reality.
- Mirrors – A mirror is a symbol of self-examination and mental reflection. At the end of the book, Granger says that the job of the men will be to “build a mirror factory”—i.e., to force society to closely examine itself.
- The Sun and Moon – The sun gives off light by burning, the moon by reflecting. Clarisse is connected to the moon because she is reflective by nature.

Fahrenheit 451

Practice Free-Response Questions

Practice Free-Response Question #1

A common figure in literature is the “muse,” a woman who inspires the hero’s quest. This woman is usually pure, beautiful, and unattainable; the hero never gets close to her, but he uses her image as motivation for his noble deeds.

In a well-organized essay, analyze the function of Clarisse as Montag’s motivating figure in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*.

Practice Free-Response Question #2

The setting of many works of literature consists of two main locations placed in opposition to one another (e.g., Paris and London in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the forest and the town in *The Scarlet Letter*). Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the way the two main settings of *Fahrenheit 451* parallel Montag’s character development.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

Practice Free-Response Question #3

Many works of science fiction are essentially dystopian; that is, they take place in an *anti-utopia*—a society that claims to fulfill every need of its citizens, but actually harms or oppresses them. In a well-organized essay, analyze the extent to which the anti-utopian features of the society in *Fahrenheit 451* contribute to the main themes of the book.

Practice Free-Response Question #4

One theme that appears in many works of science fiction is that technology is dangerous; it may change or harm human society in ways unforeseen by its designers. In a well-organized essay, explain how different kinds of technology in *Fahrenheit 451* contribute to the downfall of humanity. In addition, discuss what aspects of human nature enhance such destructiveness.

Practice Free-Response Question #5

Read the passage in “The Hearth and the Salamander” describing Beatty’s visit to the Montags’ house, beginning with, “Montag made sure the book was well-hidden,” and ending, “He turned and went out through the open door.” In a well-organized essay, explain the ways Bradbury creates suspense in this scene.

Practice Free-Response Question #6

Reread the passage at the beginning of “Burning Bright” that starts, “Lights flicked on…” and ends, “And he stumbled along the alley in the dark.”

In a well-organized essay, analyze the dramatic structure of this scene and explain how it contributes to the development of Montag’s character.

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Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions 1 – 5

Carefully read the lecture that Captain Beatty gives when he visits the Montags, beginning with “When did it all start...” and ending, “He turned and went out through the open door.” Then select the best answer to each of the questions below.

1. Captain Beatty’s lecture can best be described as
 - A. persuasive.
 - B. stern.
 - C. informative.
 - D. pleading.
 - E. sarcastic.
2. Beatty tries to appeal to Montag’s
 - A. love of his wife.
 - B. fear.
 - C. reason.
 - D. greed.
 - E. sense of importance.
3. The device that Beatty most frequently uses to make his point is
 - A. metaphor.
 - B. rhetorical questions.
 - C. understatement.
 - D. alliteration.
 - E. allegory.
4. Beatty refers to _____ and _____ as opposites.
 - A. facts...information
 - B. information...meaning
 - C. pleasure...happiness
 - D. doubt...pain
 - E. information...feeling
5. Beatty claims that the society in which he and Montag are now living reflects the will of
 - A. the religious.
 - B. the government.
 - C. the people.
 - D. the firemen.
 - E. the intellectuals.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions 6 – 10

Carefully read the exchange between Faber and Montag during Montag's first visit to Faber's house, beginning with "Who is it?" and ending, "Not good night." Then select the best answer to each of the questions below.

6. In the myth of Hercules and Antaeus that Faber recounts, Antaeus represents
 - A. books.
 - B. society.
 - C. roots.
 - D. Faber.
 - E. knowledge.

7. Faber uses the comparison involving fireworks and flowers to show that
 - A. the pursuit of pleasure may be harmful to society.
 - B. the government, not the people, is responsible for society's problems.
 - C. good books have texture and depth.
 - D. society is unable to appreciate true beauty.
 - E. people have no good reason to hate and fear books.

8. Montag's character development is most evident through his
 - A. contrast of himself with Faber.
 - B. awareness of his own cowardice.
 - C. empathy towards Faber.
 - D. regrets about getting married.
 - E. attempt to think for himself.

9. The motif most prevalent in this section is
 - A. rain.
 - B. fire.
 - C. seeds.
 - D. war.
 - E. hearing.

10. Faber's attitude towards human beings can best be described as
 - A. pessimistic.
 - B. neutral.
 - C. betrayed.
 - D. hopeful.
 - E. frightened.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions 11 – 15

Carefully read Captain Beatty's second long speech to Montag in "The Sieve and the Sand," beginning, "Stop blushing," and ending, " 'All's well that is well in the end.' " Then select the best answer to each of the questions below.

11. In the story he tells of their argument, Beatty primarily portrays himself as _____ and Montag as _____.
 - A. correct; incorrect
 - B. knowledgeable; uninformed
 - C. gentle; cruel
 - D. serene; emotional
 - E. graceful; nervous

12. Beatty's tone as he describes his "dream" is
 - A. elated.
 - B. proud.
 - C. triumphant.
 - D. relieved.
 - E. sympathetic.

13. In the dream, Beatty scolds Montag for using many words, but saying nothing; he is actually engaging in this very practice to confuse Montag. This is an example of
 - A. irony.
 - B. ambiguity.
 - C. hyperbole.
 - D. hypocrisy.
 - E. simile.

14. Beatty says about words, "Others can use them too, and there you are, lost in the middle of the moor, in a great welter of nouns and verbs and adjectives." Here, the word "welter" most nearly means
 - A. noun.
 - B. middle.
 - C. bruise.
 - D. jumble.
 - E. fear.

15. When Beatty asks whether he has given Montag "trench mouth," he is metaphorically suggesting that he
 - A. has removed Montag's ability to speak.
 - B. will soon murder Montag.
 - C. feels remorse for what he has said to Montag.
 - D. wishes Montag had never been born.
 - E. believes he can speak as well as Montag.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions 16 – 20

Carefully read the passage that describes Montag's thoughts between the time that he leaves Clarisse and the moment he opens the bedroom door, beginning, "Happy! Of all the nonsense," and ending, "Why, he thought...." Then select the best answer to each of the questions below.

16. The central motif here is one of
 - A. seeing.
 - B. dancing.
 - C. hearing.
 - D. imitating.
 - E. burning.

17. Bradbury conveys Montag's emotions through
 - A. spoken dialogue.
 - B. internal dialogue.
 - C. direct observation.
 - D. extended metaphor.
 - E. descriptive paragraphs.

18. The symbol most closely associated with Clarisse in this passage is
 - A. fire.
 - B. the earth.
 - C. the sun.
 - D. water.
 - E. the moon.

19. Bradbury uses two voices in this passage in order to show Montag's
 - A. insanity.
 - B. devotion to Clarisse.
 - C. curiosity about books.
 - D. inner conflict.
 - E. uncertainty.

20. From Bradbury's note that Montag "searched for a simile, found one in his work," we can infer that Montag
 - A. has an underdeveloped imagination.
 - B. is verbally gifted.
 - C. is in love with Clarisse.
 - D. regards other people as self-destructive.
 - E. has become isolated and unhappy.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions 21 – 25

Carefully read the description of Montag's flight between the time he leaves Faber's house and the time he reaches the river, beginning, "Montag ran," and ending, "Then, holding the suitcase..." Then select the best answer to each of the questions below.

21. On a symbolic level, Montag's wading into the river could represent his
 - A. rejuvenation.
 - B. endurance.
 - C. rebirth as a new person.
 - D. attaining wisdom.
 - E. final stage of growth.

22. Montag watches "his own chess game" through the windows of the houses as he runs. The author's use of this detail emphasizes that
 - A. most people have divided selves.
 - B. television makes things seem unreal.
 - C. selfishness is morally wrong.
 - D. there is a need for honesty in society.
 - E. television does not challenge people.

23. The colors the author primarily uses are meant to evoke
 - A. shadows.
 - B. autumn.
 - C. blood.
 - D. moonlight.
 - E. water.

24. Bradbury has the announcer count to ten in order to increase the _____ of the scene.
 - A. pathos
 - B. adventure
 - C. suspense
 - D. horror
 - E. absurdity

25. The phrase "silently baying" is an example of
 - A. simile.
 - B. metonymy.
 - C. hyperbole.
 - D. understatement.
 - E. oxymoron.

Fahrenheit 451

Answers with Explanations

1. Captain Beatty's lecture can best be described as
 - A. **persuasive.** Beatty is trying to bring Montag around to his point of view. Beatty acts friendly, smiling and sitting comfortably. His language is informal. He uses direct address often, pulling Montag in to the conversation.
 - B. stern. He is trying to win Montag over with paternal kindness, not reprimand or upbraid him.
 - C. informative. Although Beatty's lecture claims to describe the origins of firemen, its tone is not merely factual. Beatty twists information to support his argument.
 - D. pleading. Beatty assumes that he has the upper hand in the conversation; he is not asking for anything from Montag.
 - E. sarcastic. Beatty may or may not believe all of the things he is saying; Bradbury certainly does not. Beatty's primary aim is simply to talk Montag into going back to the firehouse, so (E) is not the best answer.

2. Beatty tries to appeal to Montag's
 - A. love of his wife. Beatty addresses Mildred once or twice, but never mentions her to Montag.
 - B. fear. Although Beatty is aware that Montag is nervous, he does not directly exploit the situation. Instead, he pretends to be soothing and friendly.
 - C. reason. Beatty does set out a "logical" case for the banning of books, noting that they do not bring the same immediate pleasure as television, and can even cause pain and worry. Beyond logic, however, he tries to play upon Montag's emotions more than appeal to his logical mind.
 - D. greed. Beatty does not offer money or power as a reward for being a fireman. Rather, he says that firemen have a calling: they prevent people from being unhappy.
 - E. **sense of importance.** He says that people like himself and Montag are the only thing standing between society and misery. He also announces at the beginning of the lecture that he is letting Montag in on secret information.

3. The device that Beatty most frequently uses to make his point is
 - A. metaphor. Beatty does use some metaphors—he refers to the magazines of the modern age as "vanilla tapioca" and a book as a "loaded gun," but these metaphors are not central to his rhetorical strategy.
 - B. **rhetorical questions.** Beatty asks questions that expect a certain answer. Often, he provides this answer himself. This is a way of reinforcing that his opinions are correct and Montag must necessarily agree with them.
 - C. understatement. Beatty never uses understatement; in fact, he is prone to exaggeration.
 - D. alliteration. To persuade Montag, Beatty does not rely on the sound of individual words, but on a forceful, persuasive tone.
 - E. allegory. Beatty does not use symbolic characters as his principal device.

4. Beatty refers to _____ and _____ as opposites.
- A. facts and information. Facts and information are the same thing to Beatty.
 - B. information and meaning. He notes that people enjoy memorizing facts, such as “how much corn Iowa grew last year,” but they don’t need for the facts to mean anything. Information is easy to gain, and it makes people feel knowledgeable; true meaning is difficult to grasp and brings no satisfaction.**
 - C. pleasure and happiness. Beatty equates pleasure with happiness. He says that sensory stimulation makes people happy, while thinking makes them unhappy.
 - D. doubt and pain. The doubt brought on by books brings emotional pain. One causes another, but they are not opposites.
 - E. information and feeling. Beatty does not directly relate these things to one another.
5. Beatty claims that the society in which he and Montag are now living reflects the will of
- A. the religious. Beatty never mentions either religion or adherents to any particular faith.
 - B. the government. The government, according to Beatty, merely gives the public what it wants.
 - C. the people. Beatty says that the structure of the current society is the result of efforts to eliminate unhappiness for the largest number of people.**
 - D. the firemen. Firemen are tools used to enforce the will of the people; they destroy sources of intellectual pain and inequality.
 - E. the intellectuals. Intellectuals make other people feel inferior; they must be silenced or marginalized so that all will be equal.
6. In the myth of Hercules and Antaeus that Faber recounts, Antaeus represents
- A. books. Books are what help keep people grounded, according to Faber; they are like the earth in the myth.
 - B. society. Just before he mentions this myth, Faber says that “we” (he, Montag, and the rest of their society) are trying to live on flowers and fireworks without ever returning to the earth. It follows that Antaeus, who has to be in contact with the earth to be powerful, also represents society.**
 - C. roots. Roots are what connect plants to the earth. Society, like the mythical Antaeus, needs some kind of roots; it needs to be connected to the earth.
 - D. Faber. Faber’s point is that human beings need more than empty entertainment to survive. While he is included in this category, he is not speaking only of himself, so (B) is a better answer than (D.)
 - E. knowledge. Knowledge, like books, is something society needs in order to be healthy. Without the grounding that knowledge provides, society will continue to be weak and vulnerable.

7. Faber uses the comparison involving fireworks and flowers to show that
- A. **the pursuit of pleasure may be harmful to society. Faber says fireworks and flowers—i.e., attractive but insubstantial things—are not enough to keep society functioning; if people mistake them for nourishment, society will grow weaker.**
 - B. the government, not the people, is responsible for society's problems. Faber does not assign responsibility through the comparison; he merely warns of a danger to society.
 - C. good books have texture and depth. Before the comparison, Faber does say that good books have texture; he mentions fireworks and flowers as a way of explaining *why* texture and depth are necessary.
 - D. society is unable to appreciate true beauty. Faber says people mistake superficial beauty for something that is really good for them, not that they are unable to see true beauty.
 - E. people have no good reason to hate and fear books. Faber seems to find it understandable that people would avoid conflict and only want fireworks and flowers, but he doesn't think it is good for them.
8. Montag's character development is most evident through his
- A. contrast of himself with Faber. Faber contrasts himself with Montag, not the other way around.
 - B. awareness of his own cowardice. This is key to Faber's character, not Montag's. As the hero of the story, Montag is ready to take decisive action, but not exactly sure how to do it.
 - C. empathy towards Faber. We do not learn Montag's feelings towards Faber in this section; Montag is preoccupied with righting the problems in his society.
 - D. regrets about getting married. Montag does not discuss his marriage here.
 - E. **attempt to think for himself. Montag expresses the idea that when a man is certain to die, he can take any risk without fear. Faber points out that Montag has come up with an interesting idea all on his own, without getting it from someone else.**
9. The motif most prevalent in this section is
- A. rain. Montag does mention his fear of being drowned by Beatty's words, but this is the only mention of rain in the passage.
 - B. fire. While fire is the most important motif in the book as a whole, it is not stressed in this section.
 - C. seeds. Faber mentions plants and seeds—he describes television as soil that can grow a person in ways they can't control, and Montag's plan as sowing "seeds of suspicion." But because this section is bookended by Montag's plea to be heard and Faber's providing an earpiece, (E) is a better answer than (C).
 - D. war. The war is an event looming in the background, but not a motif.
 - E. **hearing. Montag comes to Faber because he wants someone to listen to him. Faber shows Montag the plugs that he uses to drown out the noise of the subways. Finally, Faber gives Montag the earpiece that allows him to hear and be heard.**

10. Faber's attitude towards human beings can best be described as
- A. **pessimistic.** Faber says that even if Montag's plan does work, it probably will not stop human beings from destroying themselves.
 - B. neutral. Faber expresses strong regret about his own cowardice in the past, so he can't be called neutral.
 - C. betrayed. Faber acknowledges his own part in what happened. He is not resentful of humanity.
 - D. hopeful. Although Faber does show some interest in Montag's plan, he does not believe that it will ultimately solve humanity's problems.
 - E. frightened. Faber is afraid of bringing harm upon himself, but he does not express a fear of humanity.
11. In the story he tells of their argument, Beatty primarily portrays himself as _____ and Montag as _____.
- A. correct; incorrect. The most important thing to Beatty is not who is right or wrong, but who wins the argument.
 - B. knowledgeable; uninformed. Both men, in the dream, seem to have access to knowledge, even if Beatty gains the upper hand.
 - C. gentle; cruel. Beatty is better described as "serene" (D) than gentle. He stands in contrast to the hysterical Montag.
 - D. **serene; emotional.** Beatty portrays himself as calm and Montag as furiously upset. The dream both reflects and enhances what is actually happening: Beatty is talking smoothly and persuasively and Montag is becoming extremely nervous.
 - E. graceful; nervous. As Beatty is retelling his "dream," Bradbury uses the word "graceful" to describe him; Montag, listening, is obviously nervous. But in the dream itself, Beatty is cool and collected, while Montag is hysterical and enraged.
12. Beatty's tone as he describes his "dream" is
- A. elated. This word would describe Beatty's tone if he were simply very, very happy, but since his happiness arises from the fact that he is overwhelming Montag, (C) is a better answer.
 - B. proud. The dream is a vehicle to showcase Beatty's ability to manipulate language. Although he has a confident—perhaps overconfident—tone, he is too much of a slippery character to show a genuine emotion like pride.
 - C. **triumphant.** Beatty wants to make Montag feel uncertain and nervous. In the dream, he remains calm while Montag grows increasingly infuriated; in reality, Montag becomes more and more nervous. Both the Beatty of the dream and the Beatty retelling the dream are gleeful in their victory over Montag.
 - D. relieved. There is no sense that Beatty feared something and now feels relief.
 - E. sympathetic. Although he pretends to be teasing, it is clear that Beatty is trying to overpower Montag; there is nothing friendly or sympathetic in his words.

13. In the dream, Beatty scolds Montag for using many words, but saying nothing; he is actually engaging in this very practice to confuse Montag. This is an example of
- A. irony. Beatty knows and acknowledges exactly what he is doing. His point is that words can be used to any purpose. In the dream, he pretends to be against such manipulation; in speaking to the real Montag, he demonstrates it through the way he speaks.
 - B. ambiguity. Beatty is not being deliberately unclear in what he says; rather, he is using the device of the dream to show Montag how words can manipulate and overpower people.
 - C. hyperbole. Hyperbole is deliberate exaggeration; it does not apply to what Beatty does here.
 - D. hypocrisy. A hypocritical person claims to have a certain belief, but does things that undermine that claim. Beatty deliberately uses the dream to demonstrate his point about the unreliability of words; he clearly acknowledges the relationship between what he says in the dream and what he is actually doing.
 - E. simile. Beatty is not using a figure of speech, but a kind of dramatic device.
14. Beatty says about words, “Others can use them too, and there you are, lost in the middle of the moor, in a great welter of nouns and verbs and adjectives.” Here, the word “welter” most nearly means
- A. noun. Montag is in the middle of something that includes nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Being lost in a *noun* of nouns, verbs, and adjectives makes no sense.
 - B. middle. Whatever “welter” means, it is parallel to “moor.” We know that Montag is in the middle of the moor, and he’s also in a welter of words. Saying he’s in a *middle* of words does not make sense, so this answer is incorrect.
 - C. bruise. Welter sounds like “welt,” which is another name for a bruise, but “bruise” makes no sense here.
 - D. jumble. Montag is lost in a great something of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. We know he is confused by whatever he is lost in. A jumble is a mixed-up pile, so it is the closest word to “welter” of all the answers.
 - E. fear. All of what Beatty says before the word “welter” is about how confused and lost Montag is, not how afraid he is, so (D) is a more likely answer than (E.)
15. When Beatty asks whether he has given Montag “trench mouth,” he is metaphorically suggesting that he
- A. has removed Montag’s ability to speak. In Beatty’s own estimation, he has won the battle of words with Montag.
 - B. will soon murder Montag. Montag’s mouth is what Beatty has murdered; the murder is not literal.
 - C. feels remorse for what he has said to Montag. Although murder is a crime for which people often feel remorse, Beatty is happy to have robbed Montag of words.
 - D. wishes Montag had never been born. It is not Montag’s life Beatty is trying to erase or end; it is his words.
 - E. believes he can speak as well as Montag. The metaphor indicates that Beatty not only equals Montag, but overcomes him, so (A) is a better choice than (E.)

16. The central motif here is one of
- A. seeing. Montag feels that the books are looking at him, and he quickly looks away. Montag watches Clarisse's face projected on the blank wall of his imagination. He compares her to a mirror—something in which one sees oneself—and also to someone watching a puppet show.
 - B. dancing. There is no mention of dancing in this passage.
 - C. hearing. There is only one reference to sounds in this passage, so this is not the best answer.
 - D. imitating. Clarisse watches Montag carefully and is able to reflect him very closely, but she is not simply copying him.
 - E. burning. Montag does imagine most people as torches, but there are many more references to looking, seeing, and watching than to burning in this section.
17. Bradbury conveys Montag's emotions through
- A. spoken dialogue. Montag is speaking to himself; there is no indication that any of the words are said aloud.
 - B. internal dialogue. Montag is speaking to himself; the conversation takes place only inside his mind.
 - C. direct observation. Although Bradbury does narrate this section in the third person, he allows Montag's thoughts to run on without interruption.
 - D. extended metaphor. Bradbury does not use any comparison to show Montag's emotions.
 - E. descriptive paragraphs. Montag is shown thinking of ways to describe Clarisse, but Bradbury does not describe Montag's emotions.
18. The symbol most closely associated with Clarisse in this passage is
- A. fire. Fire is mentioned in this passage, but only when Montag tries to think of a way to classify most people as compared with Clarisse.
 - B. the earth. There is no mention of the earth in this passage.
 - C. the sun. Montag has just come from his meeting with Clarisse, and it is night. She is associated with night rather than with day. She reflects light rather than giving it off; she glows rather than burns. (E) is therefore a better answer than (C.)
 - D. water. Clarisse is reflective, like water, but because of the description of the white glow of her face, (E) is a better choice than (D.)
 - E. the moon. Montag compares her to a clock with a glowing white face that is seen in the middle of the night. Like the moon, she reflects light; other people are like torches (or the sun), giving off light by burning.

19. Bradbury uses two voices in this passage in order to show Montag's
- A. insanity. Montag is in the middle of a mental conflict, but he is not insane.
 - B. devotion to Clarisse. Montag's mind has been disturbed by Clarisse, but part of him is still fighting the change. He is not entirely on the side of Clarisse yet.
 - C. curiosity about books. Montag is upset that Clarisse has questioned his happiness; his focus is on her, not on books.
 - D. **inner conflict. Montag is arguing with himself; part of him wants to remain as he is, conforming to the rest of his society and rejecting people like Clarisse. The other part has agreed with her all along.**
 - E. uncertainty. This answer is tempting, but vague. (D) is a more specific, therefore, a better answer.
20. From Bradbury's note that Montag "searched for a simile, found one in his work," we can infer that Montag
- A. **has an underdeveloped imagination. Montag only has the experience from his job at hand when he needs to think of a simile. His whole life has been devoted to burning.**
 - B. is verbally gifted. Bradbury notes especially that Montag has to search in his mind for a simile; the most he can come up with is torches. Rather than thinking of something original and striking, Montag goes for something close to his own life.
 - C. is in love with Clarisse. Montag's feelings about Clarisse are not responsible for his unimaginative simile.
 - D. regards other people as self-destructive. Bradbury's note tells us *why* Montag comes up with this particular comparison, not what the comparison means.
 - E. has become isolated and unhappy. Montag has indeed become isolated and unhappy, but this fact is not reflected in his simile.
21. On a symbolic level, Montag's wading into the river, could represent his
- A. rejuvenation. Water is sometimes associated with the ability to stop aging, as in bathing in the Fountain of Youth, but there is no evidence of that here.
 - B. endurance. This is true literally, but his change does not take place on a symbolic level.
 - C. **rebirth as a new person. Montag sheds his old clothing and puts on Faber's. He also leaves his old life behind in the form of the city from which he flees.**
 - D. attaining wisdom. The river takes Montag away from his old life. It symbolizes a change in his character, but symbols that might indicate new understanding—light, a new ability to hear—are not present.
 - E. final stage of growth. Montag watches his clothes—a symbol of his old self—float away. It is clear that he is undergoing a change, but the language here does not indicate that he goes from incompleteness to completeness.

22. Montag watches “his own chess game” through the windows of the houses as he runs. The author’s use of this detail emphasizes that
- A. most people have divided selves. The symbolism of this section does not apply to the psychology of individuals, but to the condition of society as a whole.
 - B. **television makes things seem unreal. Watching the pursuit play out on the parlor walls makes Montag feel like a piece in a game; he is almost unable to grasp that he is facing his own death. Meanwhile, the television audience does not empathize with him; it sees him as a character in a program.**
 - C. selfishness is morally wrong. The fact that a man’s death is no more than entertainment shows that something is wrong with the citizens of Montag’s society, but Bradbury is not condemning them; rather, he is pointing out that they have lost their sense of reality because of television.
 - D. there is a need for honesty in society. This episode does not deal with the honesty or dishonesty of society, but with its access to truth and reality.
 - E. television does not challenge people. People watch the pursuit of Montag on television because it provides immediate, suspenseful entertainment, so this answer is incorrect.
23. The colors the author primarily uses are meant to evoke
- A. **shadows. The sidewalks are white; the river is “a solid, moving blackness.” The people who emerge from their houses have entirely gray features. He sees “silhouettes” of people watching television.**
 - B. autumn. Although Bradbury says that the Hound comes “like autumn,” the colors of autumn—red, orange, and yellow—are not present in this passage.
 - C. blood. The primary colors here are shades of black, white, and gray, not red.
 - D. moonlight. While the pursuit does occur at night, the colors Bradbury uses underscore the unreality of the scene and the shadowlike nature of the people’s lives; they do not bring moonlight to mind.
 - E. water. Water is usually symbolized by blue, which is definitely not present here; there are only shadows in this scene.
24. Bradbury has the announcer count to ten in order to increase the_____ of the scene.
- A. pathos. Although readers may feel the tragedy of Montag’s situation, the counting device ratchets up the suspense, not the pathos of the scene.
 - B. adventure. The excitement of the scene increases; the reader does not know whether Montag will make it to the river or not. More things do not start happening as he gets closer to ten, though, so this answer is not the best one.
 - C. **suspense. The reader is held in suspense about whether Montag will be spotted by a resident of Elm Terrace and then killed by the Hound. With each number, presumably, more people are mobilized to look out their windows, increasing the chance that Montag will be caught.**
 - D. horror. The horror of this scene comes from its strangeness: a human being is about to be killed by a robotic dog for the amusement of other human beings.
 - E. absurdity. The scene may seem almost absurd because things are so far removed from the way they should be, but the absurdity does not increase as the announcer counts to ten.

25. The phrase “silently baying” is an example of
- A. simile. This phrase does not compare one thing to another.
 - B. metonymy. One thing is not being symbolized by another, closely-related thing here.
 - C. hyperbole. Bradbury is not exaggerating anything.
 - D. understatement. Bradbury is not using language that makes his subject seem less than it is.
 - E. oxymoron. “Baying” is loud howling; the Mechanical Hound is baying without any noise. Bradbury uses this phrase to show that the Hound is a grotesque reproduction of a real dog; rather than barking or howling, it announces its presence in a much more artificial, unlikelike way.

Fahrenheit 451

Study Guide

Part One: The Hearth and the Salamander

1. In an ancient Greek myth, Prometheus, a son of Zeus, feels sorry for human beings, who are cold and helpless. He steals fire from the gods and gives it to mankind. Symbolically, the giving of fire is the beginning of wisdom and science. Fire is also destructive: the Christian Hell is supposed to be a place where people burn eternally, and some religions predict that the world will end in fire. What aspect of fire do we see in the opening of the book?

The book begins with the destructive aspect of fire. Montag burns books for a living.

2. How does Bradbury characterize Montag in the opening paragraphs of the book? What details does he use to accomplish this characterization?

Montag is, or seems to be, cheerful and easygoing. Bradbury compares him to a “minstrel man.” Minstrel shows, popular in the United States in the 1800s, often featured white men who pretended to be black, singing and dancing in a parody of black people. Montag’s grin, like the grin of someone in blackface, is grotesque. He does not control it; he simply cannot remember a time when he was not smiling.

3. Why does Montag’s helmet have the number 451 on it?

451 degrees Fahrenheit is the temperature at which paper burns.

4. What details does Bradbury give to establish the setting of Montag’s encounter with Clarisse? Why might these be significant?

They meet on an autumn night. Bradbury describes the sidewalk and the leaves circling Clarisse’s feet in the moonlight. Bradbury’s decision to begin the book in the autumn—a time when things die and the old year nears its end—may signal that something in Montag’s life is about to end. The late hour adds to the sense of mystery surrounding Clarisse. Bradbury notes several times that the street is quiet. Montag is made uncomfortable by the silence; perhaps he is not used to it.

5. What kinds of words and images does Bradbury use to characterize Clarisse? How might these be symbolic?

Clarisse is associated with the color white and with the moon. Montag detects the scent of apricots and strawberries in her presence. All of these things suggest innocence—Diana, the Greek goddess of the moon, was associated with purity and virginity. White is the color of purity, and the fruits suggest the Garden of Eden, the Biblical setting in which the first humans lived before they fell from grace.

6. What distinction does Bradbury make between electric light and candlelight? In light of Montag's conversation with Clarisse, why might this be significant?

Bradbury calls electric light "hysterical" and candlelight "strangely comforting." Clarisse seems to notice things about the natural world that Montag has never thought to examine. Bradbury is setting up a dichotomy between the natural and the artificial.

7. What do we learn about the society in which Clarisse and Montag live?

We learn that firemen burn books and that people drive at such high speeds that billboards have to be grossly elongated in order to be read. Walking and driving slowly are rare; casual conversation with one's family is unheard of.

8. What question does Clarisse ask that upsets him?

She asks if he is happy. Montag has never before had occasion to question his own happiness.

9. Besides her complexion, what feature of Clarisse does Bradbury emphasize? Why does he do this?

He emphasizes her eyes. She, unlike Montag, looks closely at things. As they talk, Clarisse takes Montag in with her eyes. He is not used to being looked at so closely. The emphasis on Clarisse's eyes indicates that she is a "seer," visionary, or prophet, able to understand a truth that others cannot perceive.

10. What image associated with light does Montag think of in connection with Clarisse after he is back in his house?

He compares her to a mirror. Instead of burning like a torch (as, according to Montag, most people do), she reflects the light of others.

11. What word does Montag think of repeatedly in connection with his bedroom and his wife? Why are these details here?

He thinks about cold. Bradbury says the bedroom is like a tomb and a mausoleum. It is also dark, as if a candle has blown out, adding to the lack of warmth. After Montag calls the hospital, he stands shivering. Two things are obviously missing in Montag's life: the warmth of human relationships and the light of understanding.

12. What is happening in the background as Montag dials the hospital? What do these suggest?

Fighter jets fly overhead, signaling that the country is at war or that a war is about to begin.

13. What is the most prominent feature of the machine used to pump Mildred's stomach? Why is this feature significant?

The machine has an Eye that sees without really seeing. Unlike Clarisse's eyes, which saw beyond the apparent reality, the Eye of the machine sees the physical reality without understanding what it sees. Although it can remove toxins from Mildred's body, it can't diagnose the larger problems in her society that led to her overdose.

14. The technician tells Montag that cases like Mildred's are extremely common. What does this indicate about the state of Montag's society?

There must be widespread unhappiness, whether or not people are aware of it. Life has lost its value.

15. Describe the conversation between Montag and Mildred. What does it indicate about their relationship?

They talk without really talking. Mildred reads Montag's lips while continuing to listen to the programs on her Seashell. Although Montag tries to tell her about her overdose, she pays little attention to him. She keeps repeating the same sentence; this may be a sign that she is not even paying attention to what she herself is saying.

16. Describe the play coming on the "parlor walls." What does Montag seem to think about this form of entertainment? What does Mildred think?

The play has characters, but no discernible plot. The characters say things that have no meaning. Bradbury says that Montag asks "tiredly" about the play. When Mildred tells him about it, he responds with silence or one-word answers. She, on the other hand, seems enthused about the upcoming interactive program, though she can't point to any plot or meaning in it.

17. What word does Mildred use to describe the play? What does this suggest about her character?

She says it is "fun." Clearly, she feels that having fun is the most important thing in life; Montag is starting to question this idea. He is beginning to wonder if fun and pleasure are enough to make a person happy.

18. Compare Montag's conversation with Clarisse to his conversation with Mildred.

Mildred barely listens to Montag and rarely looks at him. Clarisse pays attention to even the smallest of Montag's words and gestures.

19. What images are linked to Clarisse in the passage describing her second conversation with Montag? Why might Bradbury use these images in connection with her?

Rain, the dandelion, birds, butterflies, and the moon are all mentioned during this conversation. Clarisse represents the natural world just as Mildred represents the artificial one.

20. What figure from mythology does the Mechanical Hound recall?

Cerberus, the three-headed dog who guards the underworld in Greek mythology, is echoed by the Hound.

21. Bradbury's description of the Mechanical Hound makes it seem like a grotesque parody of a living thing. What are some details that contribute to this description?

Bradbury compares the Hound to a bee, but instead of being full of honey, it is full of poison. He also says it is both dead and living at the same time.

22. Describe the relationship between Montag and Captain Beatty. What are some details that give us information about their relationship?

Beatty seems to be suspicious of Montag; he may have known about Montag's doubts even before Montag did. Bradbury notes the way Beatty directs "a questioning glance" at Montag and "stood there looking at him steadily." Beatty uses his eyes to intimidate Montag; he seems to be able to see into Montag's thoughts.

23. Clarisse notes that Montag's laugh sounds "more relaxed" than it did when they talked before. Trace the change in Montag from the beginning of the book until now.

Although Bradbury started the book by portraying Montag as a satisfied, easygoing person, Montag realized, upon meeting Clarisse, that he was not happy. Clarisse tapped into a division in Montag's self; she brought out doubts that he had been hiding from himself. Now that he has begun to let the doubtful side emerge, Montag is less strained and more relaxed, even though his fight with society is just beginning.

24. What connection does Clarisse make between her school and the forms of entertainment that most of her peers prefer?

Clarisse notes that the students at the school don't actually learn anything and never get to make any real social contact. Although they are together, they don't learn how to relate to one another. As a result, they are frustrated and exhausted; they let out this anger in destructive ways.

25. What, according to Clarisse, would prevent young people from being so violent and destructive?

Clarisse says that she, unlike her peers, is responsible. Because she was disciplined as a child, she is now a conscientious adolescent, and she is able to control her impulses. Discipline, which causes momentary pain but improves people morally, has been abandoned in most of the society.

26. An *allegory* is a story in which characters and objects have a direct symbolic function. In his philosophical dialogue, *The Republic*, the Greek philosopher Plato includes a passage known as “The Allegory of the Cave.” It imagines a group of people inside a cave, watching shadows playing on a wall. Unable to leave the cave, the people know only the shadows, and they believe that the shadows are reality. A person who escapes the cave and experiences the true reality is unable to convince the people chained in the cave of what he or she has seen. What allusion to this allegory occurs in this chapter?

Clarisse mentions the “joke boxes” in the “caves”—these are, presumably, places that people gather for entertainment. She says that in the caves and at museums, the only things for people to look at are abstract color patterns running up and down on the walls. People accept this as entertainment because they have never known anything else. Clarisse, however, knows that there is something more meaningful that they are not getting.

27. When Montag asks Beatty about the history of fire departments, two other firemen pull out their handbooks to remind him of something he already knows. How have the firemen changed history to suit their own ideas? What point is Bradbury making by bringing up Benjamin Franklin here?

It is now claimed that fire departments have always existed to destroy books. Benjamin Franklin, who started the first fire department in Pennsylvania, is credited with being the first of the kind of firemen who burn books. In reality, Franklin was a noted author, scholar and inventor, as well as a signer of the Declaration of Independence; his first job was in his brother's printing press. Bradbury is making a subtle connection between the ability to read and write and personal freedom. By claiming that Franklin destroyed, rather than published, books, the firemen are also, in a way, supporting the removal of personal liberties.

28. Explain the significance of the statement the woman in the house quotes before she is burned alive.

She quotes Hugh Latimer, a Protestant minister who was burned at the stake during the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary I of England. Like Latimer, she will soon burn alive for her beliefs. But part of what Latimer said was that in dying, he and Ridley would light a candle for the ages—their martyrdom would inspire other people to action. The woman who dies has a similar effect on Montag.

29. Beatty tells the woman that she has been “locked up...in a Tower of Babel.” To what is he referring?

A story in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament describes people building a tower that would reach all the way to heaven. For their presumption, God punishes them by making them all speak different languages. Books, Beatty is saying, all contradict one another, causing confusion.

30. What language relating to heat and cold does Bradbury use in the passage about Montag returning to bed and hiding the book?

Montag feels an urge moving from one shoulder to another, “like a spark leaping a gap.” He has “sweating cold fingers.” The pillow is cold, and Montag seems to lie on a “winter island.”

31. Why does Montag begin to cry when he thinks about Mildred dying?

He cries because they have a loveless marriage; he can't imagine that he would feel anything if she died.

32. What is ironic about Montag referring to the people on the parlor walls as “relatives” and Mildred saying, “That’s my family”?

Montag and Mildred, who are supposed to be a family, have no relationship at all. The people on the programs, who are not real and say meaningless things, are closer to Mildred than Montag is.

33. As Montag lies in bed thinking about what is wrong with his marriage, what episodes does he remember? Why are these significant?

Montag remembers a time when he asked Mildred what actually happened on her programs and she invited him to listen. There was a terrible noise and vibration, and he felt as though something had happened, though everything was still the same. He also remembers riding with Mildred in the car. She went so fast that Montag was terrified. Both of these memories indicate that Montag has had reservations about his society for some time. It is too loud and too fast; television and the automobile have become destructive forces.

34. How does Mildred treat Montag when he becomes ill?

She is unsympathetic, concerned only about the effect that Montag’s mental unease will have on her future.

35. How is Beatty characterized during his visit to Montag's house? What words and details contribute to this characterization?

Beatty is like a kindly old professor in this passage. Words like "peaceful" and "abstractedly" contribute to this image. Beatty sits in a comfortable chair and settles himself in. Throughout the lecture, he puffs on his pipe. Like the Hound and the whole system of firemen, he is a grotesque mockery of what should be; he appears to be more professorial than Faber, who actually was a professor.

36. How does Bradbury build suspense during the passage describing Beatty's visit?

He contrasts the calm demeanor of Beatty with the anxiety of Mildred, who doesn't know what to do when the "parlor walls" aren't on. As Beatty gets to the point of his speech about why books make people unhappy and should be banned, Mildred gets closer and closer to the book Montag has hidden beneath his pillow.

37. What vital role do firemen play in society, according to Beatty?

Firemen level the playing field; they prevent feelings of inferiority by removing the tools that make some people seem smarter than others.

38. Does Beatty really believe all of the things he tells Montag in the lecture? What evidence supports your answer?

Beatty has an extensive and well-thought-out explanation for why books are harmful. This shows that he has spent time pondering the reasons for the state of his society. We have also seen that he has knowledge of things that can only be found in books, such as the information about Hugh Latimer. His lecture, however, is about why people should never spend time thinking and why books should be destroyed. Clearly, there is some kind of conflict in Beatty's character; either he does not entirely believe what he is saying now, or he once believed differently. People who subscribe entirely to the philosophy he espouses would never have bothered to think of the reasons behind it. Beatty also says that books don't answer people's most important questions: "You come away lost." This suggests that he has turned to books for help and been disappointed.

39. What does Beatty say about pleasure and happiness?

He says that thinking makes people miserable. Sensory stimulation brings pleasure, which Beatty equates with happiness. Consequences and discipline have been eliminated; the only goal of life is pleasure.

40. During Montag's conversation with Mildred after Beatty leaves, what indication is there that she has internal conflict?

Mildred understands what Montag means when he says he wants to “smash things and kill things.” When she feels this kind of tension and anxiety, she drives as fast as she can to distract herself. Like Beatty, although she says one thing, her behavior indicates that there is a second self fighting to come to the surface.

41. What book does Montag finally settle on to read with Mildred? What is the symbolism of this book?

He finds Gulliver's Travels, by Jonathan Swift. In this eighteenth-century satire, the protagonist travels to different and exotic nations of the world, where he meets creatures who represent various human foibles, especially logical ones. Satire is the kind of thing that would make people unhappy, according to Beatty's logic, since it raises questions about the human condition.

Part Two: The Sieve and the Sand

1. The first two books mentioned in this section are by James Boswell, an eighteenth-century lawyer and friend of the writer Samuel Johnson. Boswell is best known for his biography of Johnson and his diaries describing their travels together. Why does Montag think these books have something to do with Clarisse?

Montag connects them to Clarisse because she, like Boswell, was interested in understanding the world around her.

2. What connection does Montag make between books and empathy?

Montag believes that the entertainment that has flourished in the absence of books allows people to ignore the suffering of others. When people are not challenged, the misfortunes of their fellow-humans become less real to them. Books present a challenge—they allow the possibility that not everything is pleasant or harmonious.

3. In relation to the Allegory of the Cave, who would Faber be? What does he say that indicates this is the case?

Faber says that he is concerned with the real, rather than the superficial, meaning of life. This is why he says he knows he is alive.

4. Describe Montag's state of mind as he rides the train to see Faber. Has he made a complete break with his old self?

At this point, Montag still thinks he will be able to return to life as he knew it before. He expects that Faber will show him how to be happy again.

5. Why does Montag, at this point, have the memory about the sieve and the sand?

Montag is trying to save the words in the Bible by memorizing them, but they disappear from his mind the way the sand spills through a sieve.

6. What Bible verse is Montag trying to memorize during the train ride? Who or what is his antagonist in this scene?

Montag is trying to memorize a verse from the Book of Matthew in the New Testament. The verse occurs during the Sermon on the Mount, the speech that Jesus makes in which he outlines the principles of a spiritual life. In this verse, he warns people not to worry about immediate material needs. The full verse is as follows: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." As Montag is trying to commit the verse to memory, he is interrupted and distracted by an advertisement for toothpaste. Clearly, the eternal and the superficial are at war in this scene.

7. What, according to Faber, has been done to Jesus by the television programs?

Jesus is now being used for advertising purposes. As he did when Montag was riding the train, the author sets up opposition between the truly spiritual and the commercial world.

8. What does Faber mean when he says that good books have "pores"?

Faber probably means that unlike the programs on television, good literature can be examined at many levels; it has depth. The "parlor families" say things that have little or no meaning; looked at closely, their superficiality becomes clear. But literature has meaning and significance that comes from real life; looking at it closely reveals new things about it.

9. What metaphors does Faber use to describe the texture that good literature has? What do all of these metaphors have in common, and what is Faber's larger message here?

Faber compares the current society to flowers without soil or fireworks with no fuel. He also says that the society is like Antaeus, a giant of Greek mythology who had to have contact with the earth in order to be strong. The earth is the common symbol in each metaphor. People live without consequences, seeking only pleasure and entertainment; they do not have access to things which would nurture and ground them. To Faber, that which gives pleasure is not automatically good.

10. Why, according to Faber, is it impossible to argue with the "parlor walls"?

The programs on the parlor walls are loud, fast, and immediate; they allow no time for argument. Books, on the other hand, can be put aside if a reader needs time to think of an argument. In addition, because television programs occur in real time, it is easy to confuse them with reality.

11. Faber warns Montag not to look for answers in one “person, machine, or library.” Where, according to Faber, do the answers lie?

Faber is trying to get Montag to think for himself. He cannot provide any wisdom other than urging Montag to use his own judgment.

12. What does Faber say about the public that echoes Beatty’s lecture?

He says that people chose to stop reading; it wasn’t something forced on them by the government. People want entertainment; they don’t want to be challenged.

13. How does Montag force Faber to become his guide?

He begins to destroy the copy of the Bible that he has brought. Faber’s pain at the destruction of the book emphasizes his position as the virtuous guide, in opposition to Beatty’s satanic character.

14. How is Faber’s use of technology different from society’s?

Faber built the earpiece hoping he might actually communicate with someone; most technology in their society prevents real communication and thought.

15. How is the “blind faith” that Montag has in Faber different from the blind faith that he had in the fire chief?

Faber acknowledges that Montag has to take what he (Faber) says on faith, but at least he is encouraging Montag to think for himself. Perhaps Montag is not yet ready to do things entirely on his own.

16. Faber reads Montag the Book of Job, about a virtuous man whose faith is tested by God. The main question of the Book of Job is why God allows pain and suffering in the world. Why might Bradbury have chosen the Book of Job for this moment in the story?

Montag has started to ask why things are the way they are, just like the Book of Job does.

17. What do the women do that drives Montag over the edge? To what does he compare them in his mind?

The parlor walls are so loud that the women have to scream at each other. The things they scream are almost completely meaningless. In addition, the images they are watching are brutally violent. The women are like saints in a church. Montag, during his visit to the church, is unable to summon up any emotional response to the sculptures of saints. Now he feels the same numbness as he looks into the faces of the women. It is his frustration at this numbness that pushes him to read the book of poetry. Bradbury may be saying that an inability to make an emotional connection is the root problem of his society.

18. From what the women say, what can we infer about the election?

All the women voted based on the appearances of the candidates. The more handsome, seemingly-charming man won. The loser was less attractive physically, and he used words his audience couldn't understand. Even their names influenced the vote; the women much preferred Winston Noble over Hubert Hoag. The election is managed just like any other televised program.

19. The poem that Montag reads is "Dover Beach," by Matthew Arnold. The speaker of this poem stands with his lover at night, watching the waves crash on the shore and the armed boats signal with their lights. He concludes that the world is not a caring or hopeful place, and hopes that their love will be able to survive. Why does Bradbury choose to have him read this poem?

The poem is a man's plea for some emotional connection in a harsh and violent world. Clearly, Montag lives in such a world; violence and killing are commonplace, and love is rare. Reading the poem is his way of seeking the same connection that the speaker in the poem does.

20. What does Bradbury tell us about the development of Montag's character in this section? What allusion is suggested in the references to fire, water, and wine?

Montag notices himself changing; with Faber's influence, he is becoming a different person, a combination of himself and Faber. Bradbury says that Montag's fire and Faber's water will eventually become wine. In the New Testament, Jesus is able to turn water into wine through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is sometimes identified with fire. There will, in other words, be a kind of divine transformation of basic elements into something new.

21. What is ironic about Beatty saying "the sheep returns to the fold"?

This is also language that echoes the New Testament. Jesus is sometimes called the Good Shepherd; the people in his care are his sheep. In the Gospels According to Matthew and Luke, Jesus says that it is right to leave ninety-nine sheep to look for one that is lost. Ironically, Montag, having strayed from the "flock," is the only one who is not lost.

22. Sum up the two sides of the argument in Beatty's dream.

Montag is arguing in favor of knowledge and truth; Beatty is saying that books and writing are insignificant compared with things like survival and power. As Montag becomes more upset, Beatty gently mocks his self-righteousness.

23. Why does Beatty's speech make Montag so upset?

Beatty is pointing out that works of literature, even works by the same author, may contradict one another. Although Montag thinks it is his duty to save books, the books may not save him; there are no certain answers to be found within them.

24. What images does Bradbury use to describe Beatty and the other firemen? What ideas do these images evoke?

Beatty, with his black raincoat flying behind him, looks like a “great black bat,” and the other firemen are “clumsy as spiders.” Bradbury’s imagery evokes night and the underworld.

Part Three: Burning Bright

1. To what story is Beatty alluding when he says Montag “wanted to fly near the sun”?

He is referring to the Greek myth about Daedalus and Icarus. Daedalus was a famous inventor. He made wings for himself and his son, Icarus, out of wax and feathers. Icarus, in his excitement, flew too near the sun; the wax melted, and he fell into the sea and drowned. Beatty is saying that Montag let his curiosity take him to dangerous extremes.

2. What, according to Beatty, is the real attraction of fire?

Beatty praises the destructive powers of fire; it can totally consume things so that they don’t have to be thought about any more.

3. What is the last thing that Montag burns?

The parlor walls are the last to go. Montag is baffled by the fact that he is making nothing out of something that is already nothing.

4. What does Montag mean when he says, “We never burned right”?

The statement is ambiguous. It could mean “We never burned correctly”—i.e., people could have used fire in its positive manifestation, for learning, understanding, and emotional connection. Or the “right” could be the same noun as in the phrase “know right from wrong,” and Montag could be saying that virtue survives and cannot be burnt.

5. Why does Montag run to Faber’s house?

Montag needs to have his faith reaffirmed, to “know there [is] a man like Faber in the world.”

6. Who almost kills Montag? What is the significance of the motivation for this attempted murder?

A car full of teenagers—strangers to Montag—tries to run him down for fun. This emphasizes the extent to which Montag’s fun-mad society has devolved.

7. Where does Faber advise Montag to travel? Why might this be thematically significant?

He tells Montag to follow the railroad tracks out into the country. Montag will be fleeing the city and all its evils in order to return to a more natural setting; in effect, he is going from Babylon back to the Garden of Eden.

8. Why does Bradbury compare the Hound to autumn? What other mention of autumn have we seen in the book?

It was autumn when Montag met Clarisse; it must now be almost early winter. Autumn is a time of ending and death; the Hound, like the fall season, is bringing an end to Montag's old life. In addition, autumn brings cold. Throughout the book, Bradbury has used words relating to cold to describe the machines that have replaced warm, living human beings.

9. Bradbury says that Montag feels the pressure of the Hound's silence rising. How does this echo the description of Montag burning his own parlor walls?

Bradbury described the process of setting fire to the parlor walls as making nothing out of something that was already nothing—the force of the vacuum almost overwhelmed Montag. The Hound also represents this emptiness; paradoxically, the emptiness fills up more and more space, threatening to suffocate Montag.

10. What is ironic about the broadcast of the chase?

All of the citizens in Elm Terrace watch Montag as if he is part of a television program. Throughout the book, characters have discussed how “real” the parlor walls seem. In this final section of the book, the real becomes television—Montag's actual fleeing for his life is turned into an interactive program. As part of this program, the citizens of Elm Terrace leave their televisions and actually look outside; they see the real real world.

11. Why does Bradbury describe the people looking out of their homes as gray?

Like the inhabitants of the Cave, they are unaccustomed to the outside; they have lived in a world of shadows.

12. What does Montag do right before he enters the river?

He touches the water to make sure it is real.

13. Verse 11 of the Book of Ecclesiastes reads as follows:

There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow.

How does this fit in with Montag's realization about the sun?

Montag realizes that time is unstoppable; all things pass away. If people do not work to preserve their history, it will pass away with them.

14. Why does Montag want “a glass of milk, an apple, a pear”?

These are symbolic of human contact. Sharing a meal with someone is one of the most ancient and sacred human interactions. Montag is afraid of being all alone in the natural world.

15. What language relating to fullness and emptiness does Bradbury use when Montag steps out of the river?

Montag fears the vastness of the world; he is at first overwhelmed by hugeness of the land and the billions of leaves in the forest. After noticing all the smells emanating from the forest, however, he understands that the natural world is full rather than empty. Unlike the parlor walls, the forest provides “more than enough.”

16. Montag's foot hits “something that (rings) dully”—it turns out to be the railroad track. What episode from earlier in the book does this sentence echo?

In the first part of the book, Montag's foot hit the empty medicine bottle, leading him to discover Mildred's overdose.

17. How is the campfire different from the other kinds of fire mentioned in the book?

The campfire is used for something positive: it helps the men stay warm. As Montag thinks to himself in surprise, it can “give as well as take.”

18. How does Montag's approaching the fire echo the story of Prometheus?

Montag, like men before they had fire, is almost animal. Coming near to the light and warmth—the fire symbolizing knowledge—he gains his humanity.

19. What is significant about the fact that the police find a substitute for Montag to end the chase?

The ending of Montag's escape and chase shows the extent of the public's simplemindedness, and the willingness of legal and media authorities to encourage this simplemindedness. Because the public has no attention span, having grown up on television clips and sound bites rather than real and in-depth reports, they will not wait long for their desire to see Montag caught and punished to be fulfilled. When it seems as if the search for Montag might take hours—or longer—the police choose a substitute, catch and kill him, and satisfy the public. This is more important than truth and justice.

20. How is the death of the substitute Montag symbolic?

The anonymous man, Montag's "shadow self," is destroyed, and the real Montag is brought back to life.

21. What theme of *Fahrenheit 451* does the title of Granger's book hint at?

*Granger's book is called The Fingers in the Glove; the Proper Relationship between the Individual and Society. Montag has rebelled against a tyrannical majority; he has become an outcast from his society. He should have been listened to, but instead he was almost destroyed. The relationship between individuals and society in *Fahrenheit 451* is off balance.*

22. What Biblical references does Granger make?

He mentions a "coat of a thousand colors." The Book of Genesis, Chapter 37, Verse 3, mentions a coat of many colors that the patriarch Jacob makes for his beloved son Joseph. Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery; they cover the coat with blood to make it seem like Joseph has been murdered. Then Granger says that the men are "the odd minority crying out in the wilderness." John the Baptist, the prophet who announces the coming of Jesus, calls himself the "voice of one crying in the wilderness," a phrase which goes back to the Book of Isaiah.

23. Chapter 19 of the Old Testament Book of Genesis tells the story of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the story, these cities are destroyed because of the sins of their people. One man, Lot, is righteous enough to be saved. He takes his wife and leaves the city; they are told by an angel not to look behind them. Lot's wife looks back anyway and is turned into a pillar of salt. What scene at the end of the book echoes this story?

Montag looks back at the city and realizes that his wife will be killed. He was able to leave, but she was not.

24. What symbolic action do the men take after they recover from the bombing?

They light a small fire. This recalls the fire that Prometheus brought to the first human beings.

25. Granger says that the men are “going to build a mirror factory.” What earlier events in the book does this wording recall?

Montag thought of Clarisse as a mirror; she was able to reflect other people's thoughts back to them. And in his imagination, right before Mildred died in the bombing, she saw the emptiness of herself in the mirror.

26. Does the book seem to have a hopeful or a pessimistic conclusion?

Both can be argued for. Granger emphasizes that even if they save the literature, it may not help mankind; like the phoenix, men have a tendency to destroy themselves no matter what they learn. But he also says, “We pick up a few more people that remember every generation,” indicating that some progress is being made. The last thing that Montag remembers is a line from the Book of Genesis about the tree of life. He understands that he can use these words, like the tree's healing leaves, to help other people.

27. A parable is a story that teaches a moral lesson. What is the lesson of *Fahrenheit 451*?

The main warning of the novel is that human beings are naturally destructive; technology must be carefully handled, or it will enhance this destructiveness.

Fahrenheit 451

Questions for Discussion

1. Was killing Captain Beatty right or wrong? Are books worth more than human beings?
2. Not only do most people in *Fahrenheit 451* not read, but they also don't write. What kinds of freedom does writing provide?
3. What are the benefits and drawbacks of democracy, according to the book?
4. Is censorship a natural result of majority rule?
5. With the Internet, information is available to everyone. Is this a good or a bad thing? What might Bradbury think about it?
6. Even though Montag has never been exposed to books, he has an affinity for them; he is able to be moved by words. Do all humans have this innate ability and desire, or is it something that has to be taught and fostered in the culture?
7. Beatty says that every fireman goes through what Montag is going through at some time or another. Do you think this is true? If so, have the other firemen been convinced by Beatty that they are doing the right thing?
8. Faber implies that people and society are not just the perpetrators, but the victims, of a shallow, unstable society. How can this be true?
9. Analyze Faber as a guide. What are his strengths and weaknesses?

Fahrenheit 451

Study Guide

Part One: The Hearth and the Salamander

1. In an ancient Greek myth, Prometheus, a son of Zeus, feels sorry for human beings, who are cold and helpless. He steals fire from the gods and gives it to mankind. Symbolically, the giving of fire is the beginning of wisdom and science. Fire is also destructive: the Christian Hell is supposed to be a place where people burn eternally, and some religions predict that the world will end in fire. What aspect of fire do we see in the opening of the book?

2. How does Bradbury characterize Montag in the opening paragraphs of the book? What details does he use to accomplish this characterization?

3. Why does Montag's helmet have the number 451 on it?

4. What details does Bradbury give to establish the setting of Montag's encounter with Clarisse? Why might these be significant?

5. What kinds of words and images does Bradbury use to characterize Clarisse? How might these be symbolic?

6. What distinction does Bradbury make between electric light and candlelight? In light of Montag's conversation with Clarisse, why might this be significant?

7. What do we learn about the society in which Clarisse and Montag live?

8. What question does Clarisse ask that upsets him?

9. Besides her complexion, what feature of Clarisse does Bradbury emphasize? Why does he do this?

10. What image associated with light does Montag think of in connection with Clarisse after he is back in his house?

11. What word does Montag think of repeatedly in connection with his bedroom and his wife? Why are these details here?

12. What is happening in the background as Montag dials the hospital? What do these suggest?

13. What is the most prominent feature of the machine used to pump Mildred's stomach? Why is this feature significant?

14. The technician tells Montag that cases like Mildred's are extremely common. What does this indicate about the state of Montag's society?

15. Describe the conversation between Montag and Mildred. What does it indicate about their relationship?

16. Describe the play coming on the "parlor walls." What does Montag seem to think about this form of entertainment? What does Mildred think?

17. What word does Mildred use to describe the play? What does this suggest about her character?

18. Compare Montag's conversation with Clarisse to his conversation with Mildred.

19. What images are linked to Clarisse in the passage describing her second conversation with Montag? Why might Bradbury use these images in connection with her?

20. What figure from mythology does the Mechanical Hound recall?

21. Bradbury's description of the Mechanical Hound makes it seem like a grotesque parody of a living thing. What are some details that contribute to this description?

22. Describe the relationship between Montag and Captain Beatty. What are some details that give us information about their relationship?

23. Clarisse notes that Montag's laugh sounds "more relaxed" than it did when they talked before. Trace the change in Montag from the beginning of the book until now.

24. What connection does Clarisse make between her school and the forms of entertainment that most of her peers prefer?

25. What, according to Clarisse, would prevent young people from being so violent and destructive?

26. An *allegory* is a story in which characters and objects have a direct symbolic function. In his philosophical dialogue, *The Republic*, the Greek philosopher Plato includes a passage known as “The Allegory of the Cave.” It imagines a group of people inside a cave, watching shadows playing on a wall. Unable to leave the cave, the people know only the shadows, and they believe that the shadows are reality. A person who escapes the cave and experiences the true reality is unable to convince the people chained in the cave of what he or she has seen. What allusion to this allegory occurs in this chapter?

27. When Montag asks Beatty about the history of fire departments, two other firemen pull out their handbooks to remind him of something he already knows. How have the firemen changed history to suit their own ideas? What point is Bradbury making by bringing up Benjamin Franklin here?

28. Explain the significance of the statement the woman in the house quotes before she is burned alive.

29. Beatty tells the woman that she has been “locked up...in a Tower of Babel.” To what is he referring?

30. What language relating to heat and cold does Bradbury use in the passage about Montag returning to bed and hiding the book?

31. Why does Montag begin to cry when he thinks about Mildred dying?

32. What is ironic about Montag referring to the people on the parlor walls as “relatives” and Mildred saying, “That’s my family”?

33. As Montag lies in bed thinking about what is wrong with his marriage, what episodes does he remember? Why are these significant?

34. How does Mildred treat Montag when he becomes ill?

35. How is Beatty characterized during his visit to Montag’s house? What words and details contribute to this characterization?

36. How does Bradbury build suspense during the passage describing Beatty’s visit?

37. What vital role do firemen play in society, according to Beatty?

38. Does Beatty really believe all of the things he tells Montag in the lecture? What evidence supports your answer?

39. What does Beatty say about pleasure and happiness?

40. During Montag's conversation with Mildred after Beatty leaves, what indication is there that she has internal conflict?

41. What book does Montag finally settle on to read with Mildred? What is the symbolism of this book?

Part Two: The Sieve and the Sand

1. The first two books mentioned in this section are by James Boswell, an eighteenth-century lawyer and friend of the writer Samuel Johnson. Boswell is best known for his biography of Johnson and his diaries describing their travels together. Why does Montag think these books have something to do with Clarisse?

2. What connection does Montag make between books and empathy?

3. In relation to the Allegory of the Cave, who would Faber be? What does he say that indicates this is the case?

4. Describe Montag's state of mind as he rides the train to see Faber. Has he made a complete break with his old self?

5. Why does Montag, at this point, have the memory about the sieve and the sand?

6. What Bible verse is Montag trying to memorize during the train ride? Who or what is his antagonist in this scene?

7. What, according to Faber, has been done to Jesus by the television programs?

8. What does Faber mean when he says that good books have “pores”?

9. What metaphors does Faber use to describe the texture that good literature has? What do all of these metaphors have in common, and what is Faber’s larger message here?

10. Why, according to Faber, is it impossible to argue with the “parlor walls”?

11. Faber warns Montag not to look for answers in one “person, machine, or library.” Where, according to Faber, do the answers lie?

12. What does Faber say about the public that echoes Beatty’s lecture?

13. How does Montag force Faber to become his guide?

14. How is Faber's use of technology different from society's?

15. How is the "blind faith" that Montag has in Faber different from the blind faith that he had in the fire chief?

16. Faber reads Montag the Book of Job, about a virtuous man whose faith is tested by God. The main question of the Book of Job is why God allows pain and suffering in the world. Why might Bradbury have chosen the Book of Job for this moment in the story?

17. What do the women do that drives Montag over the edge? To what does he compare them in his mind?

18. From what the women say, what can we infer about the election?

19. The poem that Montag reads is "Dover Beach," by Matthew Arnold. The speaker of this poem stands with his lover at night, watching the waves crash on the shore and the armed boats signal with their lights. He concludes that the world is not a caring or hopeful place, and hopes that their love will be able to survive. Why does Bradbury choose to have him read this poem?

20. What does Bradbury tell us about the development of Montag's character in this section? What allusion is suggested in the references to fire, water, and wine?

21. What is ironic about Beatty saying "the sheep returns to the fold"?

22. Sum up the two sides of the argument in Beatty's dream.

23. Why does Beatty's speech make Montag so upset?

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Fahrenheit 451

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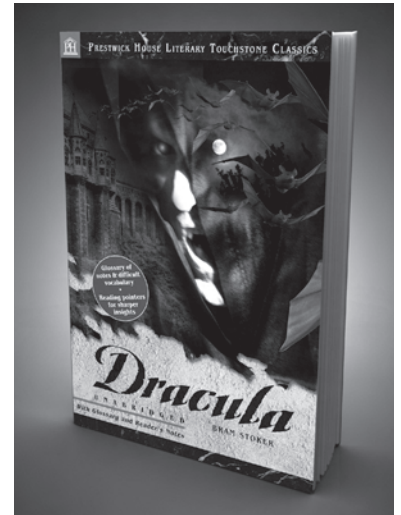
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School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: _____ Email: _____

ITEM NO	TITLE	QUANTITY	X	PRICE	=	TOTAL

Method of Payment (Choose one)

Check or Money Order Enclosed
 Visa MasterCard Discover Card American Express

Purchase Order Enclosed
We accept purchase orders and authorized orders charged to institutions. Personal orders not on a credit card must be accompanied by a check.

Signature _____

Telephone # _____ Exp. Date _____

Credit Card # _____

Subtotal	\$
Shipping 12% S&H (\$6.00 minimum)	\$
Total	\$

Shipping & Handling
 For orders of \$50.00 or less, please add \$6.00 for shipping and handling charges. For orders from \$50.01 to \$799.99 add 12%. For orders of \$800.00 and more, add 10%

Delivery Service
 Most orders are shipped FedEx and you can expect delivery within 7-10 working days. Items in stock are usually shipped within one working day of receiving your order.

Expedited Delivery
 for expedited delivery ask about the following options:
 • Overnight Air
 • 2nd day air
 • 3 Day Select

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