

Mrs. Hernandez
Honors American Literature Junior Year

Fahrenheit 451 Summer Reading Assignment

Fahrenheit 451 is a dystopian novel published in 1953, during the Cold War, yet Bradbury's message is relevant to the society we live in today; a society addicted to technology and ignorant of social norms. Please read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury and complete the assignment below and turn in the first day of school. This will be your first grade for your junior year; please work hard to start your year on a good note. I will grade this assignment based on accuracy. There are 63 questions so each will count as 1.5 points.

I am a huge advocate of hand written work; it improves memory, creativity, reading fluency, and focus. When we engage the body by writing with our hands it creates a holistic experience and allows us to slow down and fully engage with our thoughts. With that said, we will write a lot with pen and paper this year! You are required to use a composition notebook for your Summer Reading Assignment, which you will use as a journal to answer the questions listed below.

Directions: Please read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury and answer each comprehension question using complete sentences in your composition notebook. Please label your answers by section and number your answers.

“The Hearth and the Salamander”

Section One (Pages 3-24)

Overview: Montag, the protagonist, appears to be happy in his job as a fireman. He is distressed about his wife Mildred's suicide attempt. His meetings with Clarisse, however, have a powerful influence on him. His second self, the one who isn't happy, is disturbed by Clarisse. In fact, she seems to be a mirror of his inner thoughts and feelings.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Montag is a fireman of the future. Explain what he means when he says, “It was a pleasure to burn.”
2. Instead of water, what does the fire hose spray?
3. Describe the sounds and scents associated with Clarisse.
4. For what “crimes” has Clarisse's uncle been arrested? What does this tell you about this society?
5. What question does Clarisse ask Montag? (Hint: 3 words)
6. Describe the atmosphere inside Montag's house.
7. When Montag gets home from work, he realizes that Mildred has taken an entire bottle of sleeping pills. Compare the two hospital “handymen” with today's healthcare

workers.

8. How does Mildred react after she wakes up from her attempted suicide?
9. Describe the set-up of Montag's TV room.
10. What is Clarisse doing when Montag sees her? (p. 21)

Section Two (Pages 24-48)

Overview: Notice the developing character of Beatty, who seems to be totally unfeeling. Beatty also seems to be suspicious of Montag. The introduction of the Mechanical Hound is important since it stands in such harsh contrast to the friendly, cute Dalmatian typically associated with firemen. The fire at the old woman's house transforms Montag. He realizes the difference between things and people, which seems to be the same to Beatty. Mildred's emptiness and robot-like reactions make him realize how isolated he feels. Clarisse's death adds to his despair.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. The Mechanical Hound is the mascot of the fire department. Describe who its victims are and how they are killed. (p. 25)
2. How does the Mechanical Hound react to Montag?
3. Describe school in the world of Fahrenheit 451.
4. Why does society consider Clarisse "anti-social"? (p. 29)
5. How do teenagers amuse themselves in their free time? (pp. 29-30)
6. What happened to Clarisse's friends?
7. What do the rule books say about the Firemen of America? (pp. 34-35).
8. What reasons does Beatty give for burning books?
9. What startling news does Mildred reveal to Montag? (p. 47)

Section Three (Pages 48-68)

Overview: Beatty's long speech in this section deserves careful study. He is a spokesman for the masses, and his explanation for the insanity of this society almost seems to make sense. A close reading of this speech offers an opportunity to think about the consequences of censorship and the meaning of the word "equal." Montag's metamorphosis is now well under way; he knows there is something in books that he needs and wants to understand. He hopes the truth he seeks is enough to awaken Mildred from her zombie-like existence.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Montag once described the smell of kerosene in a positive way. How does the fact that it now makes him sick connect with the plot?
2. The old woman refuses to abandon her books. What effect does this have on the firemen?
3. How does Mildred react when Montag tells her about the old woman burning alive with her books? (pp.49-51)
4. Why must fire captains have book knowledge?
5. Where does Montag hide the book he stole? (p. 53) What does Mildred do when she finds it? (p. 66)

6. Why does Beatty visit? (p. 52)
7. What literature is allowable in this society? (p. 57)
8. Montag asks, "How do people like Clarisse come to exist in our world?" How does Beatty reply? (p. 60)

"The Sieve and the Sand"

Section Four (Pages 71-93)

Overview: Montag is now acting as his second self, the one that Clarisse brought out. His "fireman" self is still with him, but he is beginning to have his own thoughts about how to save society from what he now recognizes as a terrible mistake. Faber is an important mentor and teacher to Montag.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Mildred react to Montag's reading?
2. What answers does Montag give to Mildred's question, "Why should I read? What for?" (p. 73)
3. What comes sniffing around the door as Montag is reading?
4. Montag needs a teacher to help him understand books, and he remembers that the old man in the park is a retired English professor. What is his name? (p. 75)
5. What problem does Montag have regarding which book to turn in to Beatty? (p. 76)
6. Why does Faber see himself as a coward and Montag as a brave man? (pp. 81-82)
7. Describe the plan that Faber and Montag devise.
8. Describe the device that Faber invents. How will Montag use it? (p. 90)

Section 5 (Pages 93-110)

Overview: Montag's tirade against the women is his first attempt to express his revolutionary thoughts and feelings to someone from the zombie-world. He realizes he has made an error, and this makes him nervous at the fire station, where Beatty tells him about a "dream" he had. Beatty spits out literary quotes that contradict one another and completely confuse Montag.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the conversation between Millie and her friends.
2. What does Montag do that irritates the women? (p. 94)
3. Describe Mrs. Bowles' parenting methods. (p. 96)
4. Describe the superficial voting practices of the women. (pp. 96-97)
5. What does Montag say to Mrs. Bowles just before she leaves? (p. 101)
6. How is Montag greeted by Beatty at the firehouse? (pp. 104-105)
7. What address is typed out on the alarm report?

"Burning Bright"

Section 6 (Pages 113-136)

Overview: This section can be easily understood on a symbolic level. As he burns his house and then turns his torch on Beatty, Montag is also burning his past and any possibility of continuing his old life. When Montag realizes that Beatty wants to die, the reader sees that Beatty has a second self, too, one perhaps very similar to the person Montag is becoming. As Montag hears the announcement that the threat of war is now a declared reality, he begins his own battle. He argues with himself and even considers giving up. As he takes the books to Black's house and phones in the alarm, he acts as a sort of behind-the-lines rebel. The ten-lane highway he crosses is like a battlefield, and the children in the car want to kill him even though they have no idea who he is, just as young soldiers in battle kill enemy soldiers. By the time he arrives at Faber's, Montag is energized and in charge of his life. He is doing his own thinking now. His heroism even makes the frail Faber "feel alive."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Bradbury compare the scene at Montag's house to a carnival?
2. How does Beatty describe Clarisse?
3. What does Mildred regret losing in the fire?
4. Who turned in the alarms?
5. How does Beatty discover the two-way radio?
6. What happens to Montag's leg that it becomes "a numbness in a numbness hollowed into a numbness"?
7. What two announcements does Montag hear on the Seashell radio?
8. What happens when Montag crosses the highway?
9. Where will Faber be going on the 5:00 A.M. bus?

Section 7 (Pages 137-154)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. What new "game" does the police invent?
2. What does Montag's desperate flight remind him of?
3. What does Montag think about as he drifts down the river?
4. What terrifies Montag as he steps onto land?
5. What does Granger give Montag to throw the Hound off his track?
6. What "snap ending" had to be created for the "chase show" on TV?
7. Who are the members of the group that Montag meets in the woods? (p. 150)

Section 8 (Pages 154-165)

Overview: Granger's speech about his grandfather ranks in importance with the speeches of Faber and Beatty. The idea that it is what we do in life that matters is worth thinking about. In fact, Montag realizes he doesn't miss Mildred because she never did a thing. Montag is a little disappointed that the men in the forest aren't action-oriented. Compared to them, he seems

idealistic and full of energy to make changes. After the bombs destroy the city, Granger cynically says that it's history repeating itself in another cycle of destroy-and-rebuild, and he reminds the men to always keep in mind that they are nothing. Bradbury makes a valid point here about learning from past mistakes. (Hint: Is there anything to note on your list of quotes and page numbers?)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Granger tell Montag the story about his grandfather?
2. What does Montag picture Mildred doing during the bomb blast?
3. Where is Faber when the bombs hit?
4. How is the legend of the phoenix related to the story? (p. 163)
5. Discuss the meaning and importance of building a mirror factory.