

# Fahrenheit 451



By

Ray Bradbury

A Novel Study  
by Joel Michel Reed

# Fahrenheit 451

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each section of the novel study focuses on one chapter of **Fahrenheit 451** and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identify/create *similes*
6. Use of singular / plural nouns
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *anagrams*
10. Identify *personification*

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a short story.
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Sheet
9. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip.

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## Synopsis

Ray Bradbury's internationally acclaimed novel *Fahrenheit 451* is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future.

Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden.

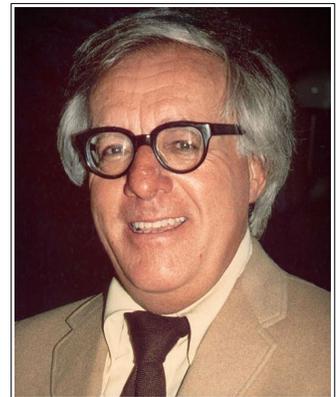
Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television “family”. But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television.

When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life. (The Publisher – Simon and Schuster)

## Author Biography

*Ray Bradbury*

**Ray Bradbury** (1920-2012) was the author of more than three dozen books, including *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *Dandelion Wine*, and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, as well as hundreds of short stories. He wrote for the theatre, cinema, and TV, including the screenplay for John Huston's *Moby Dick* and the Emmy Award-winning teleplay *The Halloween Tree*, and adapted for television sixty-five of his stories for The Ray Bradbury Theatre. He was the recipient of the 2000 National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the 2007 Pulitzer Prize Special Citation, and numerous other honors. (The Publisher – S & S)





# Fahrenheit 451



*By Ray Bradbury*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 1 – The Hearth and the Salamander



Before you read the chapter:

*Fahrenheit 451* is frequently classified as a 'dystopian' novel. Do a bit of research in your school library or the Internet and list at least three other novels that also fit into this category.

Novel 1		Author 1	
Novel 2		Author 2	
Novel 3		Author 3	



Vocabulary (Activity A):

Choose a word from the list that means the same or nearly the same as the underlined word(s).

screaming	quivering	entirely	misadventure
fervent	laughing	tremendous	shining
transcribed	exasperating	jesting	saturated

1	Later, going to sleep, he would feel the <u>fiery</u> smile still gripped by his face muscles, in the dark.	
2	The trees overhead made a <u>great</u> sound of letting down their dry rain.	
3	“Strange. I heard once that a long time ago houses used to burn by <u>accident</u> and they needed firemen to <i>stop</i> the flames.”	
4	How rarely did other people's faces take of you and throw back to you your own expression, your own innermost <u>trembling</u> thoughts.	
5	He stood very straight and listened to the person on the dark bed in the <u>completely</u> featureless night.	
6	Toast popped out of the silver toaster, was seized by a spidery metal hand that <u>drenched</u> it with melted butter.	
7	“Yes, I have. God knows why. You're peculiar, you're <u>aggravating</u> , yet you're easy to forgive. You say you're seventeen?”	
8	“All of those chemical balances and percentages on all of us here in the house are <u>recorded</u> in the master file downstairs.	

## Vocabulary (Activity B):

Write a **sentence** using ten of the following words. Make sure that the meaning of the word is clear in your sentence.

Luxuriously	
Lengthened	
Transformed	
Dimensions	
Pedestrian	
Subconscious	
Collapsing	
Experienced	
Tremendous	
Occasional	
Disposable	
Aggravating	

# Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story as Chapter One begins.


2. Why did Montag seem so upset when he first met Clarisse?


3. What were the unusual treatments that the emergency team performed on Mildred after she took the bottle of sleeping pills?


4. What do you think the author intended to say when he made the following statement:  
*“Well, after all, this is the age of the disposable tissue. Blow your nose on a person, wad them, flush them away, reach for another, blow, wad, flush. Everyone using everyone else's coat-tails. How are you supposed to root for the home team when you don't even have a program or know the names?”*


5. Why did Clarisse say that she hated going to school?


6. Write a brief description on each of the personalities of the following characters:

Guy Montag	
Clarisse McClellan	
Mildred Montag	

7. The author seems to paint a rather bleak picture of society in *Fahrenheit 451*. In your own words, describe the kind of society that you feel would be the most ideal.


8. There are several examples in this chapter where the author uses strange words to describe particular objects. For example, a portable radio is often referred to as an 'audio-seashell'. Find another such example from *The Hearth and The Salamander*.

Word	Description

9. Why did Montag cry at the thought of Mildred's death?


10. Describe the significance of the following statement, and it's potential implications:  
*"School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work. Why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?"*


## Language Activities



**A. PERSONIFICATION** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here is an example taken from *Fahrenheit 451*: "As he stood there the sky over the house screamed. There was a tremendous ripping sound as if two giant hands had torn ten thousand miles of black linen down the seam. Montag was cut in half."



Why do you think personification is a popular literary device used by many authors?


Create your own example of personification.


**B.** Rewrite the following sentences putting in the **correct capitalization** and **punctuation**.

i didn't know that montag laughed abruptly

--

sure she'll be okay we got all the mean stuff right in our suitcase here it can't get at her now as i said you take out the old and put in the new and you're okay


that's what I thought she chewed her toast sore stomach but I'm hungry as all get-out hope I didn't do anything foolish at the party


**C.** Copy out any three sentences from these chapters and underline the **nouns** and circle the **pronouns**.


**D.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. Here's an example from chapter two: *“He glanced back at the wall. How like a mirror, too, her face. Impossible; for how many people did you know that refracted your own light to you? People were more often-he searched for a simile, found one in his work-torches, blazing away until they whiffed out. How rarely did other people's faces take of you and throw back to you your own expression, your own innermost trembling thought?”*



What two things are being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) A baby crying.


b) A man laughing.


## E. Observation Chart

*Fahrenheit 451* is a novel filled with sights and sounds. Look back over the first chapter and get as many examples of the five senses, then list them in the chart below with a brief description about where each was found. You may wish to choose your examples from one particular scene, or include a number of different scenes.



Sight	Sound	Touch	Taste	Smell

## F. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **SUED** can also form the word **USED**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



- read the clue in the right-hand column.
- Using the word in the left-hand column move [all of] the letters around in any order.

Word	Anagram	Clue
Allergy		A room or building for the display or sale of works of art.
Cautioned		The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction.
Claimed		Relating to the science or practice of medicine.
Streaming		Obtaining great skill of a particular art or activity.
Spiracle		An exact copy or model of something.
Trounces		To give an account of an event or experience.
Reductions		To make known by name to another in person.