



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Martian Chronicles

Ray Bradbury

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Martian Chronicles

Ray Bradbury

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

ISBN 978-1-50203-982-8

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Author	3
Background Information	4
Initiating Activities.....	7
Eleven Sections	13
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	29
Post-reading Extension Activities.....	31
Assessment.....	32
Glossary.....	33

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Research, analyze,
brainstorm, critical thinking,
comparison

Listening/Speaking

Viewing, music, drama,
discussion

Writing

Poetry, prose, sequel,
Negro spiritual, dirge

Comprehension

Predicting, cause/effect,
inference

Vocabulary

Key words, definitions,
application

Literary Elements

Metaphor, simile, symbolism,
characterization, irony,
personification, conflict,
theme, universality,
foreshadowing

Across the Curriculum:

Art—collage, caricature,
sketch; History—research;
Music—lyrics, mood

Genre: science fiction

Point of View: third-person omniscient

Style: a series of short stories in narrative form

Setting: primarily Mars; 1999–2026; secondarily Earth

First Publication Date: 1950; Bradbury wrote and copyrighted some of the short stories earlier, beginning in 1946 with "The Million-Year Picnic," which is the last story in the book.

Themes: survival, colonialism, racism, censorship, fear

Conflict: person vs. person; person vs. self; clash between Martians and Earth Men

Summary

The series of short stories presents different characters in diverse situations. A thread of commonality, human invasion and colonization of Mars, ties the stories together. Four expeditions from Earth arrive on Mars, with varying receptions. The first three are unsuccessful and end in the deaths of the Earth Men. The fourth expedition is successful, and the men from Earth discover that almost all the Martians have died from chicken pox. Settlers from Earth begin to arrive and establish homes, and a few people encounter Martians. Mars becomes inhabited by people of all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. All but a few people from Earth return to their homeland when they discover it is being attacked by atomic warfare. One family escapes the devastation on Earth to arrive on Mars, and the father tells his sons that they are now Martians. He expresses hope for the future and anticipates the arrival of another family.

About the Author

Personal Information: Ray Douglas Bradbury was born August 22, 1920, in Waukegan, Illinois, the third son of Leonard and Esther Marie Bradbury. The family alternately lived in Waukegan and Tucson, Arizona, between 1926 and 1933, then moved to Los Angeles, California, in 1934. While attending Los Angeles High School, Bradbury actively participated in the drama club. He graduated from high school in 1938, ending his formal education, but he continued with his own self-education. He and Marguerite "Maggie" McClure were married in 1947. They have four daughters, Susan, Ramona, Bettina, and Alexandra, and eight grandchildren. He and his wife continue to live in Los Angeles.

Literary Career: Bradbury began to write seriously while in high school, and his first short story, "Hollerbochen's Dilemma," appeared in 1938 in the amateur fan magazine *Imagination*. Four issues of his own fan magazine, *Futura Fantasia*, were published in 1939, and he wrote a great deal of the content himself. The first story he sold was "Pendulum," a short story that was published in *Super Science Stories* in 1941. He began writing full time in 1943, following the success of the story, "The Lake," which also established his unique writing style. His short story, "The Big Black and White

Game" was selected for publication in *Best American Short Stories* in 1945. His first collection of short stories, *Dark Carnival*, was published in 1947. *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) established his reputation as a leading writer of science fiction. *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) is one of his best-known works. In addition to an abundance of short stories over the past five decades, he has written novels, plays, essays, and poetry. His most recent work, *One More for the Road: A New Short Story Collection*, was published in 2002. In addition, he has been involved in many Hollywood productions, including episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Twilight Zone*, and his own series, *Ray Bradbury Theater*. He contributed to the development of "Spaceship Earth" at EPCOT. He continues to write and lecture occasionally.

Honors and Awards: The O. Henry Award, the Benjamin Franklin Award (1954), the Aviation-Space Writer's Association for Best Article in an American Magazine (1967), the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America.

Background Information

The science fiction genre is based on real or imaginary developments and events in science and/or technology. Basic themes usually include space travel, time travel, life on other planets or in other worlds, extraordinary inventions, and the invasion of Earth by aliens from outer space. Bradbury reverses the latter theme by having Earth Men invade Mars.

The Martian Chronicles was first published in 1950, during the "Cold War," a time of mutual distrust between the communist and non-communist nations. Following World War II, intense rivalry existed between the USSR and its communist allies (the Eastern Bloc) and the United States and its democratic allies (the Western Bloc), and the world faced the threat of World War III. In the novel, Bradbury alludes to the nuclear arms race, and Earth is eventually obliterated by an atomic war. Although the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was not created until 1958, Bradbury's book features interplanetary rocket travel.

Bradbury also refers to the problem of racism in America. In 1950, the violation of civil rights against African Americans was rampant, especially in the South. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation of blacks in public school was unconstitutional. During this era, federal, state, and local governments passed many civil rights laws, and Martin Luther King became the predominant spokesperson for his people during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Mars is the fourth closest planet to the sun; Earth is the third closest. Mars is slightly over half the diameter of Earth. Details of the surface of Mars can be seen from the earth. Its name is derived from the association of its reddish color with the ancient Romans' bloody-red god of war, Mars. Mars is known to have cold, dry wind and a thin atmosphere.

Character Attribute Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web for a character in *The Martian Chronicles*.

A central circle is connected to five surrounding circles. The central circle has a horizontal line for a name. The surrounding circles are labeled: 'His/her statements' (top), 'His/her thoughts' (top-left), 'His/her behavior' (top-right), 'Others' statements about him/her' (bottom-left), and 'Others' statements toward him/her' (bottom). The bottom-right circle is labeled 'Others' behavior toward him/her'.

His/her statements

His/her thoughts

His/her behavior

Others' statements about him/her

Others' statements toward him/her

Others' behavior toward him/her

“—and the Moon be Still as Bright,” pp. 48–72

The fourth expedition arrives on Mars and discovers that the Martians have died from chicken pox. The men experience conflict within their own ranks, and several die.

Vocabulary

blasphemy (49)	caper (49)	vamped (55)	bigots (64)
pagan (66)	propagation (67)	naïve (67)	cynics (67)
sarcophagus (72)			

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the crew members of the fourth expedition and compare with the students' impression of astronauts today. *(Most of the crew is rowdy, inconsiderate, and uneducated. They show no respect for Mars or its former inhabitants. Some of them want to party and celebrate, even after they learn of the Martians' extinction. Captain Wilder, Hathaway, and Spender do not join in the "festivities" and are considerate of the land and its former inhabitants. Student response will vary as to the impression of astronauts. Suggestion: Astronauts today are viewed as highly educated, goal-oriented, poised, and courageous. They view other planets with respect. pp. 48–55)*
2. Discuss what men of the fourth expedition discover about Mars and how this happened. *(Martians have died from chicken pox. Their metabolism reacted differently than Americans' to the disease, and the chicken pox burned them black and dried them to brittle flakes. pp. 48–50)*
3. Analyze Spender and his reaction to the other men. Discuss why Captain Wilder reacts as he does to the necessity of killing Spender. *(Spender is awed by Mars and reflects on the beauty of the land. He feels that the Martians' deaths from chicken pox were unjust. He resents the frivolity and lack of respect of the crew members in the stillness of the death of a civilization and is ashamed of their behavior. He feels the Martians are watching them and that they should respect the spirit of things that had been. He does not want men from Earth to come to Mars to commercialize and pollute the land. Frustrated and angry, he leaves the group. After several days, he returns and kills six of the men but is unable to "complete the job" because of his adverse physical reaction to the murders. Although Captain Wilder knows Spender will kill again and must die, he respects Spender for his mentality toward Mars and its former inhabitants and his philosophy about returning to Earth. Wilder demands that Spender's death be clean—one hole through the chest. pp. 51–69)*
4. Examine Bradbury's view of pollution as revealed in this section. *(He is cynical about the pollution in America. Through Spender's voice, he expresses the view that Americans have a talent for ruining big beautiful things, whether in their own country or another. p. 54)*
5. Discuss the significance of Cherokee. *(He represents the minority figure in a typical grouping of soldiers, etc., especially during World War II. Cherokee's response to Spender's question about how he would feel if he were a Martian and people tore up his land indicates that he understands the Martians' plight. He says that he is all for the Martians. Cherokee reflects on the mistreatment of Native Americans in an earlier era, yet he thinks Spender is crazy. Spender kills him. p. 60)*

-
6. Examine the interaction of Spender and Capt. Wilder. *(They have mutual respect for each other. Both want to preserve Mars. Spender will not kill Wilder because they are alike. Wilder must kill Spender, but he insists it be done cleanly with one bullet in the chest, and finally does it himself. He buries Spender in a Martian tomb, symbolic of the last Martian. pp. 63–71)*
 7. Analyze Spender's rationale for killing members of the rocket crew. *(Spender calls himself the last Martian. He recalls a visit to Mexico City, where he saw the aftereffects of Cortez's arrival, i.e., the destruction of a civilization by greedy, righteous bigots. He believes the same thing will happen to Mars when Americans invade the planet. They have already brought disease, causing the death of the Martians, in one of the earlier expeditions. The Americans plan to establish atomic research. Bomb depositories on Mars will destroy all that is left. He views the men he killed as being part of the desecration of Mars. p. 64)*
 8. Read aloud the poem "So We'll Go No More A-Roving," (Lord Byron, 1817). Analyze the significance of the title of this chapter, "—and the Moon be Still as Bright" which is taken from Byron's poem. *(The poem refers to the inevitability of death. Spender quotes the poem after viewing the stillness of the Martian city and reflecting on mental images of those who had lived and died there. He says that the poem fits the city and how the Martians must feel, if any are alive to feel. He thinks the poem might have been written by the last Martian poet. The moon is still bright and the city still stands, but the Martians no longer live to enjoy the pleasures of their life. pp. 54–57)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Have students research a prior example of massive death due to disease, e.g., the bubonic plague, smallpox, etc., then prepare a short report for class discussion in which they correlate this with the death of the Martians.
2. Have students write a brief response in which they agree or disagree with the statement, "The majority is always holy" (p. 69).
3. Literary Devices: **Similes**—fire...like an offering to a dead god (p. 49); [dead bodies] like walking in a pile of autumn leaves; like sticks and pieces of burnt newspaper (p. 50); [accordion] sounded like a dying animal (p. 55); [walking in Mexico city] like entering a vast open library or mausoleum (p. 56); [Spender] like a dog in a bone yard (p. 59) **Metaphors**—Mars: immense tomb (p. 49); men of fourth expedition: kids in rompers (p. 55)