

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Fahrenheit 451**

by Ray Bradbury

written by Ashlin Bray

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Item No. 200522

# Fahrenheit 451

## Note to the Teacher

Note to the Teacher: *Fahrenheit 451* includes instances of mild profanity, sexuality, suicide, and drug.

All references come from the Del Ray edition of *Fahrenheit 451*, published by Ballantine Books, April 1991.

# Fahrenheit 451

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit the students will be able to:*

1. identify the main themes of the story.
2. discuss elements in the story that classify it as science fiction.
3. develop a character sketch of Montag, Mildred, Beatty, and Faber.
4. cite static and dynamic characters and give reasons for their classifications.
5. discuss the role of a hero in a story and identify heroes and anti-heroes in this story.
6. discuss the symbolism used in Fahrenheit 451.
7. analyze the concepts of conformity and rebellion as illustrated in the book.
8. give a chronological summary of the story.
9. discuss the concepts of utopian and dystopian society and cite instances of both types of depictions in the story.
10. discuss the role and importance of propaganda in the story, citing incidents including the Seashell, the televisor set-up in the parlor walls, and the televised chase for Montag.

# Fahrenheit 451

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Fahrenheit 451 was first published in 1950. Discuss developments in the story that have come into mainstream society. Do these developments make the story seem more or less believable to you? Explain why.
2. Contrast Mildred's use of the Seashell with Montag's use of the device Faber invented. One device was treated in the story as evil or negative, and one was portrayed as helpful. Explain the different moral presentations of the devices, their uses, and their importance to the story.
3. Discuss the use of symbols in the story, including the phoenix, the salamander, and the number 451.
4. Analyze the character of Captain Beatty. Include his role as the captain in the firehouse, his meeting to counsel Montag, his use of literary quotations, his library, and his death.
5. Contrast Clarisse McClellan and Mildred Montag.
6. Remembering that this novel was written in 1950, contrast the treatment of women in the story with the role of women in society today.
7. Discuss your personal opinion of how Fahrenheit 451 describes—or contrasts with—the world today.
8. Discuss the use of the Mechanical Hound in the three sections of the story.
9. Discuss the quotation, "Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Discuss the initial use of the quotation and how it could later be applied to other incidents in the story.
10. Discuss Faber's analysis of Jesus.
11. Faber instructs Montag in the three elements needed for happiness. Show how Montag acquires or recognizes these elements in the course of the story.
12. A society is called Utopian when it strives for the happiness of all its citizens. Two different societies are portrayed in the novel: the mainstream society and the society of the literary men in the woods. Discuss both in terms of the Utopian model, showing how they aim for the happiness of those who live there, and how they succeed or fail.
13. Trace the development of Montag's character from being a rather anonymous fireman to being a rebel to being a leader of those who survive the war.
14. Suggest other appropriate titles for this novel.

# Fahrenheit 451

## Part I: The Hearth and the Salamander

### Vocabulary

**abruptly** – suddenly  
**abyss** – a void, emptiness  
**adders** – snakes  
**ballistics** – the science of the motion of projectiles in flight  
**bestial** – beast-like  
**buckling** – yielding; collapsing  
**cacophony** – harsh or painful sounds  
**centrifuge** – a machine that uses centrifugal force to simulate gravitational effects  
**clarified** – made clear  
**condensations** – abridgements  
**conjure** – beg; make, construct  
**dictum** – an order  
**dike** – a dam  
**fathoms** – distances of 6 feet  
**feigning** – faking  
**gibbering** – babbling  
**gilt** – golden  
**gorging** – eating greedily  
**gullet** – the throat  
**heresy** – disbelief in the established religion or rules  
**igniter** – a lighter  
**intact** – entire; complete  
**jargon** – a type of language used by a specific group, vocation, etc.  
**lubricated** – oiled  
**luminescent** – glowing  
**mausoleum** – a large tomb  
**noncombustible** – not burnable  
**objectivity** – impartiality  
**odious** – hateful  
**olfactory** – related to the sense of smell  
**pratfall** – a fall made on purpose  
**proclivities** – inclinations; desires  
**pulverized** – smashed to bits  
**quibble** – argue  
**rasping** – harsh sounding  
**ravenous** – extremely hungry  
**refracted** – altered and distorted  
**sauterne** – the color of white wine

22. What is Mildred's reaction when Montag reads from the first book? What does this indicate about Mildred's character?

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23. What is the significance of the sentence Montag reads about people dying rather than breaking the small ends of eggs?

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24. What are some of the science fiction elements depicted in this section of the book?

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25. What thematic concepts have been introduced in the story so far?

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### Part III: Burning Bright

#### Vocabulary

aesthetic – visually pleasing  
allotted – permitted; given  
convolutions – complicated curves and windings in the brain  
dilate – to widen  
gout – a gush  
illuminated – lit up  
incessantly – without stopping  
incite – to spur into action; to urge  
incriminate – to show evidence of involvement in a crime  
juggernaut – a massive force that crushes anything in its path  
liquefaction – process of becoming a liquid  
litterateur – a literary person  
oblivion – condition of forgetting everything or being completely forgotten by others; death  
obscure – vague  
pedants – people who show off their knowledge  
plummeting – falling  
prattled – chattered meaninglessly  
probability – likelihood  
procaine – an anesthetic  
pyre – a heap of wood on which a body is burned  
ricocheted – rebounded  
rigidity – hardness; stiffness  
scuttling – moving quickly  
scythe – a long curved blade for cutting grass; carried by a symbol of death, the “Grim Reaper”  
trajectory – a curving path  
vacuum – an emptiness  
valise – a suitcase

1. What is the allusion in Beatty's first statement to Montag?

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2. Beatty realizes what caused Montag to start thinking. What or who was it?

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