

Definitions to know:

- 1) Social criticism
- 2) Science fiction
- 3) Dystopia
- 4) Conformity
- 5) Censorship

# Fahrenheit 451 Study Guide

Part 1 Questions "The Hearth and the Salamander:"

1. Identify Guy Montag and describe his job.
2. Describe Clarisse McClellan.
3. What smelled like perfume to Montag?
4. During his conversation, Montag says, "You never wash it off completely" referring to kerosene. What could this mean symbolically?
5. Why was Clarisse introduced before Mildred, Montag's wife?
6. Clarisse asked Montag if he was happy. Was he?
7. Who is Mildred, and what happened to her?
8. Why did Emergency Hospital send technicians instead of doctors to treat Mildred?
9. What are parlor-walls?
10. How is life different in Montag's home as compared to Clarisse's home?
11. Describe the mechanical hound.
12. What did Montag believe had been done to the hound?
13. Why was Clarisse considered anti-social?
14. Who gave Clarisse most of her information about the way life used to be?
15. Who was Captain Beatty?
16. How did the firemen know which houses had books?
17. What lie did Captain Beatty tell Montag?
18. What did Montag do in the old lady's attic?
19. Why were the alarms to burn always at night?
20. Why did the old woman light the match and commit suicide?
21. What happened to Clarisse? How did it happen? Was it an accident?
22. What was Montag afraid Captain Beatty would discover when he came to visit?
23. Why did Captain Beatty believe books should be destroyed?
24. What did Montag show Mildred after the captain had left the house?
25. List as many things as you can that Beatty talks about in his speech to Montag that are true about our world.

Part 2 Questions "The Sieve and the Sand:"

1. When was the last liberal arts college shut down?
2. Who was Faber?
3. Why did Montag go to see Faber?
4. What three elements did Faber feel were missing from life?
5. What plan did Montag and Faber devise?
6. What was Montag willing to do to convince Faber to help carry out the plan?
7. What had Faber designed that allowed him to be in constant contact with Montag?
8. Why did Faber decide to go to St. Louis?
9. Why did Montag burn the book of poetry in the wall incinerator in his home?
10. Where did Montag hide his books after the ladies left?
11. What was the destination of the alarm on the night Montag returned to work at the firehouse?

### Part 3 Questions "Burning Bright:"

1. Who was the informant on Montag's home?
2. Why did Montag kill Captain Beatty?
3. Why didn't Montag run away before he killed Captain Beatty?
4. Where did Montag go after he killed Beatty?
5. When Montag left Faber's house, which direction did he go?
6. Why did Montag take whiskey, a suitcase, and some of Faber's dirty clothes with him?
7. What did the railroad tracks mean to Montag?
8. What was different about the fire Montag saw after leaving the river?
9. During the manhunt for Montag by the hound, why did the camera identify an innocent man as Montag?
10. What was different about the hobos Montag met? Why did each man identify himself as a famous author or piece of literature?
11. What had Montag been able to memorize?
12. What happened to the city during the war?
13. What did Montag and the intellectuals believe their mission to be once the war ended?

### Fahrenheit 451 Short Response Questions

1. Montag comes to learn that "firemen are rarely necessary" because "the public itself stopped reading of its own accord." Bradbury wrote his novel in 1953: To what extent has his prophecy come true today?
2. Clarisse describes a past that Montag has never known: one with front porches, gardens, and rocking chairs. What do these items have in common, and how might their removal have encouraged Montag's repressive society?
3. "Don't ask to be saved in any one thing, person, machine, or library," Faber tells Montag. "Do your own bit of saving, and if you drown, at least die knowing you were headed for shore." How good is this advice?
4. One of the most significant of the many literary allusions in *Fahrenheit 451* occurs when Montag reads Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach." What is the response of Mildred's friends, and why does Montag kick them out of his house?
5. It may surprise the reader to learn that Beatty is quite well read. How can Beatty's knowledge of and hatred for books be reconciled?
6. Unlike Mrs. Hudson, Montag chooses not to die in his house with his books. Instead he burns them, asserting even that "it was good to burn" and that "fire was best for everything!" Are these choices and sentiments consistent with his character? Are you surprised that he fails to follow in her footsteps?
7. Beatty justifies the new role of firemen by claiming to be "custodians of [society's] peace of mind, the focus of [the] understandable and right dread of being inferior." What does he mean by this, and is there any sense that he might be right?
8. How does the destruction of books lead to more happiness and equality, according to Beatty? Does his lecture to Montag on the rights of man sound like any rhetoric still employed today?
9. Why does Montag memorize the Old Testament's Ecclesiastes and the New Testament's Revelation? How do the final two paragraphs of the novel allude to both biblical books?
10. Are there any circumstances where censorship might play a beneficial role in society? Are there some books that should be banned?
11. If you had to memorize a single book or risk its extinction, which book would you choose?