



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

Barney Charter School Initiative

Teacher Guide:
Fahrenheit 451
(7th Grade)

A few notes on teaching literature:

We all enjoy a good story. Literature in the classroom should not be an exception. While we use literature as the subject matter for teaching composition, literary analysis, grammar, vocabulary, etc., when we teach these without the opportunity to enjoy the story then literature loses much of its charm. By not allowing our students to delight and enter into the world of the text, we turn literature into a chore, a task that simply needs to be “done”. Cognizant of this danger, it is important to remember a few things.

One of the greatest goods of literature is its ability to delight the reader. As a teacher, do not forget that you are also a reader. Take time to familiarize yourself with the story, and come to enjoy and appreciate it more and more each year. You want your students to see that you enjoy the literature. In this way, you are better able to draw students into the world of the story as well as the conversation surrounding it.

Additionally, literature has that special attribute of giving the reader an opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of its characters. In seeing the obstacles the characters overcome, children, as well as adults, see that we are able to do that too. The British essayist G.K. Chesterton writes, “Fairy tales do not give the child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since he has an imagination. What the fairy tale provides for him is a St. George to kill the dragon.” This same idea is applicable to other forms of literature as well. Invite your students to place themselves in the shoes of the characters, to consider how they might act in their position and why.

Suggestions for teaching literature:

1. Read your story to your students with passion and enthusiasm, making the world of the story as vivid as possible. When a student is reading aloud to the class, encourage them to do the same.
2. Make sure your students understand what is happening. Clarify difficult vocabulary. Use images when possible. Ask questions to ensure comprehension. If the reader has no understanding of what has transpired, he or she is unable to enter the world of the text.
3. Do not limit your questions to those about plot summary. Ask students their opinions of characters or actions, as well as why they think the way that they do.

Note: The following vocabulary, reading questions, and key quotations are not by any means exhaustive. This guide will be of most use to teachers new to teaching this content or grade level. For more experienced teachers, your understanding of how to teach this text will no doubt surpass what is in this guide. Let this resource simply be a starting point. There is no better preparation for a teacher of literature than revisiting and reengaging the text as a reader, year after year.

Vocabulary:

The following chapters have a vocabulary list to aid in understanding the text. This list is not exhaustive, but will help alert the teacher of words with which many students may be unfamiliar. *Do not assess your students on all of the following words.* When going through the literature with your students, be careful that they have a good idea of what is happening in the story, even if they do not understand every single word. One way to help comprehension is by simply pausing and asking, “Does anyone know what _____ means?”

Images are good. For concrete words, such as “mausoleum”, “bobbins”, or a “Cheshire cat smile”, it can be more effective for the students’ understanding to draw or project an image of the term rather than simply describing the term.

Literature is a means to introduce students to new vocabulary. When assessing vocabulary, make sure the students are aware of what words they are responsible to know. Preferably, choose words that occur throughout the text and have greater significance to the novel. To control the length of this guide, challenging words appearing throughout the novel will only appear the first time they are used in the text.

Reading Questions:

To teach literature well, one needs to balance allowing students to enjoy a text without distraction and asking them meaningful questions for comprehension and analysis.

Some questions will simply ensure students understand plot and descriptions. These are necessary to ensure comprehension, but should not make up all of the questions. Other questions offer an opportunity to prove or disprove claims through our use of the text. Do not hesitate to ask your student *why* they respond to a previous question the way they did, or *how* they came to that conclusion. For example:

Teacher: Is Mildred a good wife?

Student: No.

Teacher: *Why* do you say she is not a good wife?

Student: She ignores Montag for her parlor walls.

Teacher: *How* does her ignoring Montag show that she is not a good wife?

Student: Because she only cares about her own comfort and happiness. She doesn’t check to see why Montag is unhappy and if she can do anything to help.

Students have reasons for making the claims they have. Encourage them to articulate the reasons behind their thoughts. The questions provided are largely more analytical, as those questions can be more difficult to formulate for the beginning teacher. Supplement the provided questions with those that aim at a comprehension of the plot, and remember that this list is by no means exhaustive.

Key Quotations:

Quotations have been provided to highlight part of the texts that can be used for thoughtful reflection. Sometimes, questions can be posed about the quoted text, asking students “What does this mean?”, “Have you ever experienced something like this?”, or “Do you agree?” Other times, they can simply provide the teacher and student an opportunity to reflect on the scene, to wonder about a character or an interesting idea provided by the author. Use those quotes and scenes that most resonate with you, and share with your students *why* you find them moving.

Due to *Fahrenheit 451*'s lack of chapters, this guide has been broken down into manageable segments of text using page numbers (Book ISBN: 978-1451673319). Teachers should feel free to focus on however many pages their class can handle at a given time.

The Hearth and the Salamander

Pg. 1-7

- Vocabulary
 - Hearth (1)
 - Kerosene (1)
 - Minstrel (2)
 - Hypnotized (4)
 - Awe (4)
 - Hysterical (5)
 - Parlor walls (7)
 - Irritable (7)
 - Peculiar (7)
- Reading Questions
 - Bradbury starts with the line “It was a pleasure to burn.” Why start the book in this way?
 - Focus on Bradbury’s use of past tense, the distinction between pleasure and happiness, and ‘to burn’ functioning as a transitive verb without a direct object (to burn what?)
 - What does Montag think of burning the house?
 - Why is he grinning?
 - How does the fire station differ from the scene just before it?
 - Does Montag seem content upon leaving the fire station? Why or why not?
 - How does Bradbury describe the girl (Clarisse)? How does that compare to Montag, particularly in the first scene?
 - How are Clarisse’s responses and comments different from Montag’s?
 - Why does Montag become uneasy around Clarisse?
- Key Quotations
 - “Montag grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame.” (1)
 - ““You never wash it off completely.’ ‘No, you don’t,’ she said, in awe.” (4)
 - “He hadn’t looked for a long time.” (7)

Pg. 8-12

- Vocabulary
 - Subconscious (8)
 - Identification (9)
 - Mausoleum (9)
 - Seashells (10)
 - Moonstones (11)
- Reading Questions
 - How are Montag's thoughts different now from when he first left the fire station?
 - How is Montag's home and bedroom described? How does it compare to the 'hearth' mentioned in the section title?
 - What are the Seashells in Mildred's ears? What purpose do they serve?
 - Why does Montag not want outside light?
 - What has happened to Mildred?
- Key Quotations
 - "*What?*" asked Montag of that other self, the subconscious idiot that ran babbling at times, quite independent of will, habit, and conscience." (8)
 - "He felt his smile slide away, melt, fold over Darkness. He was not happy. He was not happy. He said the words to himself. He recognized this as the true state of affairs." (9)

Pg. 12-15

- Vocabulary
 - Stratum (12)
 - Impersonal (12)
 - M.D. (13)
 - Contrasedative (13)
 - Puff adders (13)
- Reading Questions
 - How are the machine and its operator described? How is Mildred described?
 - Why does Montag become angry with the operator?
 - Why is Mildred continually referred to as "this woman"?
 - What draws Montag to Clarisse's home?
- Key Quotations
 - "I don't know anything anymore," he said, and let a sleep lozenge dissolve on his tongue."

Pg. 15-18

- Vocabulary
 - Lip reading (16)
 - Obligated (16)
 - Homemaker (17)
- Reading Questions
 - What does Montag want to talk about with Mildred?

- What is Mildred concerned with in the morning?
- Why does Mildred deny overdosing on sleeping pills?
- What do we learn about Mildred's play?
- What does Mildred's desire for a fourth wall tell us about her character?
- What effect on her play would adding a fourth wall have?
- Key Quotations
 - "Does it have a happy ending?' 'I haven't read that far.'" (18)

Pg. 19-21

- Vocabulary
 - Psychiatrist (20)
- Reading Questions
 - What is Clarisse doing?
 - Why is Montag so upset about the dandelion?
 - Why is Clarisse sent to a psychiatrist?
 - What does Clarisse think of Montag?
- Key Quotations
 - "They want to know what I do with all my time. I tell them that sometimes I just sit and *think*." (20)
 - "No one has time any more for anyone else. You're one of the few who put up with me. That's why I think it's so strange you're a fireman, it just doesn't seem right for you, somehow." (21)

Pg. 21-25

- Vocabulary
 - Proboscis (22)
 - Morphine (22)
 - Procaine (22)
 - Incinerator (22)
 - Functions (24)
 - Ventilator (24)
 - Craftsmanship (25)
- Reading Questions
 - How is the Mechanical Hound described?
 - What game do the firemen play with the Hound?
 - What does Montag think of the Hound?
 - What does Beatty think of the Hound? How do his thoughts differ from Montag's?
- Key Quotations
 - "It doesn't think anything we don't want it to think." (25)

Pg. 25-28

- Vocabulary
 - Antisocial (26)

- Transcription (27)
- Abstract (28)
- Reading Questions
 - What makes Montag's friendship with Clarisse different from his other relationships?
 - What changes do we notice in Montag compared to his first encounter with Clarisse?
 - How does Clarisse describe school and children her own age?
 - How does Clarisse describe the people she observes?
- Key Quotations
 - "It was a good question. It's been a long time since anyone cared enough to ask. A good question." (26)
 - "It's a lot of funnels and a lot of water poured down the spout and out the bottom, and them telling us it's wine when it's not." (27)

Pg. 29-32

- Vocabulary
 - Dis-ease (29)
 - Self-consciousness (30)
 - Asylum (31)
- Reading Questions
 - What happens to the fireman in Seattle?
 - What happens to Clarisse?
 - How does Montag describe the firemen?
 - How is Beatty different from Stoneman and Black?
- Key Quotations
 - "Suddenly it seemed a much younger voice was speaking for him. He opened his mouth and it was Clarisse McClellan saying, 'Didn't firemen *prevent* fires rather than stoke them up and get them going?'" (31)

Pg. 32-38

- Vocabulary
 - Sheath (33)
 - Objectivity (33)
 - Janitorial (34)
 - Ritual (34)
 - Cricket (34)
 - Gilt (35)
 - Tower of Babel (35)
 - Fanatics (36)
 - Condemnation (37)
- Reading Questions
 - How do the firemen treat the old woman?
 - Why is the old woman's presence at the scene unusual from most calls to the firemen?

- Describe Montag's actions during the fire.
- What do the old woman's actions tell us about her character?
- Was she right to die there? Why or why not?
- What immediate effect do her actions have on the other characters?
- Key Quotations
 - "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." (33)
 - "Where's your common sense? None of those books agree with each other. You've been locked up here for years with a regular dammed Tower of Babel. Snap out of it! The people in those books never lived. Cone on now!" (35)

Pg. 38-45

- Vocabulary
 - Slump (38)
 - Abyss (38)
 - Ravenous (38)
 - Jargon (39)
 - Tamped (39)
 - Gibbering (41)
 - Centrifuge (42)
 - Cacophony (42)
 - Pantomime (44)
- Reading Questions
 - How would you explain Montag's silence and actions during this scene?
 - What do Mildred and Montag's actions the night of the fire tell us about their relationship?
 - Why does Montag want to know where and when he and Mildred first met?
 - Why does Montag feel detached from Mildred?
 - What does Montag's think of the walls?
 - How does Mildred and Montag's discussion of Clarisse inform how we view her character?
 - Why does Montag not open the window?
- Key Quotations
 - "And suddenly she was so strange he couldn't believe he knew her at all." (39)

Pg. 45-49

- Vocabulary
 - Cataract (45)
 - Dismay (47)
 - Radical (47)
 - Feigning (48)
 - Simple-minded (48)
 - Smoldered (48)

- Reading Questions
 - How is Mildred described physically?
 - Why is Mildred convinced Montag can't be sick?
 - What does Mildred desire?
 - How do Montag and Mildred each treat the topics of the old woman and the fire?
 - In your own words, what is Montag discovering about books?
- Key Quotations
 - "And for the first time I realized that a man was being each one of the books. A man had to think them up. A man had to take a long time to put them down on paper. And I'd never even thought that thought before." (49)
 - "We need not to be let alone. We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were *really* bothered? About something important, about something real?" (49)

Pg. 50-60

Note: While this section is part of a single conversation, it contains many complex ideas and may need to be discussed over multiple literature periods.

- Vocabulary
 - Ruddy (50)
 - Fidgeted (51)
 - Exploiters (52)
 - Centrifuge (52)
 - Pratfall (53)
 - Nomadic (54)
 - Dictum (55)
 - Idols (55)
 - Breach (56)
 - Censors (56)
 - Titillation (56)
 - Bestial (58)
 - Tactile (58)
 - Dike (59)
- Reading Questions
 - How is Mildred's treatment of Beatty different from her treatment of Montag?
 - How would you describe Captain Beatty?
 - According to Beatty, what is the major difference between the 19th and 20th century? What are some of the many affects this has on society?
 - How is Mildred responding to Beatty's monologue?
 - What, according to Beatty, is the source of these changes?
 - How does Beatty justify the existence of the firemen?
 - Why does Beatty think Clarisse was better off dead?
 - How has education changed, according to Beatty?
 - What is Beatty's depiction of books? Is there any truth to this depiction?

- What is Montag’s response to Beatty’s speech?
- What is the problem with front porches, according to Clarisse’s uncle?
- Key Quotations
 - “The mind drinks less and less. Impatience. Highways full of crowds going somewhere, somewhere, somewhere, nowhere.” (54)
 - “The bigger your market, Montag, the less you handle controversy, remember that!” (55)
 - “It didn’t come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God.” (55)
 - “Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but every *made* equal.” (55)
 - “They were given a new job, as custodians of our peace of mind, the focus of understandable and rightful dread of being inferior; official censors, judges, and executors.” (56)
 - “I don’t think you realize how important *you* are, *we* are, to our happy world as it stands now.” (59)
 - “Sometimes they just sat there and thought about things, turned things over.” (60)

Pg. 61-65

- Vocabulary
 - Incinerator (63)
 - Sagged (64)
- Reading Questions
 - Why is Mildred so attached to her parlor walls?
 - What does Mildred encourage Montag to do? Why?
 - How does Montag’s rough treatment of Mildred compare to Beatty’s treatment of the old lady?
 - Why does Montag want Mildred to help him?
 - What is Mildred’s response to Montag’s decision to move forward with the books?
- Key Quotations
 - “No, I don’t want to, this time. I want to hold onto this funny thing.” (61)
 - “I need you so much right now, I can’t tell you.” (64)
 - “We’ll start over again, at the beginning.” (65)

The Sieve and the Sand

Pg. 67-71

- Vocabulary
 - Patronage (71)
 - Cadenced (71)
 - Monologue (71)

- Reading Questions
 - Why might Bradbury have chosen to title this section “The Sieve and the Sand?”
 - Why is Mildred uninterested in the books?
 - What does Montag hope the books will do for him?
 - What causes him to reminisce about Faber?
 - What do we learn about Faber?
 - Why does Faber think Montag may be “angry” with him?
- Key Quotations
 - “Maybe the books can get us half out of the cave.” (70)
 - “But where do you get help, where do you find a teacher this late?” (71)
 - “I talk the *meaning* of things. I sit here and *know* I’m alive.” (71)

Pg. 71-76

- Vocabulary
 - Suffused (72)
 - Dune (74)
 - Jolting (74)
 - Gorged (75)
 - Gibbering (75)
- Reading Questions
 - Why does Montag call Faber?
 - Why does Montag ask Millie if the White Clown loves her?
 - What prevents Montag from reading the Bible?
 - Why does Bradbury choose to use that particular Bible quote as the one Montag tries to memorize?
- Key Quotations
 - “Even the smile, he thought, the old burnt-in smile, that’s gone. I’m lost without it.” (74)

Pg. 76-88

Note: While this section is part of a single conversation, it contains many complex ideas and may need to be discussed over multiple literature periods.

- Vocabulary
 - Saccharine (77)
 - Subsided (78)
 - Blue-jowled (78)
 - Intuitively (79)
 - Profusion (79)
 - Insidious (82)
 - Centrifuge (84)
 - Welter (86)
 - Bobbins (86)

- Reading Questions
 - How is Faber first described here? Why?
 - Why does Montag say his wife is dying?
 - How, according to Faber, has his society changed the Bible?
 - Faber says he is guilty. How? Is he correct in his judgment?
 - What does Faber say about books?
 - Explain the three things Faber claims are missing.
 - What does it mean to feed “on flowers and fireworks”?
 - How, according to Faber, are books different from the parlor walls?
 - Why is Faber hesitant that he and Montag can change anything?
 - Who was first responsible for the disappearance of books?
 - Why does Faber give Montag the “green bullet”?
- Key Quotations
 - “My wife’s dying. A friend of mine’s already dead. Someone who may have been a friend was burnt less than twenty-four hours ago.” (77).
 - “Mr. Montag, you are looking at a coward. I saw the way things were going, a long time back. I said nothing. I’m one of the innocents who could have spoken up and out when no one would listen to the ‘guilty,’ but I did not speak and thus became guilty myself.” (78)
 - “We have everything we need to be happy, but we aren’t happy. Something’s missing.” (78)
 - “Books were only one type of receptacle where we stored a lot of things we were afraid we might forget.” (79)
 - “Yet somehow we think we can grow, feeding on flowers and fireworks, without completing the cycle back to reality.” (79)
 - “The whole culture’s shot through. The skeleton needs melting and reshaping.” (83)
 - “The public itself stopped reading of its own accord.” (83)
 - “Those who don’t build must burn.” (85)

Pg. 88-98

- Vocabulary
 - Cheshire cat (89)
 - Subaudible (92)
 - Tittered (93)
 - Quavered (94)
- Reading Questions
 - Why is Montag willing to listen to Faber?
 - Describe Mildred and the other women’s behavior when the parlor walls are on and when they are turned off.
 - What is the women’s approach to children?
 - What is the women’s approach to politics?
 - Why is Montag upset with the women?
 - Why would Bradbury decide to have Montag read “Dover Beach” to the women?

- How do the women respond to the poem? Why?
- Key Quotations
 - “I don’t want to change sides and just be *told* what to do. There’s no reason to change if I do that.” (88)

Pg. 99-106

- Vocabulary
 - Filigree (99)
 - Invigorated (100)
 - Distilled (100)
 - Pries (101)
 - Perfunctorily (105)
- Reading Questions
 - Summarize the advice Faber gives Montag before meeting Beatty.
 - What does Beatty mean by “Who are little wise, the best fools be”?
 - Why does Beatty quote so many books on pages 103-104? What point is he trying to make to Montag?
 - How is Faber’s treatment of Montag different from Beatty’s?
 - What interrupt the firemen’s card game?
- Key Quotations
 - “You’re afraid of making mistakes. *Don’t* be. Mistakes can be profited by. . . . If you hide our ignorance, no one will hit you and you’ll never learn.” (100)
 - “What traitors books can be! You think they’re backing you up, and they turn on you.” (104)

Burning Bright

Pg. 107-111

- Vocabulary
 - Valise (108)
 - Warped (108)
 - Prisms (108)
 - Gobbledegook (109)
 - Raveled (109)
- Reading Questions
 - What does Beatty think of Clarisse?
 - What happens to Mildred?
 - What does Montag think about burning his own house?
 - How does this scene depict a turning point for Montag?
- Key Quotations
 - “Its real beauty is that it destroys responsibility and consequence.” (109)

Pg. 111-115

- Vocabulary
 - Cinders (111)
 - Plume (111)
 - Bewilderment (112)
 - Belch (113)
 - Literateur (113)
 - Bole (114)
- Reading Questions
 - How does Montag respond to his house burning down?
 - What does Beatty think of Montag?
 - Why does Montag turn the flamethrower on Beatty?
 - How is Montag able to escape the scene?
- Key Quotations
 - “Beatty, he thought, you’re not a problem now. You always said, don’t face a problem, burn it. Well, now I’ve done both. Goodbye, Captain.” (115)

Pg. 115-123

- Vocabulary
 - Gagged (116)
 - Excursions (117)
 - Pale (117)
 - Phosphorescent (119)
 - Rarity (122)
- Reading Questions
 - What ideas pass through Montag’s mind about what he should do next?
 - What does he ultimately decide to do? Why?
 - Montag states that Beatty wanted to die. Why might Beatty have wanted this?
 - How does Montag’s control over his leg reflect his growing control over his thoughts?
 - Why does Montag want to see Faber now?
 - How has the city begun its search of Montag?
 - How do the customer respond to the declaration of war over the radio? How does Montag respond?
 - Who does Montag think is driving the car?
 - Who is actually driving the car? How does Montag escape?
- Key Quotations
 - “Faber’s would be the place where he might refuel his fast draining belief in his own ability to survive. He just wanted to know that there was a man like Faber in the world.” (118)

Pg. 123-130

- Vocabulary
 - Dilate (127)
 - Luminous (127)
 - Oblivion (128)
- Reading Questions
 - Why does Montag leave a book at the Blacks' house?
 - How has Faber changed since his last discussion with Montag?
 - Why does Montag consider staying and watching the Hound hunt for him?
 - Are there any parallels between the people watching the Hound hunt for Montag and our own society?
 - What do Montag and Faber plan to do to escape the Hound?
- Key Quotations
 - "About what? Me? My house? I deserve everything." (129)

Pg. 130-138

- Vocabulary
 - Séance (131)
 - Ricocheted (131)
 - Racketing (133)
 - Veered (135)
 - Cardamom (137)
 - Ragweed (137)
- Reading Questions
 - Why does the Hound not enter Faber's house?
 - How do the police use the people to help catch Montag?
 - What is striking about their willingness to do so?
 - How are the city people described?
 - Why is it appropriate that Montag enters a river to escape from his old life?
 - What effect does the leisure have on Montag?
 - Why does Montag think of Mildred now?
 - How do Montag's thoughts about the country compare with his life in the city?
- Key Quotations
 - "He was moving from an unreality that as frightening into a reality that was unreal because it was new." (133)
 - "The river was very real; it held him comfortably and gave him the time at last, the leisure, to consider this month, this year, and a lifetime of years." (134)
 - "Somewhere the saving and putting away had to begin again. . ." (134)
 - "There was more than enough here to fill him. There would always be more than enough." (138)

Pg. 138-146

- Vocabulary
 - Gingerly (140)
 - Scalded (140)
 - Clinkers (144)
 - Pedants (146)
- Reading Questions
 - How is the fire Montag sees different from the fire he has known?
 - How is the silence around the fire described?
 - Why does the city pretend they have caught Montag?
 - How are the men around the campfire described?
 - Why do the men memorize the books?
 - Why are the men content to stay away from the city for now?
- Key Quotations
 - “It was not burning, it was *warming*.” (139)
 - “Montag moved toward this special silence that was concerned with all of the world.” (139)
 - “The search is over, Montag is dead; a crime against society has been avenged.” (142)
 - “But you can’t *make* people listen. They have to come round in their own time, wondering what happened and why the world blew up under them.” (146)

Pg. 147-153

- Vocabulary
 - Waterproof (147)
 - Bombardier (151)
 - Gouts (153)
 - Concussion (153)
- Reading Questions
 - What does Granger remember most about his grandfather?
 - In your own words, what advice does Granger’s grandfather give him?
 - What happens to the city?
 - How does Montag describe Mildred’s last moments?
- Key Quotations
 - “The world was bankrupted of ten million fine actions the night he passed on.” (149)

Pg. 153-158

- Vocabulary
 - (none selected)
- Reading Questions
 - What effect does the explosion have on the men?
 - Why does Granger compare man to the Phoenix?

- How does Granger encourage the men to see themselves in regard to the people they will meet?
- Why does Granger talk of building a mirror factory?
- Why is Montag now leading the men?
- Why does Bradbury end the book with a line from Revelation?
- Key Quotations
 - “And a lot of it will be wrong, but just enough of it will be right.” (154)