

Fahrenheit 451 Guided Reading Questions

The following questions are designed to guide and support your understanding as you read the novel. Please try to make brief notes in relation to each of the following questions – this will support your learning and completion of assignments in September.

Part 1: The Hearth and the Salamander

1. As the story opens, what are the forces acting upon the protagonist, Montag, and what other forces help Montag in the recognition of his dilemma?

2. What is Montag's dilemma both 1) as he sees it, and 2) as the reader sees it?

3. What is the significance of Montag seeing his reflection in Clarisse's eyes?

4. Clarisse causes Montag to recall a childhood memory in which a wish was embedded.

What is the implication of the memory and the wish?

5. What two observations does Clarisse make about Montag's conversational mannerisms? Why is this important? (The answer to this may become more obvious when you finish the novel.)

6. Define the word "peculiar" 1) for yourself, and 2) using a second resource. What things do the McClellans do according to 1) your personal definition, and 2) the definition of the society depicted in Fahrenheit 451, which cause them to be classified as 'peculiar'?

7. What final question does Clarisse ask Montag on the night of their first encounter? Why is this question important?

8. What extended simile describes how Montag sees Clarisse as he stares at the blank wall of his home but in memory sees Clarisse?

9. Find two further similes Montag uses to describe Clarisse. Do those similes serve any purpose other than for characterization of Clarisse? Explain.

10. What event occurs that night which provides Montag with an impression of the state of society?

What is that impression?

11. In contrast, what does Montag next hear and long for? What kind of characterization is this?

12. What test of love does Clarisse give Montag, and how does he respond? How is this important?

13. What does "antisocial" mean to you? What does it mean to the society of the novel? To whom is the term applied and why?

14. According to Clarisse, what do people talk about? Find representative conversations throughout the novel to support your claim.
15. During the card game at the fire station, Montag asks a question. What is it, and how does it prove pivotal?
16. Recalling the refrain of the woman whose house was burned: what did it mean, and what is its effect on Montag?
17. What does Montag think his feelings would be if his wife were to die? How do you know?
18. What does Montag think about the old woman and all the books he has destroyed? How do you know?

Part 2: The Sieve and the Sand

19. What is the meaning of the title to part 2? Why do you think so?
20. What is the value of the dentifrice commercial?
21. What are the three things which Faber says are missing from society, and how does this knowledge contribute to Montag's development?
22. Describe the parlor women, their views, and their conversational concerns.
23. Why does Montag read "Dover Beach" aloud to them, and how do they react? Why do you think they act this way? Find proof to support your opinion.

Part 3: Burning Bright

24. How does Montag feel about his own house burning? How do you know?
25. While in flight from the scene of Beatty's murder, what thought occurred to Montag about Beatty?
26. What is the explanation which Montag and Faber arrive at for how so very much could have happened within one week? Do you think this is a logical explanation for the timeline? Explain.
27. What are Montag's impressions of the land across the river and are they accurate?
28. When Montag complained about being unable to remember Mildred, what explanation did Granger give him?
29. Describe the effects of the war as Montag imaged them.
30. What is the promise at the end of the novel?