Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date & Block \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reading Comprehension Questions for** Fahrenheit 451

As you read each section of the novel, answer briefly the following questions. These questions should act as a reading guide and are not intended to replace careful examination of the novel’s themes and development.

**Part I: The Hearth and the Salamander (p. 1-48)**

1. What do the “firemen” do for a living? Why is this ironic?

2. In the opening scene, why are the books compared to birds?

3. According to pages 3-4, what does Montag think of his job?

4. Who does Montag meet on the way home?

5. During his conversation, Montag says that “You never wash it off completely” referring to the kerosene. What could this mean symbolically?

6. Why do you think that Bradbury would introduce Clarisse before Montag’s wife, Mildred?

7. Why does Mildred need help when Montag gets home?

8. Describe the help that she receives.

9. Is there anything unusual about the way the two men go about helping Mildred? How is it unusual?

10. How is life in Montag’s house very different from that of Clarisse’s house?

11. How does Mildred react after she wakes up from her previous night’s experience?

12. What does Mildred do all day?

13. Describe the setup of Montag’s TV room.

14. What is Clarisse doing when Montag sees her on pages 13-14?

15. How is Clarisse different than Mildred?

16. What is the mechanical hound and what is its purpose?

17. What is the hound’s reaction to Montag?

18. Why does society consider Clarisse “anti-social?” (p. 20)

19. At the next fire, what does Montag take?

20. On page 28, Beatty reveals something very important about himself and his knowledge. What is it?

21. What technology does Mildred use to go to sleep?

22. Who is Mildred’s “family?”

23. What has happened to Clarisse? How did it happen?

24. What is unusual about the way Mildred told Montag about Clarisse?

25. Read pages 37-43 very carefully. They contain great truths about our world. List three things Beatty talks about in his speech to Montag that are true about our world.

a.

b.

c.

26. What human institutions are being criticized in the novel?

27. What is Fahrenheit 451?

**Vocabulary Focus**

The world of the future is filled with hidden menace. Bradbury uses these words to capture the moral decay.

**venomous:** poisonous

**imperceptible:** very slight or gradual; barely noticeable

**mausoleum:** a stately tomb or a burial place

**pulverize:** to reduce to dust or powder; demolish completely

**melancholy:** a depressed or gloomy state of mind

The sentences below are based on descriptions in Part One, pages 1-48. Choose the best vocabulary word to complete each sentence. Look for context clues to help you.

**Yes, dictionaries may be used.**

1. The sound of the jet bombers overhead seems to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the stars and grind them into dust.

2. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ feeling grips Montag that another person may be somewhere nearby.

3. Mildred’s demand to have a fourth wall television installed leaves Montag in a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ state of mind.

4. Mildred’s room seems as cold and dark and airless as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Montag’s flame thrower shoots its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_flames like a great snake killing its prey.

Additional Vocabulary:

Bradbury uses these words to describe the changes that have transformed society.

**odious:** hateful; offensive

**torrent:** a furious rush or downpour

**feign:** to put on the appearance of; to pretend

**pratfall:** a comic or humiliating fall onto the rear end

**serenity:** peacefulness

**gibber:** to talk in a confused, meaningless way

1. According to Beatty, no one wants to follow serious pursuits anymore; life has become one big \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. The people on the wall television seem to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ without end, saying nothing of value.

3. In a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of emotion, Montag wonders how a woman could immolate herself for books.

4. Montag is afraid to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ illness to avoid Beatty.

5. People seek \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not challenge.

6. The people ban books that are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in any way so no one will feel inferior.