A companion guide to the Literature to Life production of

Fahrenheit 451
By Ray Bradbury
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### ABOUT THE WORLD OF FAHRENHEIT 451

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Book</th>
<th>Published in 1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Author</td>
<td>Ray Bradbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Actor</td>
<td>Rich Orlow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

##### The Context

1. The Life and Times of Ray Bradbury
2. Time Warp: America in the 1950s

##### The Pursuit of Happiness

Identity

#### POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

##### Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Civil Disobedience

##### A Different World...

Science Fiction as Genre

##### The Campfire

Literature & The Power of the Written Word

#### KEEP EXPLORING

Additional activities to take your engagement further
The following activities are recommended to be used as preparation and reflection before and/or after seeing the Literature to Life performance of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

Our Teacher Resource Guides are designed for adaptation and flexibility in response to the teachers’ needs. We have attempted to create enough variety to address different styles of learning and exploring. It is our hope that our guides provide insight and inspiration for teachers and students to explore texts from a theatrical perspective.

The time noted for each activity is approximate - please use the activities as they best fit within your classroom.

All Literature to Life resource guides are developed in collaboration with our Teaching Artists. We encourage teachers using our resource guides to reach out to us at info@literaturetolife.org to further discuss the material and collaborate in the shaping of your own exploration in the classroom. Think of us as a layer of support for you and your students.

“There must be something in books, things we can’t imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don’t stay for nothing.”

—*Fahrenheit 451*
Students will read the Ray Bradbury biography and practice identifying key information in the text. Then, they will explore their own dream careers and aspirations by writing their own autobiographies from a projected eighty-year old first-person voice.

MATERIALS
• Ray Bradbury’s biography
• Guided Visualization text
• Writing paper or notebook, and pen or pencil.

INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

Read and Listen
5 min
Distribute copies of Ray Bradbury’s biography. Students should take turns reading paragraphs of the biography aloud. Ask students to circle key information in their copy of the biography while listening/reading about Ray Bradbury’s life.

Discuss
15 min
After reading, take time to discuss a few focusing questions, e.g.:

• What was Ray Bradbury’s first achievement as a writer?

• Was he formally educated? How might education affect people’s perceptions of a writer’s work?

• What might it mean to be a writer of “courage and vision?”

• What does it say about Bradbury that he did not confine himself to one medium/genre (novels, stories, screenplays)?

• How does one measure his/her life’s achievements? Does that differ from person to person?

• What sorts of achievements do you think were most meaningful to Bradbury?

Guided Visualization & Writing
10 min
After the group conversations, have students settle in for a visualization activity - they may be on the floor, at their desks, whatever is most comfortable for them. Read the provided Guided Visualization text aloud and follow the instructions for the writing assignment.

Decide and Deliver
Time varies
As a class, decide how you wish to share your eighty-year-old stories. You could turn them into monologues, publish an “alumni biography” pamphlet, or make a collage. Feel free to be as creative as you wish!
TIME WARP:
AMERICA IN THE 1950s
55 MINUTES

Students will consider crucial historical events in American culture and politics in the 1950’s and draw parallels to the text.

MATERIALS
• Copies of pictures with descriptions (labeled 1 through 6).
• A single copy of quotes from the text (labeled A through E).

INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

Look & Listen
10 min
Print out the photos linked above or share them via projector or Smartboard. Students should examine the photos as volunteers read aloud the explanatory paragraph describing each one.

Read and Identify
15 min
Read the quotes from Fahrenheit 451 provided above aloud to the class. Each quote somehow correlates to one (or more) of the pictures/events before us. There are no “wrong answers.”

Read each quote twice and ask the students to identify which photo/event they believe the quote corresponds to. Ask focusing questions such as: “how did you know?” or “what led you to that answer?”

Discuss
10 min
• Of these historical moments, which do you think most influenced Bradbury’s writing?
• Are there any other elements about the 1950’s that you know of that were also present in the story?
• What are some of the positive/negative effects of each of these historical happenings and why is it important for us to learn about them now?
• Why do you think Bradbury set his story in a futuristic world instead of just writing directly about what was happening at the time he was writing?

Extension Activity
20 min
To further explore the quotes, read them again and ask students in small groups to create a tableaux (still picture). Create a walk-through “museum” by having each group present their tableaux while the other groups walk around it and look at it from all sides. Discuss how seeing the quote “come alive” does or does not change their perspective on what it means.
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
55 MINUTES

Students will explore the connection between the pursuit of happiness and identity. They will utilize their critical thinking, listening, and public speaking skills to engage in a formal debate about banning something they disagree with or preserving something that makes them happy.

MATERIALS
• Scrap paper or index cards

INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

Refresh & Remember
3 min
Pass out a scrap of paper or an index card to each student. Urge the students to listen to all the instructions thoroughly before writing anything down. Introduce or remind students about the initial meeting between Montag and Clarisse. For example:

In the beginning of the book Fahrenheit 451, the protagonist, Guy Montag, meets a young girl named Clarisse McClellan. Clarisse intrigues Montag with her free-spirited ways and her inquisitive nature. At the close of their first meeting, Clarisse asks Montag, “Are you happy?” This simple question acts as a crucial catalyst in the book, which leads Montag to re-evaluate all that he believes about his life.

Listen, Listen, & Write
2 min
Ask students to think about the things that make them happy and write down just one thing on their piece of paper. They should be as specific as possible, but in the case of naming people, they should replace names with relationships, i.e. instead of “My dog Bingo makes me happy” they should write: “Having a dog makes me happy.” After receiving these instructions, students should have about 90 seconds to narrow down their answer to one choice, and write it down.

Point A to Point B
5 min
Clear space in the room and ask students to stand on one side of the room at point “A.” Mark a clear point “B” across the room. (This can be done in a small space as long as there are clear points A and B and students can “cross” between them.)

Students should cross the room when they AGREE with a statement or hear something that makes them happy. If they DISAGREE with a statement or it does not make them happy, they should stay where they are. Begin with an example of your own, e.g. “Eating ice cream makes me happy.” Remind them that they’ll cross if they AGREE.

Crossing the Room
10 min
Using the student’s written responses, continue the game, skipping any repetitious items and asking focusing questions along the way, i.e. “What would happen if you couldn’t have this?” “Why doesn’t this make you happy?”
# THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
(CONTINUED)
55 MINUTES

## INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

### Notice Contrast & Establish Teams
5 min

Set aside a few of the prompts where the students seem most divided. When you've gotten through all the student prompts, pick one from the “most divided” pile and tell the students you're going to repeat the prompt again. When the students find themselves in their respective ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ points, mark them as team ‘A’ for agreement and team ‘B’ for banning.

### The Debate
20 min

Lead the students in how to engage in a debate, with students in group ‘A’ defending the thing that makes them happy using positive, clearly stated thoughts promoting their cause. Group ‘B’ wants to ban the thing that makes group ‘A’ happy, and they need to make clear and thoughtful arguments for why. Give the students some chart paper and markers. They have five minutes to brainstorm the pros and cons of this particular item-of-happiness. Urge them to brainstorm both the pros and cons, regardless of what team they are on, in order to be more prepared for the other team’s potential arguments! The teams will then debate for 10 minutes in two-minute intervals (i.e.: if team A goes first, they have two minutes to promote their cause, and team B has two minutes to debate it, continuing until 10 minutes has elapsed). The teacher should moderate the debate, and if possible, guide the students toward a compromise.

### Discuss
10 min

- What did you learn from the other team about the thing that makes them happy/upset?
- Were there arguments that the other team debated that you did not anticipate?
- How did it make you feel to ban something that makes someone else happy?
- How did it make you feel to have something that makes you happy potentially banned?
- Do you think that one group of individuals has the right to determine what makes society happy as a whole?
- What does happiness mean to you?
SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

45 MINUTES

Students will consider the meaning of civil disobedience by engaging in a process drama where they will explore what it would be like to be ostracized from their own community. Students will review the tactics used to fight injustice in Fahrenheit 451 and use critical thinking and problem solving skills to brainstorm potential tactics and outcomes.

MATERIALS
• The Memo
• Definition of Process Drama

INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

The Memo
5 min
Tell the students that you’ve just gotten a memo and you have to share it with them immediately, because it’s of the utmost importance being that all their right ears are blue. Read The Memo aloud.

Three Choices
5 min
Tell the students that you are in a very difficult position, being a red-eared teacher. Tell them that you disagree completely with what the government has decided to do, but that you have no choice but to uphold the new constitution. Tell them that you do not believe it will stop at the rezoning and you are worried for their safety.

Explain to your students that there are only three choices, and they must think quickly and brainstorm about what to do next. Here are the choices:

A. We can take a long and dangerous journey out of this land to try and find a place where we’ll be accepted.

B. We can stay where we are and try to hide what makes us unique and deal with the consequences of being blue-eared.

C. We can fight back.

Going from option A to C, work with the students to brainstorm the pros and cons of each option. When you get to option C, urge the students to remember points in history when someone used non-violent resistance to fight back and eventually succeeded in having an unjust ruling overturned, i.e. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela - something relative to a student’s prior knowledge and grade level. Share the definition of civil disobedience below with the students.

Define
5 min
“Civil disobedience is the active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government, or of an occupying power, without resorting to physical violence. It is one of the primary tactics of nonviolent resistance. In its most nonviolent form, it could be said that it is compassion in the form of respectful disagreement.”
## INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Regroup</td>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Once you’ve listed and reviewed all the pros and cons for points A through C, ask the students to vote about which they believe is the best option. Majority wins. Now ask the students to come out of role with you, ending the process drama.</td>
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</table>
| Discuss  | 10 min| - Of the choices A through C, which did Montag choose? What about Granger and the other men?  
- Who do you think is right: Granger, Montag, or neither—and why? Does hearing about Granger and Montag’s experience change the way you feel about the decision the blue-ears made?  
- What are other possible alternatives? What, if anything, do you believe makes civil disobedience a successful force in fighting injustice? |
Students will consider/identify what makes the book/play science fiction and write their own short pieces of science fiction.

MATERIALS

• Chart paper pre-marked with the letters A through Z in two columns.
• Two markers - different colors

INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

**Alphabet Race**
10 min

Set up two boards on opposite sides of the room with chart paper that is pre-marked with the letters A through Z in two columns. Divide the class into two teams, with the students lined up one behind another, facing their chart paper. Each team gets one marker, and the members within each team can help one another if they get stuck.

**Starting Instructions:** “When I say ‘GO’, the first person will step up and write a word that begins with the letter ‘A’ relating to the book or the Literature to Life adaptation of Fahrenheit 451. It can be a character, an object that was important, or any word relating to the story—literally or theoretically. Be creative. The next person will write a word that begins with ‘B’ and so on. This is like a relay race, so when you’re done with your turn, you pass the marker on to the next person. There is no skipping of letters. You must go in order. Help your teammates if they get stuck. Respect each other’s answers. When your team is finished, you should all stand quietly raising your hands so I know you’re done.”

**Work with Group List**
10 min

When the relay game is finished, have the students go through the list as a group and circle all the words that they believe represents a science fiction element in the story. Have them do this quietly within their groups, as you moderate and walk back from group to group asking focusing questions (i.e. What makes that science fiction? What happens in the book/play that illustrates that for you?). Have the students compare their circled lists and have a brief discussion about their definition of science fiction.
Explain to the students that while some science fiction includes aliens and monsters from other planets/worlds, some take place with people on planets just like our own and it is the details and the timeframe of the story that make it science fiction.

Tell them they are now to imagine that they are journalists from Earth, reporting as if it were the year 3010. The news story that the journalist tells can be about anything that’s happening on the planet.

However, in their writing, they should answer the following questions:

• Have humans discovered life on any other planets?
• What is the terrain like on Earth now?
• What is the weather like now?
• What is the best thing about Earth in 3010?
• What is the worst thing?
• What sort of economic/social/political systems exist on Earth?

Take time for students to share out (if they wish) and discuss what made them make the choices they did when thinking about the future. Is the future scary, or exciting? Why or why not?

Ask students to bring in an article about a current event that truly interests them. This event should be something that affects many people, as opposed to a single individual, i.e: an article regarding the ramifications of the recession versus an article about Alex Rodriguez. Have them write a short story about that event, written with a sci-fi spin, similar to how Bradbury’s book was a reaction to McCarthyism.
THE CAMPFIRE
40 MINUTES

Students will defend their favorite books by making statements to support their preservation. Students will examine and analyze why literature is important and powerful.

INSTRUCTIONS (STEPS)

Prepare Ahead - The Day Before
5 min
Ask students the day before you plan on facilitating this activity to bring in their favorite book for a fun activity the next day.

Introduce
5 min
Start the students off with an introduction:

_We saw in the play of Fahrenheit 451 that if enough people feel strongly enough against something, it can be systematically removed from our society. In the world of Fahrenheit 451, books were burned, effectively removed from those who read them, because it was widely believed that competing ideas were a bad thing - that they kept people unhappy. Yesterday I asked you to bring in your favorite books. Now, I want you to take out those books and sit in a circle in the space I've made for your campfire._

Lead students to a space in the room where they can sit in a circle. If there is not enough room, move desks or chairs into a circular formation.

Circle & Discuss
5 min
_If I were to tell you someone was going to come here and take away those books you love – maybe burn them – burn every copy there is – and destroy them forever – what would you say to convince them not to? Take a minute while sitting in the circle to find a special passage in your book – whatever your absolute favorite part is – so you can read it aloud._

Give students about two minutes to select a passage.

Read Aloud
25 min
Have students read selections from their books aloud, going around the circle so everyone has a turn. Ask each student to explain why they chose this particular book and that particular passage. Why is this a book they would want to save? You can ask focusing questions, such as:

- Why do you think this book tells an important story?
- How does that passage you read make you feel?
- What do you think is good about that writing?
- When you read that passage, what images come up in your head?
- Why do you think it is important for other young people to read this book?
- Do you relate to the characters in that book? How?
- Why is this part of the story your favorite?

Extension Activity
Follow this activity by having students write a short, two or three paragraph statement about why they believe literature is powerful and important. Below their statement, ask them to write the numbers 1 through 3 and write the title and author of three books they learned about in class that they did not know before and are interested in reading.
Here are a few more ideas about how you can encourage your students to reflect on the play. We would love to have copies of some of the writings or artwork your students create! Please email your reflective works to info@literaturetolife.org.

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<tr>
<th>READ &amp; DISCUSS</th>
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<td><strong>CENSORED</strong></td>
<td>Students will discuss the First Amendment and how it relates to their lives. They will explore what it means to work with censored material and will discuss the ramifications of censorship. Students will work with text from <em>Fahrenheit 451</em> to create tableaux.</td>
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<td><strong>BOOKS AS BIRDS</strong></td>
<td>Students will examine the use of language in <em>Fahrenheit 451</em> and review the definitions of metaphor and allegory. They will write their own examples of metaphor and share them with their peers.</td>
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<th>EXPLORE</th>
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<td><strong>LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS</strong></td>
<td>Students will explore conformity and its connection to power and control through a physical exercise in pairs. They will explore their feelings about conformity by writing about their own experiences.</td>
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<td><strong>WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?</strong></td>
<td>Students will use a physical exercise to explore what it means to exclude someone from a group and/or try to fit in. Students will discuss how it feels to exclude/be excluded. Students will engage in dialogue about the societal pressures they face and how these expectations play a role in their daily lives.</td>
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<th>PRESENT</th>
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<td><strong>THE REALITY</strong></td>
<td>Students will present a pitch for a Reality TV show about their school. Students will utilize brainstorming, critical thinking, and group work to reach objectives. They will discuss the ramifications of how reality TV will affect generations to come and how it is currently documenting their generation. They will relate their work back to the text and characters of <em>Fahrenheit 451</em>.</td>
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<td><strong>CONSTANTLY CONNECTED</strong></td>
<td>Students will explore their own use of technology. They will discuss the benefits and pitfalls of technology in both the book and in real life. They will work in groups to identify problems and then work together to develop an invention that solves the problems. Students will use their public speaking skills to promote their invention to their peers.</td>
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Visit us online at LiteraturetoLife.org

Learn more about our Active Titles, meet the members of our Company of Actors and Teaching Artists, and explore our Programs.

Email us!
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