

Response Essay: *Fahrenheit 451*

A **Response Essay** is an opportunity to communicate a personal point of view related to specific questions, themes, and topics. A Response Essay is *not* a book summary or a list of reasons why you enjoyed it. Rather, it is an introspective reflection of personal beliefs and values as it relates to the assigned questions.

Keep in mind that the reader is familiar with the book, so there is no need to explain the story at length. When you reference a scene or character, a sentence or two will suffice, though be sure to cite the page number of the dialogue or scene being referenced.

The first step in writing a Response Essay is to make sure you understand the content you've read. **Misinterpreting the author's intentions can derail your entire paper.** The second step is to reflect on your own experiences, knowledge, and opinions as they relate to the story. Consider the things that unnerved you, upset you, and gave you pause. Finally, decide if you agree with the author's message and whether or not you believe his warnings are substantiated. Consider middle ground ideas, as well as extreme measures.

1. What message did Ray Bradbury attempt to convey with *Fahrenheit 451*? What is your understanding of speculative fiction, as he wrote it? (Consider the personal note I read to you in class and the introduction linked on the class page.) Do you see parallels between the world Bradbury created in *Fahrenheit 451* and the world we live in today? From the book, what stands out to you as a potential future reality?
2. What is your personal position on local, state, and federal institutions banning books, general censorship, and other related acts to ensure a peaceful society? (Read more about Banned Books Week at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks>) Do you think censorship is a workable solution, even in small doses, to keep the peace? Are there any net benefits to censorship, even if that means surrendering personal freedom?
3. How has *Fahrenheit 451* challenged, shifted, or solidified your opinions regarding government, authority, or free speech?

These questions are areas and themes to address, but you are not bound by them. That does not mean every sentence needs to be an exact replica of the questions. For example, your first sentence **should not be** "The message Ray Bradbury attempted to convey..." Use your own words. Spend time thinking about the topic. Do some research if you feel lost, but **DO NOT LIFT POINTS OF VIEW** from the internet. Think for yourself. **Embrace your inner Montag and think a new thought.** (If you feel led in a specific direction, follow it, however be sure that you're writing within the scope of the assignment. Check with me if you're unsure.)

Word count: approximately 1200

Format: Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced, centered title, in-text citing of source, separate Works Cited page

Heading in top left-hand corner:

Name
Class
Assignment
Date