

Fahrenheit 451

Part 1

by Ray Bradbury

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: capillary, centrifuge, conjure, contempt, dis-ease, illumination, pulverized, ravenous, refracted, regarding

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Part 1 · The Hearth and the Salamander

Section 2 · Part 2 · The Sieve and the Sand

Section 3 · Part 3 · Burning Bright

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. Water climbed the **capillary** tubes inside the plant stem.

- A. stiff and branching
- B. hollow and winding
- C. very fine and threadlike

2. The lab technician placed the blood samples in the **centrifuge** and switched it on.

- A. a machine that spins to separate substances
- B. a machine that weighs samples precisely
- C. a machine that heats and sterilizes tools

3. He closed his eyes and tried to **conjure** the smell of his grandmother's kitchen.

- A. to describe out loud
- B. to search around for
- C. to call up in the mind

4. She looked at the cheater with open **contempt**.

- A. pity and sympathy
- B. envy and resentment
- C. scorn and disrespect

5. A quiet **dis-ease** settled over her as the house grew too silent.

- A. a vague sense of unease
- B. a dull sense of tiredness
- C. a heavy sense of boredom

6. The old hall relied on candles for **illumination** after dark.

- A. light
- B. decoration
- C. warmth

7. The old mortar and pestle **pulverized** the dried herbs.

- A. chopped into small pieces
- B. crushed into a fine powder
- C. stirred into a thick paste

8. By the time dinner was served, the hikers were **ravenous**.

- A. extremely thirsty
- B. extremely hungry
- C. utterly worn out

9. The prism **refracted** the sunlight into a band of colors.

- A. bent the light
- B. gathered the light
- C. scattered the light

10. She stood **regarding** the old photograph for a long moment.

- A. glancing quickly at
- B. looking closely at
- C. reaching out toward

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

salamander — mythical lizard said to live in fire; the firemen's emblem

Benjamin Franklin — helped organize Philadelphia's first volunteer fire company, but the book's propaganda falsely casts him as their first book-burner

We shall this day light such a candle... — said as they were about to be burned for their beliefs. The "candle" represents ideas their deaths would keep alive.

break their eggs at the smaller end — from *Gulliver's Travels* — a war over which end of an egg to crack; mockery of trivial disputes

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	C
4	C
5	A
6	A
7	B
8	B
9	A
10	B

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 "The girl stopped and looked as if she might pull back in surprise, but instead stood regarding Montag with eyes so dark and shining and alive, that he felt he had said something quite wonderful."

As it is used in the passage, the word 'regarding' most nearly suggests that Clarisse...

- A. sizes Montag up with quiet suspicion
- B. studies Montag with lively interest
- C. is too startled to look at him directly

2 "One time, as a child, in a power failure, his mother had found and lit a last candle and there had been a brief hour of rediscovery, of such illumination that space lost its vast dimensions and drew comfortably around them, and they, mother and son, alone, transformed, hoping that the power might not come on again too soon..."

The passage most strongly suggests that the candle's 'illumination'...

- A. brought closeness, not just light
- B. mattered because candles were scarce
- C. left mother and son uneasy in the dark

3 "How like a mirror, too, her face. Impossible; for how many people did you know that refracted your own light to you?"

In this passage, Clarisse's face is described as refracting Montag's own light because it...

- A. hides her true feelings
- B. shows Montag who he is
- C. reveals her beauty

4 "He felt that the stars had been pulverized by the sound of the black jets and that in the morning the earth would be covered with their dust like a strange snow."

As used in the passage, the word 'pulverized' most nearly means...

- A. crushed into fine powder
- B. burned away to ashes
- C. scattered across the sky

5 "He tried to conjure up a face to fit the words, but there was no face."

Montag has just insisted he is in love. It can reasonably be inferred that he...

- A. is too embarrassed to say who it is
- B. cannot picture anyone he actually loves
- C. is trying to remember a stranger's name

6 "Light flickered on bits of ruby glass and on sensitive capillary hairs in the nylonbrushed nostrils of the creature that quivered gently, gently, its eight legs spidered under it on rubber-padded paws."

As used in the passage, the word 'capillary' most nearly means...

- A. bristling and razor-sharp
- B. having tiny blood vessels
- C. extremely fine and threadlike

7 "The lawn was empty, the trees empty, the street empty, and while at first he did not even know he missed her or was even looking for her, the fact was that by the time he reached the subway, there were vague stirrings of dis-ease in him."

As it is used, the hyphenated 'dis-ease' most nearly suggests that Montag's discomfort...

- A. is like a sickness beginning inside him
- B. is sudden fear of the empty street
- C. is passing irritation, soon forgotten

8 "The woman on the porch reached out with contempt to them all, and struck the kitchen match against the railing."

In the passage, the woman on the porch is characterized as...

- A. desperate for the men's forgiveness
- B. dazed and unaware of her danger
- C. scornfully defiant toward the firemen

9 "His hands were ravenous. And his eyes were beginning to feel hunger, as if they must look at something, anything, everything."

Montag's 'ravenous' hands and hungering eyes most strongly suggest that he...

- A. is desperate for a hot meal and rest
- B. is numb and wants only to sleep
- C. is gripped by hunger for more than food

10 "Whirl man's mind around about so fast under the pumping hands of publishers, exploiters, broadcasters that the centrifuge flings off all unnecessary, time-wasting thought!"

In Beatty's speech, the image of the centrifuge primarily functions to...

- A. present thought as waste to be spun off
- B. describe a machine used by publishers
- C. urge listeners to slow down and reflect

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	A	
3	B	Strictly, a mirror reflects rather than refracts; Bradbury borrows the science word loosely for the mirror-like return. The item tests his figurative use, not the optics.
4	A	
5	B	
6	C	Students usually meet 'capillary' as the noun for the finest blood vessels; here it is the shared adjective sense — hairlike fineness (Latin capillus, 'hair').
7	A	Bradbury's hyphen splits the ordinary word to revive its literal root — a lack of ease — so Montag's vague discomfort reads as the first symptom of an inner illness.
8	C	'Reached out' looks like a gesture of appeal; the word turns it into its opposite — she extends scorn, not a plea, then strikes the match herself.
9	C	
10	A	

Teacher Context: Part 1

Montag, a fireman who burns books, has his complacency shaken by his curious young neighbor Clarisse and by his wife Mildred's overdose. A woman chooses to burn with her books, Beatty explains the firemen's history, and Montag admits he has been hiding books and pulls Mildred in to read with him.