Fahrenheit 451

1. Identity card

Title: *Fahrenheit 451*

Author: Ray Bradbury

Date of publication: 1953

Genre: Dystopian novel / Science fiction

Historical and Cultural Context: Written during the Cold War, the novel reflects fears of censorship, conformity and the growing influence of mass media in American society. Bradbury warns readers about the dangers of a society that abandons critical thinking and intellectual freedom.

2. Plot summary

In a nutshell: The story follows Guy Montag, a fireman whose job is not to put out fires but to burn books. In a society where reading is forbidden and people are distracted by screens and entertainment, Montag gradually begins to question the world around him. After meeting Clarisse, a curious young woman, he starts reading books and eventually rebels against the system.

Key Moments:

- **1.** Montag meets Clarisse and begins questioning his life.
- **2.** A woman chooses to die with her books rather than abandon them.
- **3.** Montag secretly starts reading books.
- **4.** Captain Beatty confronts Montag and orders him to burn his own house.
- **5.** Montag escapes the city and joins a group of people who preserve literature through memory.

3. Main characters

Name	Role	Symbol
Guy Montag	main character	awakening, critical thinking
Clarisse McClellan	young neighbour	curiosity, individuality
Mildred Montag	Guy Montag's wife	conformity, addiction to media
Captain Beatty	fire chief	manipulation, censorship
Faber	former professor	knowledge, resistance
Granger	leader of the book people	hope, cultural memory

4. Major themes and links to the LLCER program

Première - Imaginations: utopia and dystopia

How does the novel illustrate this theme?

- Dystopian vision of the future.
- Technology used as a tool of control.
- Fear of a society without critical thinking.

Key examples

- Book burning.
- Interactive television walls.
- Mechanical Hound.

Terminale - Arts and debates of ideas

How does the novel illustrate this theme?

- Defence of literature and freedom of expression.
- Criticism of censorship.

Key examples

- Montag reading books.
- The book people preserving knowledge.

5. Key quotes and key words

“a book is a loaded gun”

censorship – conformity – freedom – knowledge – dystopia – technology – critical thinking

6. Author’s message

- Knowledge is essential to freedom.
- Literature encourages critical thinking.
- Technology can become a tool of control.
- Individuals must question society.