



Humanities 1 (English) - Summer Reading Assignment

- Read Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (be ready for a test or essay on the first day)
- Complete a Thought Sheet (see p. 3), with the addition of a section for three "Humanities Questions" on the front or back

Read *Fahrenheit 451* and create a thought sheet according to the instructions and examples given in the summer assignment instructions for English 1 Honors (see page 3 below), but with an added specification: somewhere within the thought sheet—or on the back if you can't make room on the front—include a section titled Humanities Questions.

For this section, ask yourself, "Does the novel *Fahrenheit 451* provoke any questions in me about human nature (about human beings in general, or even about myself or my own existence)? What do I honestly find curious or perplexing about the nature of humanity or my own life as I look back on this novel?" **Articulate three strong questions about human nature based on your experience of the novel.** These should be questions that genuinely make you ponder, questions that you don't already know how to answer. You can ask about anything related to our common human experience of any of the following:

freedom	courage	individuality	meaning	war
morality	fear	disagreement	spirituality	revolution
goodness	truth	conformity	religion	violence
evil	conflict	original thought	despair	resistance
family	entertainment	memory	beauty	
community	technology	history	love	
relationships	happiness	censorship	social pressure	

You can address any topic on this list, or any other(s) you think should be included.

One further option: if the novel made you reflect specifically on what it's like to live in *today's* world, you may choose to ask one of your three questions about what makes society the way it is today or how it could be different.

Contextualize each question by introducing it with a statement or two. Here are some **samples**:

- *A key catalyst of Montag's awakening is Clarisse's question, "Are you happy?" What constitutes human happiness? What does the answer say about our purpose or nature as human beings?*

- *Montag has a wife, Mildred, but the novel clearly portrays the failures of their relationship. What qualities make for a true companion, especially when someone's world seems to be falling apart?*
- *Many of the people of Montag's world unquestioningly hold socially acceptable opinions, but early in the novel Montag becomes unable or unwilling to do the same. What makes a person question the attitudes that the vast majority of people around him or her take for granted? Is it only certain people who naturally question the status quo, or are all human beings capable of doing so, but only if a certain experience provokes them? If so, what essential factors make up such a provocation?*
- *The futuristic technology portrayed in the novel increases human beings' comfort, capabilities, and potential for entertainment. Why does an increase in these things bring problems with it, rather than simply being a good thing?*

As you might have noticed, sometimes it can be helpful to ask a series of questions rather than just one, either because asking the same question in a different way clarifies what you mean by the first question, or because follow-up questions show how a certain answer to the first question leads to further inquiry.

Rationale:

Assignments usually ask you for answers, but what good are answers before you have questions? This assignment asks you to come up with questions instead of answers, because practicing good questioning draws upon and intensifies our God-given desire for truth. Literature invites us to look for ways to unearth meaning in what may initially seem mere embellishment. Additionally, great books often portray aspects of human experience which cannot easily be put into simpler language, so questions help us approach the truth contained therein. Asking a good question rather than simply making a statement indicates that you're letting the book push you beyond the boundaries of your understanding, rather than reducing the book's meaning to what you already know—or think you know—about human existence.

Thought Sheet Instructions

What is a Thought Sheet? A thought sheet is a handwritten, unlined, single-page (8-½ x 11) response to your text. A thought sheet connects the verbal and the visual; it connects the novel's ideas to your ideas. A thought sheet displays an active investment in what you are reading.

Directions: Cover a page with writing: quotations, thoughts, and images. Use the entire sheet of paper. Your grade will be contingent upon the quality and quantity of your work.

How to Fill your Thought Sheet	How NOT to Fill your Thought Sheet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Extract a telling quotation; use it as a springboard to explore your own ideas.➤ Sketch a small visual image to reflect your thoughts on a specific part of the novel.➤ Make connections with other texts or concepts or historic events.➤ Cluster words and images around a dominant impression, feeling, or thought regarding what you have read.➤ Make a personal statement about the novel.➤ Include a "Humanities Questions" section if you're in the Humanities Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Don't type or cut out pictures and paste them on the sheet.➤ Don't merely summarize.➤ Don't simply draw one or two pictures or a scene from the novel.➤ Don't think a half page will do.➤ Don't use a sheet larger than 8-½ x 11.➤ Don't use lined paper.

Some sample student Thought Sheets follow this page.



* How has the US maintained its success in cotton industry for the past 200 years?
 short-term answer: subsidies

* Why is entrepreneurial creativity and motif so significant?

Entrepreneurial Creativity

"The cotton farmers responded with a creative maneuver - a new idea, a new technology, a new policy" (7).

Increase in societal/economic developments during Civil War

* Cotton constituted approximately half of all US exports from 1815 to 1860

Industrial Gap between the North and South

* South focused on agriculture, whereas North focused on industrialization

Slavery

* As much as I understand the significance of slavery in labor, I still believe it is a morally flawed system.

Complete Slavery = Systems of Control + Monitoring + Incentives

"Governance"

Two types: positive incentives (prizes)

and negative incentives (punishments)

"Commercial success can be achieved through moral failure" (14).

* Considering this statement...

1. How objectively moral is the US today?
2. How moral was the US 200 years ago?
3. How much difference in morality is there in US from 200 years ago and today?

* I wonder which had greater efficiency output, positive or negative incentives?
 * How significant was "governance" to the cotton industry?

Cotton goods demand:

- ① Labor available on demand
- ② Cost of labor
- ③ Guaranteed productive behavior

* Why were these requests granted by the Congress?

Farm Price Support Programs → Growers Benefit

* Despite it being so ironic in practice, why did these policies continue to be used?

Sharecroppers failed because of gov't policies

Elimination of weeds
cons

Herbicides

Environmental Contaminants
pros

* Is the use of herbicides worth its shortcomings?

Cottonseed
 50% seed meal
 30% seed hull
 16% seed oil
 4% seed linters

- Cattle food
- fertilizer
- Butterfat catalysts
- Consumable oil

"Instead, he gets a tiny dividend every time city folks spread peanut butter on their toast" (55).

* Given Nelson receives profit for recycling cottonseeds, about what proportion is the said earnings compared to his total gains?

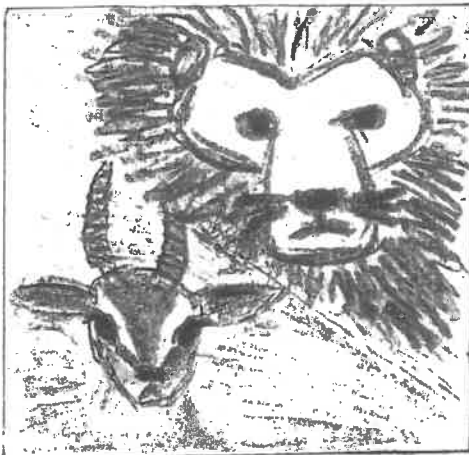
* Of the two, I personally advocate "Back-to-Nature" policies over those of "Forward-to-Future" because I assume there's relatively less amount of ecological consequences for moving backwards, more so than continuing technological innovations and developments.

Farmers' Total Subsidies = Direct Payment + Minimum Payment + Countercyclical Payment

* I personally believe the aggregate amount of farmers' federal subsidies is far too overwhelming as compared to that of other industrial workers within the same community.

* This is also the reason why I can understand and support opposition forces against the 2002 Bill

* Because I understand that democracy is the best platform for simultaneous economic and ecological progress, I assume countries such as China championed only economic developments.



Farmers being referred to as both gazelles and lions reminds me of human nature. People are inherently good, but will take whatever road they have to survive.



The Seed to Shirt coalition reminds me of the U.S. Civil Rights movement. Just as the farmers came together to fight trade policy, African Americans came together to fight injustice.

"The cotton needed water, yet it couldn't be picked wet. The hail would come down and knock the fluff right off the plant, or the gusty wind would blow it away" (37)

If cotton is so difficult to farm, why not make t-shirts out of polyester or silk?

- No wonder the U.S. produces the most cotton in the world. Unlike other cotton producing countries, the U.S. has a capitalist government, advanced technology, and government support
- I disagree with the author's statement that cotton textile production kicked off the Industrial Revolution. Britain's Industrial Revolution was kicked off due to Britain's strong central government and vast supply of minerals. Cotton is not a necessity and can easily be replaced by silk or polyester. On the other hand, coal is limited and an essential mineral to survival

- It makes sense Lubbock produces the most cotton because farmers in Texas adapt unlike the South and other countries
- It surprises me that different articles of clothing have different tariffs

- Personally I believe protectionists will never be happy one way or the other because politics and the economy are always changing and presenting new challenges
- The author presents this book through his admiration for the difficulty and unique cotton textile industry

