

CLOSE READING QUESTIONS (homework)

1. How would you describe the atmosphere established in the opening paragraphs of the story?
2. What does Mead’s “brightly lit” house tell us about him? What evidence in the story as a whole supports this view?
3. Bradbury describes Mead’s walk as being “...not unequal to walking through a graveyard...” In what ways is the city like a graveyard?
4. How would you describe life in this city in the year 2053? Consider the narrative carefully and identify specific examples of Bradbury’s use of language and stylistic features that have enabled you to reach your conclusion.
5. The voice from the police-car notes: “No profession” in response to the pedestrian’s statement that he is a writer. What does this particular utterance reveal about the society in which the story is set?

6. When did you realize that there was no one driving the police-car? Why is it that the identity of the voice in the car is kept anonymous? Who do you think is actually ‘controlling’ the car?

7. Why is Mead arrested?

8. What is his punishment to be? Why?

9. How is the repetition of the word “empty” particularly ominous at the end of the story?

THINKING DEEPER (Partner Work—NOT Homework)

You will use all of your notes and findings to discuss these questions within a group and report out to the rest of the class.

Groups 1 & 3:

1. What social trends does Ray Bradbury observe and see as potential problems for society?

2. What potentially harmful trends might you observe in today's society?

3. What warnings would you give about life in sixty years time?

Groups 2 & 4:

4. How do you think television could be used to suppress/change/control people’s thoughts and ideas?

5. Do you think that Bradbury’s fantasy is set very clearly in the future (sometime after 2052) or does it comment on some features of our present society?

6. What aspects of technology today do you see as isolating people from each other?