



# Genre Study

## FUTURE DYSTOPIA

### AS91101: WRITING PORTFOLIO - 6 CREDITS

#### 2.4: PRODUCE A SELECTION OF CRAFTED AND CONTROLLED WRITING



Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
<p>Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas.</p>	<p>Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas convincingly.</p>	<p>Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas effectively.</p>
<p>Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to create effects.</p>	<p>Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to create convincing effects.</p>	<p>Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to command attention.</p>



“So it was the hand that started it all... His hands had been infected, and soon it would be his arms... His hands were ravenous”

## Outline

This task is a culmination of our genre study of the dystopia Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury. This is an opportunity to explore the genre of the novel by explaining the extent to which it conforms to the style and preoccupations of its dystopian genre.

### CENTRAL QUESTION

Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 is part of a larger category of fiction. As a dystopia it serves to communicate an idea about society. Explore the means by which Bradbury uses the conventions of dystopia to communicate his ideas about where society has gone wrong.

## Preparation

### SUMMARY

1. Keep a personal summary of key events in Fahrenheit 451, including a wide range of cogent quotations.

For example:

**The novel starts with a scene where Montag and the other firemen are fuelling a fire:**

“With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history” p1

In this quotation the firehoses that spurt kerosene are being compared to great snakes – generating a direct comparison between the destructive work of the firemen and the mythological evil of serpents

2. Identify **a range of key features of the dystopia genre** that you recognise as being common to Fahrenheit 451 and other dystopian fiction you know. List these.
3. Research parallels with 2017
  - Twitter
  - Autobahns
  - Virtual reality
  - Earpods
  - Attitudes to reading
4. Plan the structure of your answer
5. Draft a practice paragraph



## The Final Piece

### SIZE

Once your initial research and preparation is completed, the final piece should be written in the form of a literary essay. While there is no specific word limit, making an effort to keep it to **1000-1200 words** will allow you to keep your argument focussed.

### CONDITIONS

The final piece will be written in class over **4 periods**. You may use your online journals to complete the writing and some superficial feedback may be sought as part of the initial drafting process.

### SCOPE

Your proficiency with spelling, grammar and punctuation will aid the clear and effective communication of your argument, as will conforming to a clear structure with your writing.

### ADVICE

You are advised to refer to examples of critical essays that you have been exposed to as part of the genre study in order to refine your understanding of how such a piece can be constructed for effect.

Seek feedback from your teacher in the early stages of your drafting in order to ensure you are on the right track.



# Exemplar

MATTHEW INGRAM

## Are we living in Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451?

The introduction engages the reader through the parallel employment of inclusive pronouns and a 'conversational' tone, exemplified in the use of the dashes to express an aside.

The introduction establishes the argument and clearly states the central question: Is the present what Ray Bradbury predicted?

Science-fiction author Ray Bradbury, one of the world's leading writers of the genre for more than 60 years, died on Tuesday at the age of 91. Although he wrote many books and short stories that were well-received — and in many cases made into movies, plays and TV shows — he was probably best known for *Fahrenheit 451*, about a dystopian future in which the government burns books. The story is usually seen as a protest against censorship, but Bradbury said his point was to draw attention to how television and other forms of media were making people less interested in the world of ideas. Given that we are surrounded by more media and entertainment content than ever before, what would Bradbury think of the world we live in now?

A short plot summary of the novel, explaining the main events that are relevant to this essay's discussion.

In the book (which Bradbury wrote in the UCLA library on a typewriter he rented by the hour), protagonist Guy Montag is a fireman — but that term is used for people who burn things, including books, rather than for people who put fires out. In the future envisioned by Bradbury, people's lives have been taken over by television, which for most people involves multiple wall-sized screens that broadcast mind-numbingly mundane shows with which the citizens of the future are obsessed. Montag's wife is one of those people, and he grows estranged from her and fascinated by the books he is supposed to be burning. The book ends with a nuclear war that apparently destroys most of civilisation.

## Bradbury saw society as becoming anti-intellectual

Factual information communicating Bradbury's stated intentions with the writing of *Fahrenheit 451*

Although books are outlawed in *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury said in interviews that his main purpose wasn't to argue against censorship (although that's clearly a sub-theme). Instead, he said he was trying to paint a picture of where society might be heading, as books and other old forms of media and entertainment were being replaced by what he saw as shallow and frivolous alternatives like television shows. In this future, Bradbury argued that books would become outlawed because people themselves would become increasingly anti-intellectual and see them as suspicious. Not surprisingly, perhaps, he was no fan of electronic books:

Those aren't books. You can't hold a computer in your hand like you can a book. A computer does not smell... A book has got to smell. You have to hold it in your hands and pray to it. You put it in your pocket and you walk with it. And it stays with you forever. But the computer doesn't do that for you. I'm sorry.



Bradbury also reacted strongly when Yahoo wanted to publish a book of his online: “You know what I told them? ‘To hell with you. To hell with you and to hell with the Internet. It’s distracting,” he said. In a lot of ways, Bradbury’s views about television and the dumbing down of culture were similar to those raised by author Neil Postman in his 1985 book “Amusing Ourselves to Death,” which was inspired by Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World” and was about the soporific effect of television and its impact on society. It’s not clear what Bradbury thought (if anything) about the internet or the rise of social media, but it seems likely he would see them as just part of the same pattern: shallow amusements that serve to distract people from the pursuit of true knowledge.

[CONTINUE READING:

[HTTPS://GIGAOM.COM/2012/06/06/ARE-WE-LIVING-IN-BRADBURY-S-FAHRENHEIT-451/](https://gigaom.com/2012/06/06/are-we-living-in-bradbury-s-fahrenheit-451/)]