

English 12: World Literature

All students in English 12 are required to read the following text: *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. In response to this novel, you'll need to write a 2-3 page essay in response to the novel. In addition, you will need to write one of your college admissions essays (650 word limit for Common App essays) and complete the summer vocabulary notecards explained below.

All summer work is due on the first day of class. Please have each of your essays printed as well as copies of both texts and your vocabulary notecards at the time of class. Points will be deducted if work is not submitted by the deadline, and you should be prepared to discuss the summer reading on the first day of class. Please note that there will be tests on the readings and summer vocabulary in the first two weeks of school.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Select **one** of the AP-style questions listed below and write a 2-3 page essay that responds to the prompt with regard to the novel *Fahrenheit 451*. Your essay should be in MLA format, as discussed in English 11. Be sure to use specific textual evidence to support your response.

- **Prompt A:** An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. In an essay, discuss the ending of a novel or play of acknowledged literary merit. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.
- **Prompt B:** The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. From a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.
- **Prompt C:** Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might on the basis of the character's actions alone be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.
- **Prompt D:** A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between a passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his or her responsibilities. In a

well-written essay show clearly the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character, and its significance to the work.

A Note of Caution: Students are not to use internet study guides or print study guides (such as *Cliff Notes* or *Sparknotes*) to answer any of these questions. To do so will be considered a violation of the honor code. Students in a senior English course should be capable of original thought and writing original essays.

College Essay Assignment

“Make me care. Please. Intellectually, emotionally, aesthetically – just make me care.”
– Oscar-winning filmmaker Andrew Stanton

The Purpose

Why exactly do colleges want you to write an essay? Well, an admissions essay can:

- Show how you react to challenging situations
- Reveal your values and priorities
- Explain factors in your background that have influenced you
- Discuss how you will contribute to life on campus
- Relate the reasons why you and the institution mesh

The college essay should give the Admissions Officer a brief glimpse into your character and how you handle life’s ups and downs through telling a compelling and memorable story.

The Approach

Use some of the techniques and strategies you’ve witnessed in the work of other writers you admire: clear prose, interesting word choice, vivid descriptions, etc. Do what you can to make the Admissions Officer care intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually. This increases your chance of getting admitted to the college of your choice.

Since the purpose of the essay is to reveal something compelling about your character, be sure that you begin with this in mind: “What do I want them to understand about me after reading my essay?”

The Prompts

If you already have a college application essay topic: you should use it to complete this assignment. *If not:* you may use one of the essay prompts from the Common Application:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

You are given a **650 word limit** for this task, so be sure to make every word count!
In choosing an essay topic, consider the following questions:

1. What does this story reveal about *you*?
2. How does this story show your capacity for growth, resilience in the face of change, and/or your progression as a human being?
3. How is your story *different* or *unique*?
4. What do you hope the Admissions Officers understand about your character as a result of reading your essay?

For a look at some exemplary examples of the college admissions essay, check the following website: <https://apply.jhu.edu/apply/essays-that-worked/>.