Columbus City Schools
English Language Arts Curriculum
Reading

Course/Grade English 10	**Genre/Text Selection** Fiction “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury	**Pacing** 10 days

Common Core Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension

The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts. (CCSS, Introduction, 8)

Note on range and content of student reading

To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing. Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal U.S. documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts. (CCSS, College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, 35)

An integrated model of literacy

Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout the Common Core State Standards document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)

Research and media skills blended into the Standards as a whole

To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today’s curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understanding are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)

Strands/Topics
Standard Statements

Reading Literature/Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Reading Literature/Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Reading Literature /Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Reading Literature/Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Reading Informational Texts/Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Reading Informational Texts/Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
5. Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

Reading Informational Texts/Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing/Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Writing/Research to Build and Present Knowledge

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
   a. Apply *grades 9-10 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]").
   b. Apply *grades 9-10 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning").

Writing/Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening/Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
   a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
   b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
   c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
   d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

Speaking and Listening/Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language/Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9–10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
   a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the

meaning of a word or phrase.
   b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy*).
   c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
   d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
   a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
   b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Instructional Strategies

"Because science fiction portrays a multitude of alternate futures, it can provide students not only with a means for evaluating the forces affecting the shape the future may take, but also with extrapolations depicting various directions in which advances in science and technology may lead us. These alternate futures can also provide the perspectives needed to appreciate the possibilities open to society and the human race—a vision not always easy to achieve in our rapidly changing environment." (p. vii) -- (Tymn, Marshall (1988). Introduction. In Marshall Tymn (ed.), *Science fiction: A teacher's guide & resource book* (pp. vii-xi). Mercer Island, WA: Starmont House, Inc.)

Day 1:
Pass out the handout **"Science Fiction"** (**appendix**). Give students time to brainstorm ideas. Then, ask students to share their ideas in whole-class discussion format. Record or have a student record class answers on the overhead, Elmo, whiteboard, etc. Be sure to challenge and extend student thinking by asking follow-up questions. Hopefully, current examples of science fiction came up during class discussion. If they did not, ask students for examples or provide a PowerPoint of visual images with examples. (You may also wish to begin class with a video clip from a recent science fiction film or series. One possibility is *Star Trek The Next Generation*, "The Arsenal of Freedom." You may show the exposition which runs 4:15 which is sufficient for students to discuss elements of science fiction. The entire program runs 45:47. Follow this link: http://www.startrek.com/watch_episode/tMAg_HCSa9MB .) When you have exhausted the previous discussion, tell students that the story they will be reading comes from the science fiction genre. Ask students what elements of plot, setting, character, and other literary devices they can expect to encounter based on class discussion.

Exit Ticket: Ask students to pull one detail from the brainstorming session and use it to make a prediction about a literary element they will encounter in the story.

Day 2:
Show the PowerPoint presentation **"Monsanto House of the Future"** located on the curriculum guide website OR show the YouTube video "House of the Future, 1957" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VowfYuhx1-o . As students watch, ask them to compile two lists: 1) What seems usual, traditional, or expected? 2) What seems unusual, modern and unexpected?

Have a class discussion in which students share their reaction to the House of the Future.

Put students in small groups and have them sketch and design their own house of the future. Display sketches around the room and have students participate in a gallery walk in which they observe the work of the class. Ask students to comment on each other's designs. What seems usual, traditional, or expected? What seems unusual, modern and unexpected?

Day 3:
Tell students they will be reading a story about a futuristic house. Assign students a focus area by numbering them 1, 2, 3 or use your chosen grouping method. Tell them they will have a focus for the story. Pass out the handout(s) **"There Will Come Soft Rains Worksheets"** (**appendix**). Review the three areas of focus—imagery, irony, and personification—as well as the models for each focus area.

Allow students the rest of class to read the story (pages 284-292 of the textbook) and fill out their graphic organizers.

Days 4 and 5:
Please read the handout **"Bradbury Text Dependent Questions"** (appendix) or read the excerpt from it in the text below before today's lesson.

Begin a **close reading** of "There Will Come Soft Rains" by either reading it aloud to the class or having a student or two voluntarily read aloud. Using the table that follows, guide students through the short story by re-reading the paragraphs under discussion, clarifying the vocabulary that is in bold print (which will then enable students to use context clues to determine definitions of other unknown words in the paragraphs), and asking text-dependent questions that relate directly to the excerpt provided. Note: A copy of this short story in its entirety is located in the appendix so that students may make annotations.

Text Passage Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text-Dependent Questions for Students
In the living room the voice-clock sang, Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up, time to get up, seven o'clock! as if it were afraid that nobody would. The morning house lay empty. The clock ticked on, repeating and repeating its sounds into the emptiness. *Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine!* In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and **ejected** from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunny side up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk. "Today is August 4, 2026," said a second voice from the kitchen ceiling, "in the city of Allendale, California." It repeated the date	**ejected**: cause (something) to drop out or be removed, usually mechanically	**(Q1)** Ask students to think about story openings. What is unusual about this opening? What is expected or familiar? *There is no exposition. The reader is given no background information but instead is presented with an unusual situation—a house that talks. Although the opening is unusual in many ways, it also opens with the concept of time, invoking the familiar opening line, "Once upon a time."* Ask students what kinds of stories begin with, "Once upon a time." What is the purpose of those kinds of stories? What does this usage suggest about Bradbury's purpose here? *Fairy tales and fables begin with this phrase. These stories—Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, Hansel and Gretel, etc.—are meant to instruct and warn children about right and wrong. The usage suggests that Bradbury's story is also meant to be didactic.* **(Q2)** The diction and syntax of the voice-clock invoke images of a nursery rhyme. Explain why Bradbury would use this stylistic device. *The sounds emitted from the house—sing-song, routine, and happy—contrast sharply with the sights of the house—it is completely empty. The contrast creates a feeling of discord in the reader.* **(Q3)** Tell students that a homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning. Ask students to look at the word, "morning." How might this word be interpreted differently depending on the context? *In this context, the house is trying to wake up a vacated space. The*

three times for memory's sake. "Today is Mr. Featherstone's birthday. Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage. Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills." Somewhere in the walls, **relays** clicked, memory tapes glided under electric eyes. *Ten o'clock*. The sun came out from behind the rain. The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.	**relay**: an electromagnetic device for remote or automatic control that is actuated by variation in conditions of an electric circuit and that operates in turn other devices (as switches) in the same or a different circuit	*word could also be read as "mourning" or "sad." The house is empty and therefore in a state of grief.* **(Q4)** Give examples of Bradbury personifying the house. What purpose does this personification serve? *"Voice-clock," the house and its machines "repeat, hiss, and eject." It introduces the house—an inanimate object—as a character in the story and also serves to underscore the fact that no humans are present.* **(Q5)** How does Bradbury create discomfort in the opening of his story? *He contrasts things normal and familiar—a wake-up alarm, toast, eggs, bacon, etc.—with those that are not—a house that is empty first thing in the morning.* **(Q6)** What kind of information does the house give its occupants? What does this suggest about the function of machines in the future? *The house gives the date and location. It also reminds its occupants of birthdays, anniversaries and bills that are due. This information—"repeated…three times for memory's sake"—suggests that machines are now programming the mental knowledge for humans, instead of humans programming the machines.* **(Q7)** Is the word "somewhere" specific or vague? How does this word choice add to the reader's sense of uneasiness? *The word "somewhere"—an adverb—means in, at, from, or to a place unknown or unspecified. The functions of the house are occurring, unknown and unseen to humans.* **(Q8)** Notice phrases like, "voice-clock," "memory tapes," and "electric eyes." What function do these phrases serve? *The phrases not only personify the house and its machines, but also blur the lines between functions and parts and between humans and machines.* **(Q9)** How does Bradbury use situational irony in this paragraph? *The paragraph begins with the image of the sun coming out after the rain. For readers, this normally signifies the end of bad times, the promise of good things to come. In this paragraph, however, the sun reveals that the house is the only one left, "in a city of rubble and ashes." The reader's sense of normalcy and outcomes is disrupted. Additionally, at night, the city gives off light—"a radioactive glow"—*

Ten-fifteen. The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden **founts**, filling the soft morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted window panes, running down the **charred** west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one **titanic** instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.	**founts**: fountain; source **charred**: converted to charcoal or carbon usually by heat **titanic**: having great magnitude, force, or power	*instead of the city receiving light from a natural source such as the moon or stars. Everything about this setting disrupts the reader's sense of normalcy and order.* **(Q10)** How does Bradbury use setting to give hints about plot—what has happened? *The author does not directly tell the reader that some atomic holocaust has occurred but instead reveals this indirectly through a description of the outside of the house and its surroundings. A "silhouette" is all that is left of each of its occupants, imprinted on the west wall of the house. Not only is the cause of death explained but also the course of it. Each of the charred images is busy—mowing the lawn, picking flowers, playing ball. This was a family at leisure, unaware that they were about to experience a "titanic instant" that would be the rest of their life.*
The house was an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly. *Twelve noon*. A dog whined, shivering, on the front porch. The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with		**(Q11)** What figure of speech occurs here? For what purpose? *The house is compared to an altar—a symbol of worship and sacrifice. When the house was occupied with its family, the rituals—like those performed in church—were meaningful and full of purpose. Now, without attendants—the family—the rituals of the house seem senseless and useless.* **(Q12)** What does the phrase "the gods had gone away" suggest? *All faith is gone in this post-apocalyptic world. Like the rapture or second coming alluded to in religions, all that is left in the human world is ruined and destroyed.* **(Q13)** What has happened to living things in this world? *The dog, "once huge and fleshy," is now starving and covered in sores.*

sores, moved in and though the house, tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience. For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrows. There, down the tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an **incinerator** which sat like evil **Baal** in a dark corner. The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at last realizing, as the house realized, that only silence was here. It sniffed the air and scratched the kitchen door. Behind the door, the stove was making pancakes which filled the house with a rich baked odor and the scent of maple syrup. The dog frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles, biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy, and died. It lay in the parlor for an hour. *Two o'clock*, sang a voice.	**incinerator**: a machine that burns contents to ashes **Baal**: the name of the supreme god worshiped in ancient Canaan and Phoenicia. In the Bible, Jesus calls Satan "Beelzebub," linking the devil to Baal-Zebub. The Baalim of the Old Testament were nothing more than demons masquerading as gods, and all idolatry is ultimately devil-worship	**(Q14)** How does the house react to elements from the natural world? *The house reacts with anger—the robotic mice are angry at the "inconvenience" of having to pick up mud—and defense—"a leaf fragment blew under the door but the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out."* **(Q15)** What is Bradbury's purpose in including an allusion to Baal? *The allusion conjures up images of hell and the devil. The technology, in this context of a post-apocalyptic world—becomes dark and sinister.* **(Q16)** What is ironic about the house's treatment of the dog? *The house treats the dog with either annoyance—at having to pick up after his mess—or indifference—it does not respond to his "hysterical yelping" or scratching at the kitchen door when he smells food. For as smart as the house is, it cannot read the instinctual needs of an animal.* **(Q17)** The dog is the only living creature in the story. Describe the actions of the dog in this environment. How might you interpret the dog as a symbol? *The dog is starving and sickly, unable to survive in this environment without its human masters. The dog runs in circles, biting itself. The dog turns on himself, just as the science and technology that allowed*

Delicately sensing decay at last, the **regiments** of mice hummed out as softly as blown gray leaves in an electrical wind. *Two-fifteen*. The dog was gone. In the cellar, the incinerator glowed suddenly and a whirl of sparks leaped up the chimney. *Two thirty-five*. Bridge tables sprouted from patio walls. Playing cards fluttered onto pads in a shower of pips. Glasses **manifested** on an oaken bench with egg-salad sandwiches. Music played.	**regiments**: troops; squads **manifested**: readily perceived by the senses and especially by the sense of sight	*humans to live a life of convenience turned on them.* **(Q18)** Look at the diction in this passage: "sprouted," "fluttered," "shower." What is ironic about the imagery suggested here? *The effect of the diction forms an image of nature, the natural world. However, just earlier, the house—and we can assume its former occupants—did much to keep the natural world out. The fact that man-made items in the house are mimicking nature, then, is ironic.*
Nine-five. A voice spoke from the study ceiling: "Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?" The house was silent. The voice said at last, "Since you express no preference, I shall		**(Q19)** Bradbury keeps inserting the voice of the house, which repeats the time. What effect does this have? *The repetition of the clock suggests that we are leading up to something—it builds anticipation.*

select a poem at random." Quiet music rose to back the voice. "Sara Teasdale. As I recall, your favorite… There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground, And swallows circling with their shimmering sound; And frogs in the pools singing at night, And wild plum trees in **tremulous** white; Robins will wear their feathery fire, Whistling their **whims** on a low fence-wire; And not one will know of the war, not one Will care at last when it is done, Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, If mankind perished **utterly**; And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn Would **scarcely** know that we were gone."	**tremulous**: timid; shy **whims**: impulses; urges **utterly**: completely; absolutely **scarcely**: barely, hardly	**(Q20)** Compare and contrast the Teasdale poem to the story. *Just as the story does, the poem begins with rain. There are noises in both texts, but the sounds in the poem come from the natural world—birds and frogs—while the sounds in the story—the voice clock—come from the machine world. The image of white given by a wild plum tree pairs with the white paint on the side of the house. The poem speaks of a war, which is the event that has led to the destruction of this California town, or even the world. The poem declares that "not one will know of the war, not one/Will care at last when it is done." So in the story, too, is there no one to tell of what happens. Mankind has "perished," as the poem suggests he/she could.* *The poem and the story differ, though, as seen in the lines, "And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn/Would scarcely know that we were gone." The poem personifies and empowers nature. Nature outlasts mankind. In the story, Bradbury personifies machines. Machines have outlasted mankind. But as spring would barely notice if mankind ceased to exist, the house continues to talk, make breakfast, perform cleaning duties, as if it has no idea that the family is gone.*
At ten o'clock the house began to die. The wind blew. A falling tree **bough** crashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning **solvent**, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant! "Fire!" screamed a voice. The house lights flashed, water pumps	**bough**: branch; limb **solvent**: solution that dissolves	**(Q21)** The climax of the story begins here. What interaction creates the climax? *The tree limb—an object from the natural world—breaks through the barrier of the house. When it collides with a chemical, man-made*

shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took it up in chorus: "Fire, fire, fire!" The house tried to save itself. Doors sprang tightly shut, but the windows were broken by the heat and the wind blew and sucked upon the fire. The house gave ground as the fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease from room to room and then up the stairs. While scurrying water rats squeaked from the walls, pistoled their water, and ran for more. And the wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain. But too late. Somewhere, sighing, a pump shrugged to a stop. The **quenching** rain ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days was gone. The fire crackled up the stairs. It fed upon **Picassos and Matisses** in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings. Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of	**quenching**: the state of putting to an end typically by satisfying, damping, cooling, or decreasing **Picassos and Matisses**: paintings by the famous artists of the same name. They are regarded as two of the three artists who most defined the revolutionary	*solution—the cleaning solvent—a fire breaks out.* **(Q22)** What might the fire symbolize? *Fire is one of the most primitive forces of nature. It has been around long before man or the house.* **(Q23)** Bradbury uses the verbs "licking, eating" to describe the fire. What images does this usage suggest? *The fire becomes animalistic, with an insatiable appetite.* **(Q24)** What other natural force assists the fire? *The wind*

drapes! And then, reinforcements. From attic trapdoors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical. The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth. But the fire was clever. It had sent flames outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps there. An explosion! The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze **shrapnel** on the beams. The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung there. The house shuddered, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton **cringing** from the heat, its wire, its nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn the skin off to let the red veins and **capillaries** quiver in the scalded air. Help, help! Fire! Run, run! Heat snapped mirrors like the first **brittle** winter ice. And the voices wailed Fire, fire, run, run, like	developments in the plastic arts in the opening decades of the 20th century, responsible for significant developments in painting, sculpture, printmaking and ceramics. **shrapnel**: bomb, mine, or shell fragments **cringing**: wincing; recoiling; shrinking **capillaries**: any of the tiny blood vessels connecting the small arteries and veins **brittle**: hard	**(Q25)** What do the verb choices in this sentence suggest? *The fire lays, stands, and changes. The fire now becomes personified as it utterly destroys the house.* **(Q26)** What is the effect of the reinforcements? *They temporarily stop the fire, but ultimately are unsuccessful as the fire finds another route to destroy the house.* **(Q27)** The house uses "faucet mouths gushing green chemical" to fight the fire. What does this imagery conjure? *Many students will think of vomit, being sick, etc.* **(Q28)** Explain the figure of speech used here to describe the fire and the house. *Bradbury uses simile to compare the reaction of the fire to the faucet to that of an elephant to a snake. The comparison reinforces the power and size of the fire in relation to the resources of the house.* **(Q29)** Paraphrase the sequence of events in this paragraph. *The fire is smart and sends its flames outside of the house, where they go up to the attic where the pumps are. There is an explosion as the main controls of the house that live in the attic react to the fire. The bronze that composed the "brains" of the house shatters into pieces.* **(Q30)** As the fire takes over, the destruction of the house intensifies. How does Bradbury create intensity here? *His personification of the house continues, but becomes more extreme and grotesque—the flesh of the house has burned away as its infrastructure—"oak bones" and "skeleton" begin to crumble. Additionally, he uses a simile comparing the fire to a surgeon "tearing" off the skin, which creates a violent association. The house's "red veins and capillaries quiver" as it becomes completely vulnerable and*

a tragic nursery rhyme, a dozen voices, high, low, like children dying in a forest, alone, alone. And the voices fading as the wires popped their **sheathings** like hot chestnuts. One, two, three, four, five voices died. In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river.... Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, **oblivious**, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with **sublime** disregard for the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires	**sheathings:** casings; coverings **oblivious**: unaware **sublime**: amazing	*helpless as a patient on the operating table.* **(Q31)** Bradbury returns to the nursery rhyme sounds he used to open the story. Here, he explicitly says the voices sound like a "tragic nursery rhyme." How do nursery rhymes function? How are they functioning at this point in the story? *Nursery rhymes are songs or poems that are easy for children to memorize. They are often allegorical, containing messages about cultural values and expected behavior. Here, the nursery rhyme takes on a particularly ominous feel, as human desire for power and dominance over the environment results in ultimate chaos and destruction. The contrast of innocence—a children's song—to the violent and destructive reality is unsettling, to say the least.* **(Q32)** Contrast the actions of the house to the actions surrounding it. How does this authorial pairing parallel the insanity and chaos that are occurring at this point in the plot? *The house is announcing and performing routine and ordinary tasks—playing music, cutting the lawn, etc.—while around it, complete destruction occurs. The house, for all its technological advances, is completely oblivious to the reality of the world around it. The actions of the house become seen as insane and senseless in the context of the fire.* **(Q33)** Throughout the story, Bradbury has personified the house. To what kind of person is the house compared? *The house is efficient, helpful, cheerful, and task-oriented. However, the house cannot respond to any circumstances that exist outside of its programmed tasks. It relies upon machinery, rejecting any elements from the outside world. It fails to effectively combat the chaos and*

withered and the circuits cracked. The fire burst the house and let it slam flat down, puffing out skirts of spark and smoke. In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a **psychopathic** rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing! The crash. The attic smashing into kitchen and **parlor**. The parlor into cellar, cellar into subcellar. Deep freeze, armchair, film tapes, circuits, beds, and all like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound deep under. Smoke and silence. A great quantity of smoke. Dawn showed faintly in the east. Among the ruins, one wall stood alone. Within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam: "Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is…"	**psychopathic**: of, relating to antisocial personality disorder **parlor**: a room used primarily for conversation or the reception of guests	*violence of crisis, instead falling back on pre-programmed routines and drills.* **(Q34)** What might Bradbury be saying about this type of person? *People who rely on order and routine may find themselves utterly inept to deal with unforeseen circumstances.* **(Q35)** Bradbury uses the phrase "psychopathic rate" to describe the house's functions as it succumbs to destruction. Have students look up the etymology of the word. What is a psychopath? What does Bradbury's usage suggest here? *The word "psychopathy" is a joining of the Greek words psyche (soul) and pathos (suffering, feeling). A psychopath is someone whose soul is troubled. Bradbury's usage suggests that the house suffers from a soul sickness.* **(Q36)** The house is the last remaining artifact from the destroyed town of Allendale. Ask students to articulate why houses/homes are so important. How might the house in this story be seen as a symbol? *Students might say that homes are where you go to take refuge, comfort from the world. Houses become the center of the family. In this particular story, the house does appear to suffer from a "soul sickness." It lacks any emotional spiritual intelligence.* **(Q37)** Bradbury changes his syntax here in the last three paragraphs. What do you notice about the sentence length when you compare the sentences to the previous two? What effect does this have? *The sentences in the last three paragraphs are much shorter in length. The paragraphs that come before are much longer. The change in length parallels the fire burning out, the action of the story slowing down and coming to a close.* **(Q38)** The story begins and ends with a mechanized voice. What does this suggest? *There is no end, only a cycle. The events that transpired in this story*

		are destined to occur again. **(Q39)** Return to the Teasdale poem. How does the poem end? What cycles continue? *The poem ends with Spring awakening—a sign of hope and new beginnings. The seasons and cycles of nature continue regardless of man's presence.* Compare this ending to the Bradbury story. How does the story end? What cycles continue? *The story ends with a new dawn. However, instead of the image of spring, we hear the voice of a machine under the rubble.* **(40)** Bradbury's story parallels the Teasdale poem in that both works end with the idea of cycles. However, while Teasdale's poem ends with the cycles of nature, the last image in the story is that of a machine. What does this suggest about Bradbury's view of the future? *Answers will vary.*

Day 6:
Place students in small groups, ensuring that each group contains a student from each focus area ("There Will Come Soft Rains Worksheets"). Give students time to share their findings in small groups. After 15-20 minutes, ask groups to share their findings with the whole class, emphasizing that students should focus on the last column, "Effect." As students share, be sure to encourage them to articulate how their literary device—imagery, irony, or personification—contributes to the overall theme of the story. Record student responses on the overhead, Elmo, SmartBoard, etc.

Day 7:
As a warm-up, pass out the **"KWL Chart"** (**appendix**) and allow students to fill out the first two columns ("what I know and what I want to know"). Depending on your comfort level with the topics, you may need to do a little research on your own. For the sake of taking class notes, please review the following website for a brief synopsis on the topics: http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war. Have a class discussion in which students share their knowledge. Be sure to include accurate student knowledge in the class copy of the chart on the overhead, Elmo, SmartBoard, etc.

Exit Ticket: Ask students to connect the day's discussion to the story. More specifically, ask them how people's fears during the Atomic Age/Cold War can be seen in the story. *(For example: The fact that the setting of the story is an apocalyptic world set just after nuclear destruction illustrates Americans' fears of the "arms race" that began when Russia tested their own atom bomb in 1949.)*

Homework: Give students the article **"Why We Love Sci-Fi"** (**appendix**), and ask them to read and annotate for homework.

Day 8:
Entrance Ticket: Why We Love Sci-Fi (**appendix**). Allow students time to complete the entrance ticket while you walk around the room and check last night's annotations. Use the entrance ticket as a spring board for class discussion.

Write the term **allegory** on the board. Ask students to guess what it is. (Allegory is the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence.) Ask students to speculate how "There Will Come Soft Rains" is allegorical. *(The story is allegorical largely because it warns readers that the very technologies we depend on for comfort and ease may also be used against us to the end of our destruction.)*

Explain to students that another critical feature to science fiction is **setting.** Ask students why setting is so important in science fiction. (*Answers will vary, but students might say things like: Science fiction stories have an imaginary setting. The readers want to leave the cares and concerns of everyday reality behind and be transported to a completely different world. OR, an imaginary setting is not only essential to the definition of most science fiction, it generally plays a far more important role in it and a qualitatively different one than it does in mainstream fiction. In science fiction, setting is less a backdrop for action and characterization and more a key element that is intimately related to plot, character, and the story as a whole. In fact, one might argue that story elements such as plot and character are far less relevant to the success of a science fiction story than its setting.)*

Tell students that in the story, the setting—the house—is also the main character. Bradbury has done this largely through personification.

Exit Ticket: Literary Devices in "There Will Come Soft Rains" (**appendix**)

Day 9:
Make a T-chart list (Science Fiction Work/Setting) on the board, overhead, Elmo, etc. Ask students to brainstorm a list of science fiction movies or stories. Ask them to list the setting(s) of those works. Compile a list as a class. Tell students that although the primary setting of science fiction has no boundaries and is often extraordinary, in order for readers to connect to the ideas, themes, etc. of the story, writers and filmmakers must include details from the known and familiar world of readers and viewers. Remind the students of the definition of the term **imagery** (*language that appeals to the senses*). Ask them to take several minutes to review the story, finding examples of imagery that create familiarity. (*Answers might include the food served at breakfast, the sprinklers coming on, etc.)* Tell students that realistic and familiar imagery is important in any story, but especially in science fiction.

Tell students to take out a piece of paper and brainstorm a list of imagery for the classroom. Give them several minutes to do so. Then, ask students to work with a partner to create an introductory paragraph for a science fiction story that takes place in a classroom. Have students share their stories and talk about how imagery helps orient the reader in a new and unknown world. Additionally, talk about how the familiar imagery might contrast with the setting to create a sense of uneasiness or unfamiliarity in the reader.

Day 10:
Introduce final project. (See handouts **"Final Project"** and **"Final Project Rubric"** that are located in the appendix.) You may assign a due date and ask students to work on the project entirely outside of class, or you may designate additional days in this lesson plan with which students will be allotted time to work on this assignment in class.

Possible Extensions:
Artistic: Have students explore the Robert Beckmann series "Nuclear Testing" (http://robertbeckmann.com/) and create their own artistic drawings to complement the story. Note: A PowerPoint of Beckmann's series accompanying this lesson plan is available on the curriculum guide website.
Film: Students watch the film *WALL-E* and compare and contrast the post-apocalyptic worlds of the film and the Bradbury story.
Research/Humanities: Students research the ideologies and mindsets around the Cold War.
Non-fiction Articles:
Speech given by Newton Minnow (former chairman of the FCC) on May 9, 1961, to the National Association of Broadcasters, in which he accuses television programming of being a "vast wasteland." After lamenting the deplorable quality of television programming, he identifies how broadcasters can live up to their responsibility to deliver quality programming to their viewers.
Retrieved June 25, 2013, from http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/newtonminow.htm

Anonymous news report (November 1, 2000). Digital angel unveiled: Human-tracking sub dermal implant technology makes debut. *World Net Daily*.
Retrieved June 25, 2013, from http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=17705

Farah, Joseph (February 14, 2000). Meet the "Digital Angel"—from hell. *World Net Daily*.
Retrieved June 25, 2013, from http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=14913

Anonymous news report (November 4, 2004). "Brain" in a dish flies flight simulator. *CNN.com*.
Retrieved June 25, 2013, from http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/11/02/brain.dish

Samples of visual art created by Ray Kurzweil's computer (named AARON),
Retrieved June 25, 2013, from http://www.kurzweilcyberart.com/aaron/static.html

Instructional Resources

- *Literature Language and Literacy,* Grade 10, "There Will Come Soft Rains," Pearson Education Inc., 2010
- Information about The Cold War: http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VowfYuhx1-o Monsanto's House of the Future, 1957 (8:28)
- *Star Trek The Next Generation*, "The Arsenal of Freedom." http://www.startrek.com/watch_episode/tMAg_HCSa9MB Exposition (4:14); full episode (45:47)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Strategies for Diverse Learners)

- http://www.ohiorc.org/adlit/InPerspective/Issue/2007-02/Article/feature.aspx "Differentiation at the Secondary Level" by Rick Wormeli
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzhlU8rXgHc Leonard Nimoy reading "There Will Come Soft Rains" (14:44)
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8nkJo0EMP8 Video accompanying recitation of Sara Teasdale's poem "There Will Come Soft Rains" (4:06)

Professional Articles

- http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/CC/0221-sep2012/Chron0221PolicyBrief.pdf "Reading Instruction for *All* Students"
- http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/CC/0201-sep2010/CC0201PolicyBrief.pdf "Fostering High Quality Formative Assessment"
- http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1132/EJ0964Have.pdf "I'll Have Mine Annotated, Please: Helping Students Make Connections with Text"

English Language Arts Connections

Writing	**Language**	**Speaking and Listening**
Incorporate Writing Standards as students read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts. http://www.corestandards.org	Incorporate Language standards as students construct writing in terms of writing conventions, knowledge of language, and acquisition and use of vocabulary. http://www.corestandards.org	Incorporate Speaking and Listening standards as students integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats. http://www.corestandards.org

Appendix

Name:

Below, brainstorm anything and everything that comes to mind when you read the following term. Add your ideas around the term.

Name:

"There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury

As you read the story, fill in your chart with textual examples of your focus area. Please use the back of this handout for additional writing room.

FOCUS: IMAGERY: **Language that appeals to the senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell.**

Textual Example	Paraphrase	Effect
"The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden founts, filling the soft morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the charred west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places." (286-287)	In the morning, the golden sprinklers come on and spread water through the air. The water hits the windows of the house, and then runs down the burnt west side of the house where the white paint had been totally removed by the nuclear event. The entire west side of the house was now black, except for in five places.	The imagery starts out nicely enough. It's a nice morning and sprinklers are coming on. The reader would be familiar with this scene. But then the imagery takes a more ominous turn—it's burnt and black with the exception of the five white spaces. The overall effect places the normal with the abnormal.

Textual Example	Paraphrase	Effect

Name:

"There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury

As you read the story, fill in your chart with textual examples of your focus area. Please use the back of this handout for additional writing room.

<u>FOCUS: IRONY</u>—The effect created when a writer contrasts expectations of the ideal with reality.

- Situational Irony: An event contrasts expectations
- Verbal Irony: A character states the opposite of what is meant
- Dramatic Irony: The reader knows more than the character

Textual Example	Paraphrase	Effect
"Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, oblivious, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other…" (291)	Ten more computer voices stopped. Just before the fire came crashing down, other voices that weren't aware of what was happening were heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella anxiously out and in the slamming and opening front door. All these things were happening at the same time. It was like when clocks in a clock shop all go off at the same time.	This is dramatic irony. The reader is like, "Hello?! You are dying house! Do something!" And the house is actually "doing something," but it just keeps performing scheduled and routine tasks, unknowing of the reality of the situation. The entire story the house has been keeping a schedule in this post-apocalyptic setting, and this particular example highlights the absurdity of the situation.

Textual Example	Paraphrase	Effect

Name:

"There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury

As you read the story, fill in your chart with textual examples of your focus area. Please use the back of this handout for additional writing room.

FOCUS: PERSONIFICATION—Giving human characteristics or features to non-human objects.

Textual Example	Paraphrase	Effect
"For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrows. There, down the tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an incinerator…" (287)	A small part of a leaf couldn't blow under the door without the wall flipping open and copper scrap rats running out. Whatever piece of dust, hair, or paper had offended the house was grabbed by little steel teeth and quickly taken back to the tunnels of the house. From there, it went down tubes into the basement, where it finally went into a fiery burner.	The house has little tolerance for anything that it deems does not belong there. The house does not like disorder, chaos, or any kind of mess whatsoever. Anything that upsets the house will be picked up and quickly destroyed.

Textual Example	Paraphrase	Effect

"There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury

Text Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text Dependent Questions
In the living room the voice-clock sang, Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up, time to get up, seven o'clock! as if it were afraid that nobody would. The morning house lay empty. The clock ticked on, repeating and repeating its sounds into the emptiness. *Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine!* In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and **ejected** from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunny side up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk. "Today is August 4, 2026," said a second voice from the kitchen ceiling, "in the city of Allendale, California." It repeated the date three times for memory's sake. "Today is Mr. Featherstone's birthday. Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage. Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills." Somewhere in the walls, **relays** clicked, memory tapes glided under electric eyes.	**ejected**: cause (something) to drop out or be removed, usually mechanically **relay**: an electromagnetic device for remote or automatic control that is actuated by variation in conditions of an electric circuit and that operates in turn other devices (as switches) in the same or a different circuit	**(Q1)** Ask students to think about story openings. What is unusual about this opening? What is expected or familiar? *There is no exposition. The reader is given no background information but instead is presented with an unusual situation—a house that talks. Although the opening is unusual in many ways, it also opens with the concept of time, invoking the familiar opening line, "Once upon a time."* Ask students what kinds of stories begin with, "Once upon a time." What is the purpose of those kinds of stories? What does this usage suggest about Bradbury's purpose here? *Fairy tales and fables begin with this phrase. These stories—Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, Hansel and Gretel, etc.—are meant to instruct and warn children about right and wrong. The usage suggests that Bradbury's story is also meant to be didactic.* **(Q2)** The diction and syntax of the voice-clock invoke images of a nursery rhyme. Explain why Bradbury would use this stylistic device. *The sounds emitted from the house—sing-song, routine, and happy—contrast sharply with the sights of the house—it is completely empty. The contrast creates a feeling of discord in the reader.* **(Q3)** Tell students that a homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning. Ask students to look at the word, "morning." How might this word be interpreted differently depending on the context? *In this context, the house is trying to wake up a vacated space. The word could also be read as "mourning" or "sad." The house is empty and therefore in a state of grief.* **(Q4)** Give examples of Bradbury personifying the house. What purpose does this personification serve? *"Voice-clock," the house and its machines "repeat, hiss, and eject." It introduces the house—an inanimate object—as a character in the story and also serves to underscore the fact that no humans are present.* **(Q5)** How does Bradbury create discomfort in the opening of his story? *He contrasts things normal and familiar—a wake-up alarm, toast, eggs, bacon, etc.—with those that are not—a house that is empty first thing in the morning.* **(Q6)** What kind of information does the house give its occupants? What does this suggest about the function of machines in the future? *The house gives the date and location. It also reminds its occupants of birthdays, anniversaries and bills that are due. This information—"repeated…three times for memory's sake"—suggests that machines are now programming the mental knowledge for humans, instead of humans programming the machines.* **(Q7)** Is the word "somewhere" specific or vague? How does this word choice add to the reader's sense of uneasiness? *The word "somewhere"—an adverb—means in, at, from, or to a place unknown or unspecified. The functions of the house are occurring, unknown and unseen to humans.* **(Q8)** Notice phrases like, "voice-clock," "memory tapes," and "electric eyes." What function do these phrases serve? *The phrases not only personify the house and its machines, but also blur the lines between functions and parts and between humans and machines.*

Ten o'clock. The sun came out from behind the rain. The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.

Ten-fifteen. The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden **founts**, filling the soft morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the **charred** west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one **titanic** instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.

founts: fountain; source

charred: converted to charcoal or carbon usually by heat

titanic: having great magnitude, force, or power

(Q9) How does Bradbury use situational irony in this paragraph?
The paragraph begins with the image of the sun coming out after the rain. For readers, this normally signifies the end of bad times, the promise of good things to come. In this paragraph, however, the sun reveals that the house is the only one left, "in a city of rubble and ashes." The reader's sense of normalcy and outcomes is disrupted. Additionally, at night, the city gives off light—"a radioactive glow"—instead of the city receiving light from a natural source such as the moon or stars. Everything about this setting disrupts the reader's sense of normalcy and order.

(Q10) How does Bradbury use setting to give hints about plot—what has happened?
The author does not directly tell the reader that some atomic holocaust has occurred but instead reveals this indirectly through a description of the outside of the house and its surroundings. A "silhouette" is all that is left of each of its occupants, imprinted on the west wall of the house. Not only is the cause of death explained but also the course of it. Each of the charred images is busy—mowing the lawn, picking flowers, playing ball. This was a family at leisure, unaware that they were about to experience a "titanic instant" that would be the rest of their life.

The house was an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly. *Twelve noon*. A dog whined, shivering, on the front porch. The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with sores, moved in and though the house, tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience. For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrows. There, down the tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an **incinerator** which sat like evil **Baal** in a dark corner. The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at last realizing, as the house realized, that only silence was here. It sniffed the air and scratched the kitchen door. Behind the door, the stove was making pancakes which filled the house with a rich baked odor and the scent of maple syrup. The dog frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles, biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy,	**incinerator**: a machine that burns contents to ashes **Baal**: the name of the supreme god worshiped in ancient Canaan and Phoenicia. In the Bible, Jesus calls Satan "Beelzebub," linking the devil to Baal-Zebub. The Baalim of the Old Testament were nothing more than demons masquerading as gods, and all idolatry is ultimately devil-worship	**(Q11)** What figure of speech occurs here? For what purpose? *The house is compared to an altar—a symbol of worship and sacrifice. When the house was occupied with its family, the rituals—like those performed in church—were meaningful and full of purpose. Now, without attendants—the family—the rituals of the house seem senseless and useless.* **(Q12)** What does the phrase "the gods had gone away" suggest? *All faith is gone in this post-apocalyptic world. Like the rapture or second coming alluded to in religions, all that is left in the human world is ruined and destroyed.* **(Q13)** What has happened to living things in this world? *The dog, "once huge and fleshy," is now starving and covered in sores.* **(Q14)** How does the house react to elements from the natural world? *The house reacts with anger—the robotic mice are angry at the "inconvenience" of having to pick up mud—and defense—"a leaf fragment blew under the door but the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out."* **(Q15)** What is Bradbury's purpose in including an allusion to Baal? *The allusion conjures up images of hell and the devil. The technology, in this context of a post-apocalyptic world—becomes dark and sinister.* **(Q16)** What is ironic about the house's treatment of the dog? *The house treats the dog with either annoyance—at having to pick up after his mess—or indifference—it does not respond to his "hysterical yelping" or scratching at the kitchen door when he smells food. For as smart as the house is, it cannot read the instinctual needs of an animal.* **(Q17)** The dog is the only living creature in the story. Describe the actions of the dog in this environment. How might you interpret the dog as a symbol? *The dog is starving and sickly, unable to survive in this environment without its human masters. The dog runs in circles, biting itself. The dog turns on himself, just as the science and technology that allowed humans to live a life of convenience turned on them.*

and died. It lay in the parlor for an hour. *Two o'clock*, sang a voice. Delicately sensing decay at last, the **regiments** of mice hummed out as softly as blown gray leaves in an electrical wind. *Two-fifteen*. The dog was gone. In the cellar, the incinerator glowed suddenly and a whirl of sparks leaped up the chimney. *Two thirty-five*. Bridge tables sprouted from patio walls. Playing cards fluttered onto pads in a shower of pips. Glasses **manifested** on an oaken bench with egg-salad sandwiches. Music played.	**regiments**: troops; squads **manifested**: readily perceived by the senses and especially by the sense of sight	**(Q18)** Look at the diction in this passage: "sprouted," "fluttered," "shower." What is ironic about the imagery suggested here? *The effect of the diction forms an image of nature, the natural world. However, just earlier, the house—and we can assume its former occupants—did much to keep the natural world out. The fact that man-made items in the house are mimicking nature, then, is ironic.*
Nine-five. A voice spoke from the study ceiling: "Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?" The house was silent. The voice said at last, "Since you express no preference, I shall select a poem at random." Quiet music rose to back the voice. "Sara Teasdale. As I recall, your favorite…		**(Q19)** Bradbury keeps inserting the voice of the house, which repeats the time. What effect does this have? *The repetition of the clock suggests that we are leading up to something—it builds anticipation.*

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum trees in **tremulous** white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire,
Whistling their **whims** on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done,

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
If mankind perished **utterly**;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn
Would **scarcely** know that we were gone."

tremulous: timid; shy

whims: impulses; urges

utterly: completely; absolutely

scarcely: barely, hardly

(Q20) Compare and contrast the Teasdale poem to the story.
Just as the story does, the poem begins with rain. There are noises in both texts, but the sounds in the poem come from the natural world—birds and frogs—while the sounds in the story—the voice clock—come from the machine world. The image of white given by a wild plum tree pairs with the white paint on the side of the house. The poem speaks of a war, which is the event that has led to the destruction of this California town, or even the world. The poem declares that "not one will know of the war, not one/Will care at last when it is done." So in the story, too, is there no one to tell of what happens. Mankind has "perished," as the poem suggests he/she could.
The poem and the story differ, though, as seen in the lines, "And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn/Would scarcely know that we were gone." The poem personifies and empowers nature. Nature outlasts mankind. In the story, Bradbury personifies machines. Machines have outlasted mankind. But as spring would barely notice if mankind ceased to exist, the house continues to talk, make breakfast, perform cleaning duties, as if it has no idea that the family is gone.

At ten o'clock the house began to die.

The wind blew. A falling tree **bough** crashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning **solvent**, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant!

"Fire!" screamed a voice. The house lights flashed, water pumps shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took it up in chorus: "Fire, fire, fire!"

The house tried to save itself. Doors sprang tightly shut, but the windows were broken by the heat and the wind blew and sucked upon the fire.

bough: branch; limb

solvent: solution that dissolves

(Q21) The climax of the story begins here. What interaction creates the climax?
The tree limb—an object from the natural world—breaks through the barrier of the house. When it collides with a chemical, man-made solution—the cleaning solvent—a fire breaks out.

(Q22) What might the fire symbolize?
Fire is one of the most primitive forces of nature. It has been around long before man or the house.

(Q23) Bradbury uses the verbs "licking, eating" to describe the fire. What images does this usage suggest?
The fire becomes animalistic, with an insatiable appetite.

(Q24) What other natural force assists the fire?
The wind

The house gave ground as the fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease from room to room and then up the stairs. While scurrying water rats squeaked from the walls, pistoled their water, and ran for more. And the wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain. But too late. Somewhere, sighing, a pump shrugged to a stop. The **quenching** rain ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days was gone. The fire crackled up the stairs. It fed upon **Picassos and Matisses** in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings. Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of drapes! And then, reinforcements. From attic trapdoors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical. The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth. But the fire was clever. It had sent flames outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps there. An explosion! The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze **shrapnel** on the beams.	**quenching**: the state of putting to an end typically by satisfying, damping, cooling, or decreasing **Picassos and Matisses**: paintings by the famous artists of the same name. They are regarded as two of the three artists who most defined the revolutionary developments in the plastic arts in the opening decades of the 20th century, responsible for significant developments in painting, sculpture, printmaking and ceramics. **shrapnel**: bomb, mine, or shell fragments	**(Q25)** What do the verb choices in this sentence suggest? *The fire lays, stands, and changes. The fire now becomes personified as it utterly destroys the house*. **(Q26)** What is the effect of the reinforcements? *They temporarily stop the fire, but ultimately are unsuccessful as the fire finds another route to destroy the house.* **(Q27)** The house uses "faucet mouths gushing green chemical" to fight the fire. What does this imagery conjure? *Many students will think of vomit, being sick, etc.* **(Q28)** Explain the figure of speech used here to describe the fire and the house. *Bradbury uses simile to compare the reaction of the fire to the faucet to that of an elephant to a snake. The comparison reinforces the power and size of the fire in relation to the resources of the house.* **(Q29)** Paraphrase the sequence of events in this paragraph. *The fire is smart and sends its flames outside of the house, where they go up to the attic where the pumps are. There is an explosion as the main controls of the house that live in the attic react to the fire. The bronze that composed the "brains" of the house shatters into pieces.*

The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung there. The house shuddered, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton **cringing** from the heat, its wire, its nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn the skin off to let the red veins and **capillaries** quiver in the scalded air. Help, help! Fire! Run, run! Heat snapped mirrors like the first **brittle** winter ice. And the voices wailed Fire, fire, run, run, like a tragic nursery rhyme, a dozen voices, high, low, like children dying in a forest, alone, alone. And the voices fading as the wires popped their **sheathings** like hot chestnuts. One, two, three, four, five voices died. In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river.... Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, **oblivious**, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with **sublime** disregard for	**cringing**: wincing; recoiling; shrinking **capillaries**: any of the tiny blood vessels connecting the small arteries and veins **brittle**: hard **sheathings**: casings; coverings **oblivious**: unaware **sublime**: amazing	**(Q30)** As the fire takes over, the destruction of the house intensifies. How does Bradbury create intensity here? *His personification of the house continues, but becomes more extreme and grotesque—the flesh of the house has burned away as its infrastructure—"oak bones" and "skeleton" begin to crumble. Additionally, he uses a simile comparing the fire to a surgeon "tearing" off the skin, which creates a violent association. The house's "red veins and capillaries quiver" as it becomes completely vulnerable and helpless as a patient on the operating table.* **(Q31)** Bradbury returns to the nursery rhyme sounds he used to open the story. Here, he explicitly says the voices sound like a "tragic nursery rhyme." How do nursery rhymes function? How are they functioning at this point in the story? *Nursery rhymes are songs or poems that are easy for children to memorize. They are often allegorical, containing messages about cultural values and expected behavior. Here, the nursery rhyme takes on a particularly ominous feel, as human desire for power and dominance over the environment results in ultimate chaos and destruction. The contrast of innocence—a children's song—to the violent and destructive reality is unsettling, to say the least.* **(Q32)** Contrast the actions of the house to the actions surrounding it. How does this authorial pairing parallel the insanity and chaos that are occurring at this point in the plot? *The house is announcing and performing routine and ordinary tasks—playing music, cutting the lawn, etc.—while around it, complete destruction occurs. The house, for all its technological advances, is completely oblivious to the reality of the world around it. The actions of the house become seen as insane and senseless in the context of the fire.* **(Q33)** Throughout the story, Bradbury has personified the house. To what kind of person is the house compared? *The house is efficient, helpful, cheerful, and task-oriented. However, the house cannot respond to any circumstances that exist outside of its programmed tasks. It relies upon machinery, rejecting any elements from the outside world. It fails to effectively combat the chaos and violence of crisis, instead falling back on pre-programmed routines and drills.* **(Q34)** What might Bradbury be saying about this type of person? *People who rely on order and routine may find themselves utterly inept to deal with unforeseen circumstances.*

the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires withered and the circuits cracked. The fire burst the house and let it slam flat down, puffing out skirts of spark and smoke. In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a **psychopathic** rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing! The crash. The attic smashing into kitchen and **parlor**. The parlor into cellar, cellar into subcellar. Deep freeze, armchair, film tapes, circuits, beds, and all like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound deep under. Smoke and silence. A great quantity of smoke. Dawn showed faintly in the east. Among the ruins, one wall stood alone. Within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam: "Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is…"	**psychopathic**: of, relating to antisocial personality disorder **parlor**: a room used primarily for conversation or the reception of guests	**(Q35)** Bradbury uses the phrase "psychopathic rate" to describe the house's functions as it succumbs to destruction. Have students look up the etymology of the word. What is a psychopath? What does Bradbury's usage suggest here? *The word "psychopathy" is a joining of the Greek words psyche (soul) and pathos (suffering, feeling). A psychopath is someone whose soul is troubled. Bradbury's usage suggests that the house suffers from a soul sickness.* **(Q36)** The house is the last remaining artifact from the destroyed town of Allendale. Ask students to articulate why houses/homes are so important. How might the house in this story be seen as a symbol? *Students might say that homes are where you go to take refuge, comfort from the world. Houses become the center of the family. In this particular story, the house does appear to suffer from a "soul sickness." It lacks any emotional spiritual intelligence.* **(Q37)** Bradbury changes his syntax here in the last three paragraphs. What do you notice about the sentence length when you compare the sentences to the previous two? What effect does this have? *The sentences in the last three paragraphs are much shorter in length. The paragraphs that come before are much longer. The change in length parallels the fire burning out, the action of the story slowing down and coming to a close.* **(Q38)** The story begins and ends with a mechanized voice. What does this suggest? *There is no end, only a cycle. The events that transpired in this story are destined to occur again.* **(Q39)** Return to the Teasdale poem. How does the poem end? What cycles continue? *The poem ends with Spring awakening—a sign of hope and new beginnings. The seasons and cycles of nature continue regardless of man's presence.* Compare this ending to the Bradbury story. How does the story end? What cycles continue? *The story ends with a new dawn. However, instead of the image of spring, we hear the voice of a machine under the rubble.* **(40)** Bradbury's story parallels the Teasdale poem in that both works end with the idea of cycles. However, while Teasdale's poem ends with the cycles of nature, the last image in the story is that of a machine. What does this suggest about Bradbury's view of the future? *Answers will vary.*

August 2026:

There Will Come Soft Rains

By Ray Bradbury

In the living room the voice-clock sang, Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up, time to get up, seven o'clock! As if it were afraid that nobody would. The morning house lay empty. The clock ticked on, repeating and repeating its sounds into the emptiness. *Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine.*

In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunny side up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees and two cool glasses of milk.

"Today is August 4, 2026," said a second voice from the kitchen ceiling, "in the city of Allendale, California." It repeated the date three times for memory's sake. "Today is Mr. Featherstone's birthday. Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage. Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills."

Somewhere in the walls, relays clicked, memory tapes glided under electric eyes.

Eight-one, tick-tock, eight-one o'clock, off to school, off to work, run, run, eight-one! But no doors slammed, no carpets took the soft thread of rubber heels. It was raining outside. The weather box on the front door sang quietly: "Rain, rain, go away; rubbers, raincoats for today…" And the rain tapped on the empty house, echoing.

Outside, the garage chimed and lifted its door to reveal the waiting car. After a long wait the door swung down again.

At eight-thirty the eggs were shriveled and the toast was like stone. An aluminum wedge scraped them into the sink, where hot water whirled them down a metal throat which digested and flushed them away to the distant sea. The dirty dishes were dropped into a hot washer and emerged twinkling dry.

Nine-fifteen, sang the clock, *time to clean*.

Out of warrens in the wall, tiny robot mice darted. The rooms were acrawl with the small cleaning animals, all rubber and metal. They thudded against chairs, whirling their mustached runners, kneading the rug nap, sucking gently at hidden dust. Then, like mysterious invaders, they popped into their burrows. Their pink electric eyes faded. The house was clean.

Ten o'clock. The sun came out from behind the rain. The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.

Ten-fifteen. The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden founts, filling the soft morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the charred west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick up flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him, a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.

The five spots of paint—the man, the woman, the children, the ball—remained. The rest was a thin charcoaled layer.

The gentle -sprinkler rain filled the garden with falling light.

Until this day, how well the house had kept its peace. How carefully it had inquired, "Who goes there? What's the password?" and, getting no answer from lonely foxes and whining cats, it had shut up its windows and drawn shades in an old-maidenly preoccupation with self-protection which bordered on a mechanical paranoia.

It quivered at each sound, the house did. If a sparrow brushed a window, the shade snapped up. The bird, startled, flew off! No, not even a bird must touch the house!

The house was an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly.

Twelve noon.

A dog whined, shivering, on the front porch.

The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with sores, moved in and though the house, tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience.

For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrow. There, down tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an incinerator which sat like evil Baal in a dark corner.

The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at least realizing, as the house realized,

that only silence was there.

It sniffed the air and scratched the kitchen door. Behind the door, the stove was making pancakes which filled the house with a rich baked odor and the scent of maple syrup.

The dog frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles, biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy, and died. It lay in the parlor for an hour.

Two o'clock sang a voice.

Delicately sensing decay at last, the regiments of mice hummed out as softly as blown gray leaves in an electrical wind.

Two-fifteen.

The dog was gone.

In the cellar, the incinerator glowed suddenly and a whirl of sparks leaped up the chimney.

Two thirty-five.

Bridge tables sprouted from patio walls. Playing cards fluttered onto pads in a shower of pips. Glasses manifested on an oaken bench with egg-salad sandwiches. Music played.

But the tables were silent and the cards untouched.

At four o'clock the tables folded like great butterflies back though the paneled walls.

Four-thirty.

The nursery walls glowed.

Animals took shape: yellow giraffes, blue lions, pink antelopes, lilac panthers cavorting in crystal substance. The walls were glass. They looked out upon color and fantasy. Hidden films clocked though well-oiled sprockets, and the walls lived. The nursery floor was woven to resemble a crisp, cereal meadow. Over this ran aluminum roaches and iron crickets, and in the hot still air butterflies of delicate red tissue wavered among the sharp aroma of animal spoors! There was the sound like a great matted yellow hive of bees within a dark bellows, the lazy bumble of a purring lion. And there was the patter of okapi feet and the murmur of a fresh jungle rain, like other hoofs, falling upon the summer-starched grass. Now the walls dissolved into distances of parched weed, mile on mile, and the warm endless sky. The animals drew away into thorn brakes and water holes.

It was the children's hour.

Five o'clock. The bath filled with clear hot water.

Six, seven, eight o'clock. The dinner dishes manipulated like magic tricks, and in the study a

click. In the hearth a fire now blazed up warmly.

Nine o'clock. The beds warmed their hidden circuits, for nights were cool here.

Nine-five. A voice spoke from the study ceiling:

"Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?"

The house was silent.

The voice said at last, "Since you express no preference, I shall select a poem at random." Quiet music rose to back the voice. "Sara Teasdale. As I recall, your favorite…

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire,
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done,

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn
Would scarcely know that we were gone."

The fire burned on the stone hearth. The empty chairs faced each other between the silent walls, and the music played.

At ten o'clock the house began to die.

The wind blew. A falling tree **bough** crashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning **solvent**, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant!

"Fire!" screamed a voice. The house lights flashed, water pumps shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took it up in chorus: "Fire, fire, fire!"

The house tried to save itself. Doors sprang tightly shut, but the windows were broken by the heat and the wind blew and sucked upon the fire.

The house gave ground as the fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease from room to room and then up the stairs. While scurrying water rats squeaked from the walls, pistoled their

water, and ran for more. And the wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain.

But too late. Somewhere, sighing, a pump shrugged to a stop. The **quenching** rain ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days was gone.

The fire crackled up the stairs. It fed upon **Picassos and Matisses** in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings.

Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of drapes!

And then, reinforcements.

From attic trapdoors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical.

The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth.

But the fire was clever. It had sent flames outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps there. An explosion! The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze **shrapnel** on the beams.

The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung there.

The house shuddered, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton **cringing** from the heat, its wire, its nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn the skin off to let the red veins and **capillaries** quiver in the scalded air. Help, help! Fire! Run, run! Heat snapped mirrors like the first **brittle** winter ice. And the voices wailed Fire, fire, run, run, like a tragic nursery rhyme, a dozen voices, high, low, like children dying in a forest, alone, alone. And the voices fading as the wires popped their **sheathings** like hot chestnuts. One, two, three, four, five voices died.

In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river....

Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, **oblivious**, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with **sublime** disregard for the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires withered and the circuits cracked.

The fire burst the house and let it slam flat down, puffing out skirts of spark and smoke.

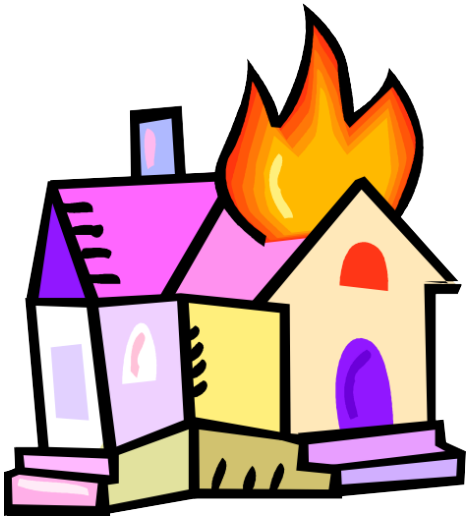
In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a **psychopathic** rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!

The crash. The attic smashing into kitchen and **parlor**. The parlor into cellar, cellar into subcellar. Deep freeze, armchair, film tapes, circuits, beds, and all like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound deep under.

Smoke and silence. A great quantity of smoke.

Dawn showed faintly in the east. Among the ruins, one wall stood alone. Within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam:

"Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is…"



Name:
K-W-L Chart

	What I know about this topic	What I want to know	What I learned
Cold War			
Atomic Age			

Space.com
"Why We Love Sci-Fi: It Boldly Goes Where Other Stories Can't"
by Adam Hadhazy, Staff Writer
03 January 2011 Time: 06:03 PM ET

Aliens. Monsters. Robots. Spaceships. Superhuman powers. Time machines. Yup, we're talking science fiction. But just why are these ideas so perennially popular?

As scholars and creators of the genre told SPACE.com, many of sci-fi's common scenarios, which may seem to be escapist fantasy, serve to delve into complex themes that beholden-to-reality fiction and nonfiction cannot explore so readily.

By engaging in what-ifs that are either far-out and close to home, science fiction stories can challenge assumptions that otherwise would go unexamined. Sci-fi shows us through film, television and literature where our society might have ended up, for better and for worse, had things been different.

"On a basic level, sci-fi is so appealing across media because it's the premier storytelling form of modernity," said Lisa Yaszek, a professor of literature, communication and culture at the Georgia Institute of Technology who is current president of the Science Fiction Research Association. "We live in a world so profoundly shaped by new sciences and technologies and the new realities they enable. Sci-fi is the one genre that has all these story and character types set up to explore these questions."

Science fiction categories

Yaszek described three very broad categories of science fiction that together explore the thought experiment landscape of the genre: the creation story, the fantastic voyage, and what she calls the "domestic science fiction story." (Naturally, these themes often overlap in individual tales.)

The first category, as its name implies, runs the gamut from stitching together a quasi-human from corpse pieces (Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein") to building robots that have artificial intelligence ("Battlestar Galactica," among many examples).

The second basic type of sci-fi story, the fantastic voyage, often involves "brave, scientist-type explorers who go to where humans don't usually live," said Yaszek. Obvious instances include "Star Trek" and Jules Verne's "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea."

The third category, domestic science fiction, consists of stories "about our encounters with new science and technology in our daily lives," said Yaszek. "We can talk about spaceships all we want, but so many of our fantastic voyages begin in the home where most of us actually experience science and technology."

Examples of domestic sci-fi include stories found in the sub-genre of cyberpunk that emerged alongside personal computers in the early 1980s, epitomized by William Gibson's "Neuromancer" and seen more recently in "The Matrix" franchise.

Through the prism of sci-fi

In many instances, science fiction serves as a vehicle for controversial topics of an era, from industrialization's dehumanization and environmental toll in the late 19th century to the specter of nuclear war in the mid-20th century and to the "war on terror" over the past decade.

"Putting things in sci-fi tropes can enable you to do exactly the same end run that Aesop did in fables," said Diane Duane, an author of science fiction and fantasy books and teleplays. "You can distance the more controversial material you might be trying to deal with by pushing it 300 years into the future or into [the] past via a time machine, and you are more free to examine the material closely, and the reader doesn't feel as threatened."

Accordingly, science fiction can provide windows into social codes of conduct, Yaszek said. Characters may have to cope with, say, the cultures of extraterrestrials or the philosophical ramifications of sentient machines, or individuals with abilities and differences à la the X-Men. These works can say a lot about how people deal with those they consider "other," whether in dress, skin tone or morals.

For Nebula Award-winning author Jack McDevitt, this confrontation with the "other" inspires much of his work. "My prime interest in science and science fiction is aliens," McDevitt told SPACE.com. "If we ever discover there is someone else out there, how do we react as a society?"

The alien in the mirror

Fans and creators share McDevitt's fascination: Some of science fiction's best-known stories, from H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds" to the silver screen's "The Day the Earth Stood Still" to television's "V," involve hostile alien visitations. Other classics, from "Contact" to "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," put the protagonists face-to-face with benevolent beings from elsewhere in the cosmos.

For science fiction short-story writers, narratives involving first contact with extraterrestrials have been the surest route to publication, according to a review of nearly 2,000 pulp stories that appeared in American magazines between 1926 and 2000.

Those stories most likely to be reprinted, however, are those that take on headier themes, such as satirizing a dystopian society, according to Eric Rabkin, a professor of English and literature at the University of Michigan.

"Although the most frequently published science fiction stories are often interested in exploring a situation of newness, the science fiction stories with continuing value were less likely to be about confronting the 'other' than they were about fixing society," said Rabkin, co-leader of the Genre Evolution Project, which is studying pulp science fiction short stories as a complex adaptive system.

Given the pace of change enabled by science and technology in the last couple of centuries, it's little wonder that sci-fi has emerged as a genre that holds up a mirror to the present by looking ahead to the future.

Where we're heading

Science fiction is often predictive, or extrapolative. It will take certain aspects of the here-and-now and will project from them. Dealing with fertility and reproductive science, for example, the 1997 film "Gattaca" presents a future society that tinkers with the genetic code to produce designer babies.

In an introduction to her Hugo- and Nebula Award-winning 1969 novel "The Left Hand of Darkness," Ursula K. LeGuin argued against the stereotype of science fiction as merely predicting the future; rather, LeGuin said she saw the genre of science fiction (and all fiction, for that matter) as metaphor for things in our present era.

What sets science fiction apart from older forms of fiction, she wrote, "seems to be its use of new metaphors, drawn from certain great dominants of our contemporary life – science, all the sciences, and technology, and the relativistic and the historical outlook. Space travel is one of these metaphors; so is an alternative society, an alternative biology; the future is another."

Yaszek believes science fiction "ultimately is a positive genre; it believes rational humans can work together and use science and technology to improve the world."

In this way, even the dystopias common to science fiction – nuclear weapon-annihilated civilizations, warring human factions spread amongst the stars, machine overlords subjugating humanity – essentially have a positive role, Yaszek said, as "cautionary tales."

Name:
Entrance Ticket: Why We Love Sci-Fi

So, why do we love sci-fi?

What are the three categories of science fiction, according to the article?

What category would “There Will Come Soft Rains” fall under?

In the article, Diane Duane compares science fiction stories to Aesop’s fables. What are Aesop’s fables? What purpose do they serve?

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Literary Devices in “There Will Come Soft Rains”

The importance of setting and allegory: Today, we discussed how setting is an important feature of science fiction. Below, use an example of setting from the story and explain how it helps Bradbury get his message across.

Answer Key: Answers will vary, but here are three possibilities.

The automated house and the machines that run it represent our obsession with technology and the convenience it can bring. The house is designed to provide everything the family could possibly need, but it can't protect them from nuclear war. Additionally, it doesn't even know the family it is designed to serve is dead and gone. The setting and its dysfunction allow Bradbury to illustrate the dangers of relying too much on technology.

OR

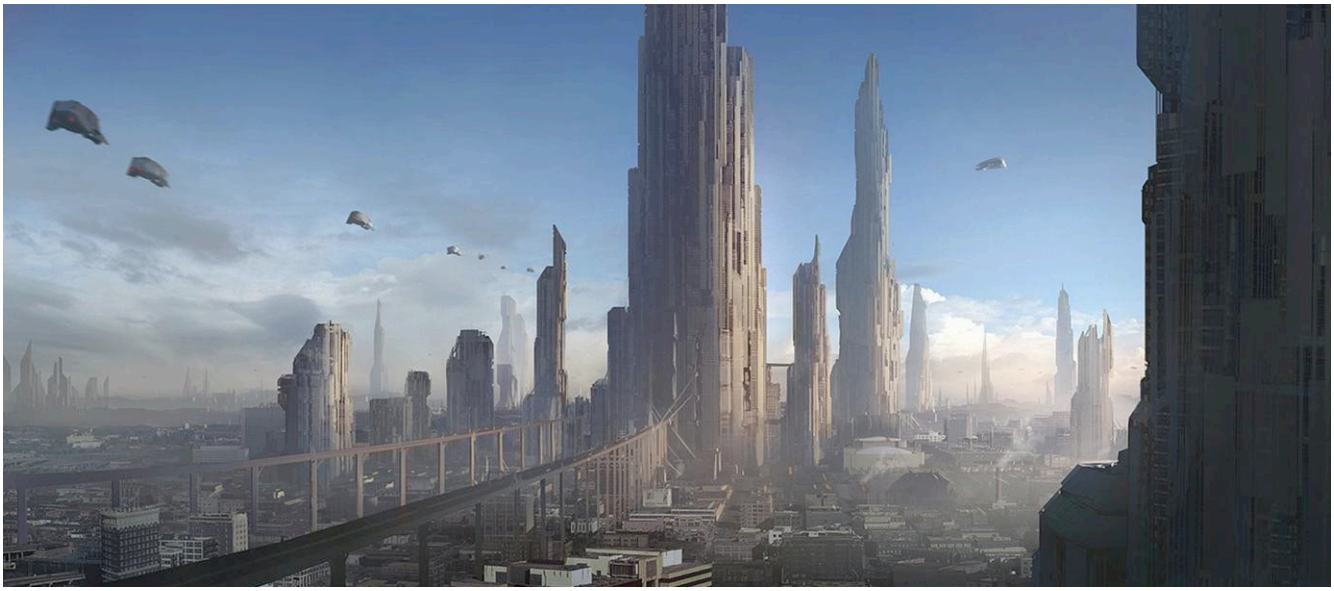
The house constantly separates itself from the outside world and in the end it is the natural elements that cause its destruction. The message is supposed to remind us not to disengage too much or not respect the outside and natural world.

OR

Not only do we have an empty, haunted house, but we also have the charred surrounding and the ghostly shapes on the wall of the house. The devastation we are presented with in the story warns readers against the horrors of nuclear war.

Final Project: Science Fiction Unit

"Science fiction is an effective means of critiquing reality and opening doors to critical, meaningful discussions of relevant events. It isn't simply mindless entertainment."
-Lloyd Biggle, Jr.



For your final project, you get to assume the creative role of science fiction writer. You will create a science fiction **story** that convinces me of your ability to use science fiction as a means of analyzing current events and extrapolating on what their consequences for the future might be. You have the freedom to be as imaginative as possible as you create this science fiction story. However, there are a few guidelines:

- It must relate to either a contemporary issue of our time, or a contemporary issue of another time. Science fiction is not as much fantasy as it is an exploration of reality. Science fiction writers get their inspiration from the events of their time. Your stories will weave together the tightly knit relationship between "what is" and "what might be."
- You *will do a little research to cite evidence of a relevant contemporary issue related to your story.*
- You will write a brief proposal for what you plan to do, and before I approve your proposal, you must convince me that your idea relates to a relevant issue, and that the construction of your story will help you explore the significance of this issue.
- Anything containing sexually explicit material or excessive profanity will not be accepted.

Furthermore, all stories must be accompanied by a written **rationale** of at least **500 words**. In your rationale, I want you to explain to me:

(a) ***why*** you chose to write this story,

(b) its ***significance in relation to your researched issue***—this is where you will cite what you've researched *and* where you will relate your research to your story, and

(c) what your ***opinion of the future is***—in relation to the issue you researched. In other words, address the question, "How does your story express your thoughts and opinions of the future?"

To help you get started, I want you to think about the future. The distant future! What do you think the world will be like in 100 years? Now, I know it's impossible to talk about everything about the future in just 20 minutes, so I want you to focus on just ***one feature*** of your future. It can be government, medicine, computers, space, the war on terror, genetics, —anything at all. Tell me what you think it'll be like in 100 years.

To help guide your thinking, you might want to consider the following questions…

- **Is your vision of the future optimistic or pessimistic? Why?**
- **What topic, value, or issue in the real world inspired you to think the way you do?**
- **What do you already know about something specific in the real world that influenced you to think the way you do?**
- **Why do you think the world is heading in this direction?**
- **What kinds of values are you taking into account as you're thinking about the future? Are your values being confirmed or violated in your vision of the future?**

I'd like for you to write about the above question for about twenty minutes. Then, we'll talk about what everyone wrote about as a class, so don't write about anything freaky that you would hate to talk about with your classmates! Don't worry about mechanics, spelling, grammar, or usage for this activity. Don't worry about how logical it is or how it flows, either. I just want you to write freely and get down some ideas for now. Be as crazy as you want—the more interesting your ideas, the more interesting our conversation will be. (Use the back of this paper for additional room.)

NAME:

RUBRIC FOR FINAL PROJECT

	4E: Expert Exceeds Expectations	3P: Practitioner Skilled, meets expectations	2A: Apprentice Partially meets expectations	1N: Novice Does not yet meet expectations
Imagery: The imagery used in the story **is precise, detailed, and creates a clear and coherent picture of this world** for the reader. Additionally, the writer has used imagery from both the **known and unknown** worlds to orient the reader in the story.				
Setting: The setting of the story is **well-established and enhanced through critical details**. The setting is appropriate in relation to the plot and characters of the story. Additionally, the story contains **not only the physical elements of setting, but also the mindsets and values that make up the culture** of this particular setting.				
Allegory: The story contains a clear didactic message that is shown, not told. Student has taken a **contemporary world event** and used the story as a platform to **explore possible outcomes** of this event.				
Narrative Strategies: The structure, pacing, characters, dialogue, and other literary elements **all work together** to create a story that is both **entertaining and meaningful**.				
Writing Conventions: The writer has taken great care to ensure that **no punctuation or grammatical errors interfere with the understanding and meaning of the work**.				