Science Fiction Study Guide

Step One: Read over the following study questions. Step Two: Next to the number, Indicate your comfort level for each question; a + means very comfortable (easy), a – means not sure, not very comfortable (difficult for me). Step Three: Try to answer as many questions as you can in your composition book, and then we will discuss them as a class.

Study Questions for “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury

1. Personification: Find three examples of personification in the story. (1.4.4)
2. What kind of “personality” does the house have? Describe and Explain. (1.4.4 and 1.6.7)
3. What steps does the house take to save itself from the fire? (1.4.4 and 1.6.7)
4. Chronology: Review the story by listing, in chronological order, the main events that took place in the house on August 4, 2026. Now, look at the little digital clocks that indicate the hours. How long did it take for the house to be destroyed? (1.6.7)
5. Irony: What is ironic about the ending of the story? What type of irony is this? (1.4.4)
6. Historical Context: This story was written in 1950. How does this historical context affect the story? (2.2.1)
7. Mood: What is the mood of this story? Pull descriptive details from the text to support your answer. (2.1.5)
8. Tone: What is the author’s tone in this story? Pull descriptive details from the text to support. (2.1.5)

Study Questions for “The Naming of Names” by Ray Bradbury

1. Setting: Re-read the section of text that starts on page 158 and ends on 159. List some examples of imagery and details that describe the setting. What is the effect of this description? (2.1.5)
2. Mood: What mood does Bradbury create through his description of Mars? What is his tone? (2.1.5)
3. Point of View: What is the point of view of this story? Why do you think the author chose this POV? (2.1.4)
4. Characterization: Why do you think Harry Bittering resists change so fiercely? Do you think Bradbury wants us to admire Harry’s resistance or to think it’s foolish? (2.1.3)
5. Conflict: What two main conflicts does Harry face? What types of conflicts are these? (2.1.1)

Study Questions for “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury

1. Why doesn’t Margot fit in with the other children?
2. How have the people on Venus adapted to the rainy climate?
3. Every seven years when the Sun comes out the plant life on Venus changes. What happens?
4. This story uses many comparisons to present ideas. For example, when the children recall that Margot was left behind in the closet, the author writes, “They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor.” Two kinds of literary comparisons are similes and metaphors. A simile, such as the example above, is a comparison that uses “like” or “as.” A metaphor is a comparison that does not use “like” or as.” List at least five examples of metaphors and/or similes from the story.
5. Write five of your own similes or metaphors in a description of some part of the story or one of the characters. You might describe Margot, life on Venus, Venus’s climate, or how the Sun appears to the children.
6. Find details in the story that describe the climatic conditions and environment Bradbury imagines to exist on the planet Venus. How does the author make Venus’ setting convincing? How do these images contrast with Margot’s memories of Earth’s climate?
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