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## Lesson Eight

### FOCUS: The Plot Unfolds

A novel's plot unfolds a series of events leading to a dramatic climax. The timing of such events can make a novel either predictable or riveting. As the author, Bradbury has made choices about how to structure and pace events to explore how book-burning can erode the human imagination. In this lesson, map the events of the story to assess the artistry of story-telling.

Some of the turning points in the novel include Mrs. Hudson's willingness to die for books; Montag's confrontation with his wife's friends; Montag's murder of Captain Beatty; and Montag's creative escape from the Mechanical Hound. Punctuated by an audible refrain of flying jets as well as constant surveillance, Bradbury amplifies Montag's unease and foreshadows war. Montag, like a rat in a maze, turns corner after corner until he finds an exit.

### Discussion Activities

In small groups, students will map a time line that depicts the development of the story and the building of drama. This map includes the most significant turning points, but also examines the lesser events that build tension. As students develop their maps, they should define the beginning, middle, and end of the novel. Groups should present their time lines to the class.

Have students imagine they are making a movie of *Fahrenheit 451*. Tell them they have to cut certain scenes because of limited running time. Divide the class into groups and have each suggest two scenes that could be dropped. How does cutting certain scenes change the story?

### Writing Exercise

Ask students to imagine a sequel to *Fahrenheit 451*. Have them outline the sequel. What would the beginning, middle, and end of the sequel look like? Then write the opening paragraphs to the sequel, imagining a beginning that immediately plunges the reader into the story.

### Homework

Read the "Afterword" and the "Coda" (pp. 167-179). Read Handout Three. Although we have focused on Montag as the central character, could books be the heroes of the novel?