Discussion Questions
The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury

Prologue
- Why do you feel the Illustrated Man decided to approach the Narrator and to tell him his story?
- What compels the Narrator to look upon the tattoos despite the illustrated man’s warnings?
- Are tattoos taboo? Describe the history of tattoo, and its cultural acceptance in the United States.
- Bradbury coined the term, “butterfly effect” when he portrayed how changing one small thing in history could have larger, unpredictable effects on what was to come. ("A Sound of Thunder" 1952) Do events in “The Illustrated Man, Prologue,” and “The Illustrated Man” support or refute this theory?

The Veldt
- Describe the effects of today’s consumerism, and technological advancement on society, culture, personal values, and family relationships.
- What is the impact of virtual reality worlds, and virtual reality video games today? Are gamers at risk of migrating into artificial reality? Are they ill-equipped for real life?
- What does the world of the future, reveal about real life as the author knew it in the 1950’s?
- Are George and Lydia Hadley mere victims, or do they share responsibility in their fate?

Kaleidoscope
- Do we die as we live? How does each character’s final moments define them?
- Is the meaning of individual existence derived solely in relation to others? How is each man impacted in the aftermath of an explosion that hurls the crew apart?
- In the psychology of grief and loss there are five stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance. (On Death and Dying, Kübler-Ross) Describe the characteristics of each stage, and provide examples in correlation to the astronauts in the story.

The Other Foot
- Do you think the peace between races seen in this story would last on Mars? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the black settlers changed their minds about creating their own form of segregation against the white refugees?
- Advocates of slavery reparations argue that the descendants of enslaved peoples should receive financial compensation for the unpaid forced labor that their ancestors performed. What are the historical precedents of reparation in the United States? Should the United States provide reparations to the descendants of slaves?
The Highway
- The 1950’s were a turbulent time in the nuclear age. Do you feel that Ray Bradbury was worried about what was going on in the world? Did he find a nuclear war imminent?
- How does the farmer’s reaction to the nuclear attack differ from young man’s reaction? Who do you feel has the most normal reaction?
- What is the history of Doomsday Scenarios? Why are depictions of mass extinction so prevalent in today’s film and popular entertainment?

The Man
- What role does pride play in preventing the Captain from encountering God?
- The Scientific Method is based on empirical evidence, or that which can be seen and measured. Describe the properties and elements of the Scientific Method, in relationship to faith.
- Is the role of faith still relevant in the age of science and space exploration?
- How is the theme of redemption evidenced in the events of the story?

The Long Rain
- Did the Lieutenant actually reach the Sun Dome, or was a hallucination?
- Do you agree that Simmons shooting the crewman was a “mercy killing?” Does his suicide later in the story influence your opinion?
- Compare the ecosystem on the planet Venus with that of Bradbury’s imaginary planet.
- What factors influence one individual over another’s ability to survive in the face of unbearable circumstances?

The Rocket Man
- Compare the father in "The Rocket" to the father in "The Rocket Man."
- Do you think that his father’s death and his mother’s reaction to it will dissuade Doug from becoming an astronaut, or will the lure of space be too strong for him to resist, as it was for his father?
- What are the developmental risks for male children of absentee fathers?

The Last Night of the World
- If you knew the world was no longer going to exist when you awoke, what would you do differently? Why do you feel that husband and wife in this story were so calm?
- What is the history of Doomsday Scenarios? Why are depictions of mass extinction so prevalent in today’s film and popular entertainment?
**The Exiles**
- Why are the Exiles’ written work and creations subject to over 100 years of censorship?
- Is book banning ever an acceptable practice? Does banning books violate our First Amendment guarantee of free speech?
- Why are real people like Poe and Dickens included in the Exiles? Why do they vanish along with the fictional characters?
- Discuss Macbeth’s three witches’ impact and influence on art, literature, or culture.

**No Particular Night or Morning**
- Can suicide be prevented? What are warning signs of suicide? What could Hitchcock’s companions have done to help him?
- How did Alfred Hitchcock influence movie making? What made his directing unique?
- What are some root causes of low self-esteem? What are some consequences of low self-esteem? Can low self-esteem be remedied?
- What are the limits of empirical reasoning?
- How are meteors formed? Can they be predicted?

**The Fox in the Forest**
- Choose a time to travel back to and compare aspects (political, economic, cultural, etc.) of that time period to today.
- Who were the scientists responsible for building the atom bomb?
- Explain how smoking (or drinking) became so deeply ingrained in our culture.
- How great is the threat of bioterrorism? How should the United States prepare for and protect against bioterrorism?
- What conditions are the refugees of 2155 fleeing? How does this society mirror the characteristics of pre-WWII fascism in Ray Bradbury’s time?

**The Visitor**
- On Earth, Leonard learned that it was safer to hide the fact that his ability was real, not a trick. Why, then, did he immediately show it off once he reached Mars?
- Compare the Leonard Mark’s hypnotic ability to create virtual scenes with the virtual reality in video games such as Minecraft.
- Investigate a disease where the sufferers were quarantined from the general population. What makes Tuberculosis so injurious? Will there ever be a cure for TB?
- What is hypnosis? Can the human mind enter a drug-free altered state of consciousness?

**The Concrete Mixer**
- Does Popular Culture have value?
- Describe the impact the western or American diet has had on countries around the world.
- Describe the importance of the automobile in American history/culture. Can cars be made safer?
- What marketing techniques were used in the story? What makes marketing successful?
Marionettes, Inc.
- Is robotic technology beneficial? What ethical, legal, and moral issues relate to robotic technology?
- Describe the effect(s) technology can have on relationships.
- Compare the actions of the character, Braling with contemporary cloning. Should human cloning be allowed?
- Bradbury, a visionary of the future was personally resistant to technological advancements. Describe the risks of technology in one of the following areas: Bioethics, Nuclear Safety, Medical Ethics, or Climate Change.

The City
- Compare a recent (avian flu) pandemic with a historical (Black Plague) one. Are we prepared for the next pandemic?
- How great is the threat of bioterrorism?
- Describe the historical or biological significance of introducing new infectious diseases into an indigenous population.
- What is ethnic cleansing? Select a past episode of ethnic cleansing and discuss its historical ramifications.

Zero Hour
- Discuss the importance of friendships in childhood.
- What role does play perform in child development? Is unstructured play necessary?
- What are cults? Why do people join cults?
- Are distant worlds habitable?
- Is there evidence supporting the activity of extraterrestrial beings on planet Earth?

The Rocket
- Describe the training & selection processes for NASA astronauts.
- Choose an astronaut, space mission, or space vehicle and describe its successes, challenges and impact on future space programs.
- Describe the unique influences that fathers can have on their children.
- What is the impact of virtual reality worlds, and virtual reality video games today? Are gamers at risk of migrating into an artificial reality? Are they ill-equipped for real life?

The Illustrated Man
- What is weight discrimination? Compare weight discrimination with other prejudices, e.g. sexual, racial, or age.
- Can domestic violence be predicted/prevented? What issues or behaviors in the marriage of William Phillipus Phelps and Lisbeth might have led to acts of domestic violence?
- Is there a psychology of violence and killing? What are the processes involved for someone to become a murderer?
- Do paranormal phenomena (e.g. fortune telling) exist? Are paranormal investigations and practices legitimate?