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| **At a Glance – “Dawn showed faintly in the east”**   * **Lesson Objective**: Examine Bradbury’s use of figurative language in representing nature and technology. * **In the Story:** N/A; no new pages * **Key Questions:** Questions 1, 2, 3, and 6 are the most important questions of the day and should not be skipped. * **Words to Watch For:**   + N/A * **Homework Options:**   + Finish Summative Writing   + Excerpt from “The Veldt” and questions (attached)   + Questions from the lesson that were skipped for time |
| **Agenda:**   * Do Now (10 minutes) * Retrieval Practice (10 minutes) * Cycle 1 – Cycle 1: Extended Metaphor (15 minutes) * Cycle 2 – Cycle 2: On Your Own (20 minutes) * Cycle 3 – Cycle 3: Personification and Symbolism (15 minutes) * Summative Writing (20 minutes) |
| **Lesson Plan**  **Do Now (10 minutes)**   * Give students 5-6 minutes to respond to the Do Now questions, then review using **Cold Call, Show Call, share out,** or a **brief discussion**. * **Q1:** **Expand the kernel sentence below using the following guidelines.**    + The morning house lay empty **because** the family who lived there had been killed in a nuclear explosion.   + **While** the morning house lay empty, the house’s appliances continued to **manifest** food, drink, and other needs for the absent family.   + **Since** the morning house lay empty, **prosaic** objects like rain boots and pieces of toast become tragic, knowing that the people who might have used them are now dead. * **Q2: In one artful sentence, explain one instance of irony in the story’s opening pages.**   + Responses will vary; students should note the irony in taking care of people who aren’t there (and are beyond care). |
| **Retrieval Practice (10 minutes)**   * In advance, answer these questions yourself, using previous lessons and the Knowledge Organizer. * Review these questions (see student packet) with your class using **Cold Call**. * ***Note****: You may opt to not ask all the questions we’ve listed. Prioritize as you see fit.* |
| **Cycle 1 (15 minutes)**   * **Read:** **Read Aloud** the definition of extended metaphor, then reread the excerpt from p. 98. * **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Talk** to respond to **Q1a**, and then write responses to **Q1b-Q1c.** * **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** of **Q1a-Q1c**. You might **Cold Call** or **Show Call** strong responses to support pacing.   + **Q1a: In this extended metaphor, who are the “ten thousand attendants”? Give an example of them “servicing, attending, in choirs.”**      - The “ten thousand attendants” are the mechanical or robotic elements of the house: making breakfast, giving reminders, preparing for the day, washing dishes, cleaning the home, etc. They “serve” the family, providing for all of their needs and performing the jobs (“big and small”) that humans would typically perform for themselves or for one another.   + **Q1b: Who are “the gods” of the house? Why have they “gone away”? What strikes you about that word choice?**      - The “gods” of the house are probably the family – the people the house’s mechanical attendants are “servicing, attending.” They have “gone away” because they’ve been killed by some sort of nuclear disaster. The word choice of “gone away” is interesting because it implies a peaceful exit or even a choice to move on (an ironic contrast to their actual violent end). This may subtly reflect the house’s naïve or ignorant perspective; as far as the house understands, the people have indeed “gone away.”   + **Q1c: Literally, why are these actions “senseless” and “useless”? Why might Bradbury have described the house’s actions as a “ritual”?**     - Literally, these actions are “senseless” because the house is unable to sense that the “gods” or the people have gone away and it’s foolish or meaningless to continue. It’s “useless” because it’s all for nothing: food is made and disposed of. Reminders are sung without anyone to hear them.     - Bradbury may describe the house’s actions as a “ritual” because they are a series of acts always performed the same way, at the same time of day. The word “ritual” also intensifies the relationship between the house and the people. Participating in a ritual is a human act, typically including solemn or serious actions. Here, the “ritual” is ironic as the house goes through the motions of caring for the family in an empty house without realizing its futility. * **Write**: After discussion, ask students to complete **Q1d** as a stamp. * **Discuss**: **Show Call** or **share out** strong responses to **Q1d**.   + **Q1d: In one artful sentence, describe the overarching metaphor of these lines. Who worships whom and why? What is Bradbury expressing about the house’s technology?**      - Bradbury compares the house’s devotion to the family to religious faith or belief, emphasizing the sad meaninglessness of their continuing ritual after the family’s destruction. * **Write**: Ask students to **Turn and Task** to respond to **Q2a** then write responses to **Q2b-Q2c.** * **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** of **Q2.**    + **Q2a: Consider the house’s actions on pp. 96-100. Does the house “scarcely notice that [the people] were gone”? How is the house in the story similar and different to nature in the poem? Explain your thinking.**      - It’s ambiguous how much the house “knows” – on the one hand, it continues “senselessly, uselessly” making toast for people who aren’t there. On the other hand, there are hints – “afraid that nobody would,” or “as the house realized, that only silence was there.” Like nature, the house continues its daily routine without missing humanity, but unlike nature, the house seems anxious or concerned (even paranoid).       * **Potential Evidence**          + *As if it were afraid that nobody would*         + *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*         + *The ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly*         + *The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at last realizing, as the house realized, that only silence was there*   + **Q2b: How is the house’s response to the destruction of humanity similar to Spring’s? How is it different?**      - Neither the house nor Spring seem to notice that the humans have gone; the house continues the “ritual of the religion” and Spring “scarcely [notices] the absence of people.” However, for the house, humans are “the gods,” so without humanity, the house’s actions are “senseless” or “useless.” The house seems irrelevant, its actions futile. In contrast, Spring seems indifferent and unbothered. She survives, waking at the beginning of a new day, and doesn’t “mind” that humans have perished.   + **Q2c: What might Bradbury be saying about the difference between nature and technology?**     - Without humanity, technology is irrelevant and useless, but nature persists, sublimely indifferent to our fate.       * ***Note****: To support comprehension, you may wish to ask:*          + *How is the house being personified? What kind of human behaviors are described? How is this different from the Spring?*         + *What do you notice about the house’s relationship with the people who live there?*         + *What do you notice about the mood of the poem? How is that mood different than the mood of the story?* |
| **Cycle 2 (20 minutes)**   * **Read:** Ask students to use **AIR** to read the embellishment in the student packet and then reread pp. 100-102 (from “At ten o’clock the house began to die” through the end of the story). While reading, students should **annotate** any figurative language used to describe the fire (particularly personification).   + **Potential Annotations**      - *The solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door*     - *The fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease from room to room and then up the stairs*     - *It fed on Picassos and Matisses in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvasses into black shavings*     - *Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of the drapes*     - *The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake*     - *But the fire was clever*     - *Which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing* * **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Talk** to respond to **Q3a**, then write responses to **Q3b**. * **Discuss:** **Share out** responses to **Q3a** and lead a **brief discussion** of **Q3b**.   + **Q3a: What does the pronoun “it” refer to? What does it mean that it “fed on Picassos and Matisses”? (Note the embellishment above).**   + ***Note:*** *You may wish to project a larger image of the painting for students to see more clearly.*      - “It’” refers to the fire; it consumed/burned/destroyed the paintings by Picasso and Matisse upstairs in the house.   + **Q3b:** **How do the changes in bold impact the way the fire is personified? Challenge: What is incongruous about the language of the original?**      - In the altered version, the fire is personified as a powerful, brutal, ravenous force, greedily wolfing down the paintings. However, in the original, the fire is personified as “tenderly” or carefully cooking and savoring “delicacies,” feeding on the paintings as if it understood their worth. In the original, the care and tenderness of the personified fire is incongruous in a scene of destruction and devastation. * **Write:** After discussion, ask students to respond to **Q3c** as a **stamp.**    + **Q3c: What might the destruction of the paintings represent or symbolize? Consider the relationship between humans and nature.**      - Not only can nature kill machines and humans, but it can even destroy culture or humanity’s achievements. We see invaluable cultural heritage destroyed when paintings by Picasso and Matisse burn in the fire. Through art, humans enable their best ideas to live on. However, death can just as easily consume the memory of humans as it can humans themselves (and even enjoy/appreciate doing so). |
| **Cycle 3 (15 minutes)**   * **Read:** **Read Aloud** or use **FASE Reading** to reread pp. 100-102, this time **annotating** for any figurative language that describes the house’s response to the fire. ***Note****: You may wish to ask students to complete this rereading independently.*    + **Potential Annotations**     - *At ten o’clock the house began to die*     - *The house tried to save itself*     - *From attic trapdoors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical*     - *Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth*     - *The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze shrapnel on the beams*     - *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*     - *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… one, two, three, four, five voices died*     - *Ten more voices died*     - *A scene of manic confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, the last few 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*     - *All like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound down under* * **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Task** to respond to **Q4** and write responses to **Q5-Q6,** cueing to **Turn and Task** for **Q6a**. * **Discuss: Share out** responses to **Q4.** Lead a **brief discussion** of **Q5-Q6**.   + **Q4: How did the fire start? What might this represent or symbolize?**      - The fire was started by a tree branch blowing through the window and knocking a bottle of chemicals onto the stove (*The wind blew. A falling tree bough crashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning solvent, bottled, shattered over the stove).* This might connect to the clash between nature and technology as it was something natural that started the confrontation/attack of the fire.   + **Q5a: How is the depiction of the house similar in all three excerpts? Annotate any similarities you see.**      - All include figurative language linking the house to a human body:       * *Brain*       * *Bone*       * *Skeleton*       * *Nerves*       * *Veins*       * *Capillaries*   + **Q5b: Contrast the death of the house with the death of the family (on p. 97). Which is more graphic or violent? Which is described in more detail? Why might this be?**      - The death of the house is much more painful and graphic than the death of the family. While the family members’ lives end “off stage” and we read a poignant, strangely beautiful description of the shadows they leave behind, the house’s death is told in excruciating detail. This might be meant to cause us to feel sympathy/compassion for the house or to note the irony that the house is even more human than the humans in its death. It may even be a surrogate for the human’s suffering, echoing what must have happened to humanity but not showing it to us directly. The destruction of the personified house allows us to feel the extraordinary sadness and intensity of the situation, whereas a graphic description of the death of a human being might simply make us recoil or shut down in horror.   + **Q6a: Final lines in short stories are often highly symbolic. Why might Bradbury have ended his story in this way?**     - Responses may vary; students may begin thinking about the significance of “dawn” or the persistence of the house’s technology.   + **Q6b: Why might Bradbury have chosen to end the story as “dawn showed faintly in the east”? What might this final image represent or symbolize?**     - Bradbury may have chosen to begin at dawn to show the persistence/survival of nature or even to end on a note of hope (for nature, if not for humanity). Dawn symbolizes a new day or new life – even in this post-apocalyptic world, spring may still “wake at dawn” with the sun “[rising] to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam.” |
| **Summative Writing (20 minutes)**   * **Prompt: Explain the relationship between Bradbury’s story and Teasdale’s poem. In your response:**    + **Explain how both texts are post-apocalyptic and what historical events both comment on**   + **Describe one image that’s characteristic of each text**   + **What common motifs and themes do you see in these two texts?** * **Potential Response:** In both Ray Bradbury’s “There Will Come Soft Rains,” and Sara Teasdale’s poem of the same name, humanity has been destroyed. Both texts are post-apocalyptic in that they imagine events after a catastrophic event ends human life. Sara Teasdale wrote her poem in the midst of World War I, as innovations in military technology made battles more gruesome than ever before. For Bradbury, writing in 1950, the fear of nuclear war is manifested in the radioactive glow emanating from the city and the nuclear shadows left by the family on the wall. Teasdale’s poem is full of peaceful, soft descriptions of the natural world, robins “whistling their whims on a low fence wire” and “swallows circling with their shimmering sound.” Nature persists, beautiful and indifferent to the loss of humans, lovely despite there being no person there to appreciate the loveliness. In Bradbury’s story, the fully automated house is also unaware of the loss of its humans and continues “senselessly, uselessly” preparing meals and issuing reminders which echo in the empty space. Both authors use the motif of conflict between nature, humanity, and technology to confront the dangers of heedless technological advancement. * (Evidence may vary) |
| **Homework Answers**   1. It’s also set in an automated house, but this time the people are alive (it’s not post-apocalyptic, just futuristic). 2. There might be a clash between nature and technology; people might be overly dependent on technology. |