

Questions to Accompany *The Martian Chronicles*

Essential Questions:

- What are the causes and effects of political turmoil in the novel *The Martian Chronicles*?
- How do the main characters in the text and people in general make decisions based on both their political and ethical beliefs?
- How do the conflicts in the texts mirror historical and modern political events?

Guiding Questions:

- Pay careful attention to “Rocket Summer”. What is the significance of the chapter and what is Bradbury’s intention by beginning the novel with that story?
- Note the different reactions of Mr. K & Mrs. K to the newcomers. How do their decisions reflect their personalities and how do their personalities affect their decisions? At some point come back and decide whose action was correct—does it matter what their individual motives were?
- Examine the Martian culture—how is it like human culture and how is it different? What can you determine the Martians value by looking at their attitudes, art, architecture, recreation, etc. What social commentary is Bradbury revealing here?
- The 2nd expedition to Mars is also a failure. What do we as readers learn about humans and Martians from this chapter? What do we learn about our current society from this chapter?
- The 3rd expedition fails as well. What does this chapter (along with the 2nd expedition) say about beliefs and logical reasoning? What are you more likely to believe, what you see to be true, what you think to be true, or what you know to be true? When do you change your mind?
- In what way does the 4th expedition resemble the historical accounts of European explorers coming to the new world? Based on your understanding of historical events, do you think Spender’s actions are understandable?
- Who do you blame for the Martians’ fate? What were the choices that led to this outcome? Was there another way?
- The settlers are coming. Look at how their presence changes the planet. Is the novel critical of or sympathetic to the humans?
- Consider the juxtaposition of “The Green Morning” and “The Locusts”. What is Bradbury trying to emphasize with these two chapters?
- How is the planet changed by the settlers? How are the settlers changed by the planet? How is life on earth changed by people leaving to settle Mars?
- What does the story of the Martian child suggest about parenthood?
- After settlers have been on Mars for some time, Earth erupts in atomic confrontation. How are these two events related? Does atomic violence break out if there is no place to escape to?
- The narrative focus begins to shift from the Martians to the humans on Mars. In light of that shift, explain the significance of the reflections at the end of the novel.