

"There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury
Project Choice List

Choose 3 of the following 5 tasks to complete

FIVE WAYS OF GOING BEYOND THE TEXT TO SHOW PERCEPTION

1. **Our modern world**

Intelligent 'smart' houses: did Bradbury predict reality?

a. Check out the virtual tour of Bill Gates' house at: <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/tech/billgate/gates.htm>
b. Comment on the similarities and differences to the house in the story – you could use a Venn diagram to do this comparison.

AD2026 – where is technology leading us?

c. Check out the latest technology trends at: <http://news.cnet.com/> and <http://www.techpark.net/>
e.g. As per many reports,

Google is expected to start selling eyeglasses that will project information, entertainment and, this being a Google product, advertisements onto the lenses. These glasses will have the combined features of virtual reality and augmented reality.

d. Construct a well written paragraph on Ray Bradbury's prescience and on how technology is influencing the way we live – for better and/or for worse.

Science & Technology

You are your own tour guide inside the Gates estate. Simply click on the active areas of the image or use the text links below to navigate.

▶ Read our Web exclusive [interview](#) with Bill Gates.



ROBERT KEMP FOR USN&WR

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Commented [JA1]: b. Create a Venn Diagram exploring the similarities and differences to the house in the story

2. **Nuclear warfare – where are we at?**

a. How close is the world to nuclear annihilation? Find out the latest – try:

- i. <http://www.spacewar.com/> - check out the Nuke Wars section – Iran's nuclear bomb capacity.
- ii. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asiapacific-12168922> China's nuclear warfare capacity.
- iii. <http://gizmodo.com/5771272/nasa-saysnuclear-warfare-could-reverse-global-warming-but-also-bring-famine-and-disease>
- iv. How New Zealand could be affected in a global nuclear war: http://www.nzses.org.nz/nzje/free_issues/NZJEcol8_163.pdf



b. In a 1-3 paragraph piece, explain the relevance of the story to the real world nuclear scenario.

3. **The writer's view:** Ray Bradbury

Although he is often described as a science fiction writer, Bradbury does not box himself into a particular narrative categorization. Here are five comments he has made on his writing:

- i "First of all, I don't write science fiction. I've only done one science fiction book and that's *Fahrenheit 451*, based on reality. Science fiction is a depiction of the real. Fantasy is a depiction of the unreal. So *Martian Chronicles* is not science fiction, it's fantasy. It couldn't happen, you see? That's the reason it's going to be around a long time—because it's a Greek myth, and myths have staying power."
- ii "People are afraid of fantasy. A lot of intellectuals think science fiction is trivial. And it's pivotal! People are walking around the streets with phones to their heads talking to someone ten feet away. We've killed two million people with automobiles. We're surrounded by technology and the problems created by technology, and science fiction isn't important?"
- iii "I have to write these books and help change the future." iv "I was born a collector of metaphors. Metaphors are the centre of life. I'm deeply influenced by Greek mythology, Roman mythology. The colourful stuff, anything magical. I've had all this stuff in my head from the age of three on."
- v "I've never set out to predict. I just write what later seems to evolve and be true." Source: http://www.raybradbury.com/articles_book_mag.html

TASK: Choose at least ONE comment and discuss a connection to the story in a well thought out and written essay, 1-3 paragraphs long.

4. **Sources of inspiration**



a. Sara Teasdale's 1920 poem

There Will Come Soft Rains

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pool singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire,

Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

There Will Come Soft Rains is a 12-line

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
six If mankind perished utterly;
rhyming

And Spring herself when she woke at dawn
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

poem by Sara Teasdale in her collection *Flame and Shadow*, published in 1920. The subject of the poem imagines nature reclaiming the earth after humanity has been wiped out by a war (line 7). The poem has stanzas, each made up of a couplet.

Sara Teasdale was born on August 8, 1884. She had poor health for most of her life, and it was only at age 14 that she was well enough to begin school. In 1933, she committed suicide.

1. Answer these questions:

- i. Which war did she have in mind when she wrote the poem?
- ii. Explain the links between the poem and Bradbury's story.

2. Write a poem in response to both the story and the poem.

b. Historic events and technology

Create a collage (digital or paper) that expresses the relationship between the following historical and political context and Bradbury's story.

Aftermath of World War II

Bradbury wrote *There Will Come Soft Rains* in the early 1950s. The memory of World War II was fresh in peoples' minds, particularly the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August, 1945, which brought the war to an end. Though the Allies had won, an increasing tension arose between the United States and the U.S.S.R., and soon a nuclear buildup known as the Cold War began. President Dwight Eisenhower, a war hero, warned of the rising military-industrial complex it took to support the Cold War.

The story portrays a scene of obliteration, in which the human race has been destroyed by a nuclear bomb. The fear of the devastating effects of nuclear force was very applicable to the time period of the 1950s. The world was still recovering from the effects of World War II and events, such as the dropping of atomic bombs in Japan still seemed recent. In 1945, the United States released a nuclear bomb over the city of Hiroshima that destroyed nearly everything in the city. Three days later, Nagasaki was also bombed. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed in these bombings, either from direct impact or the deadly effects of radiation that killed them within a few years of the incident. Even though the war ended shortly after these events, the fear of retaliation and the increasing focus on the development of nuclear weapons by many military powers world-wide, produced fear in the minds of people. After the war, tension increased between the two major military powers of the time, the U.S.S.R. and the United States, culminating in the Cold War. This era was also a time of uncertainty, and the idea of being bombed with a nuclear weapon was a daily fear.

