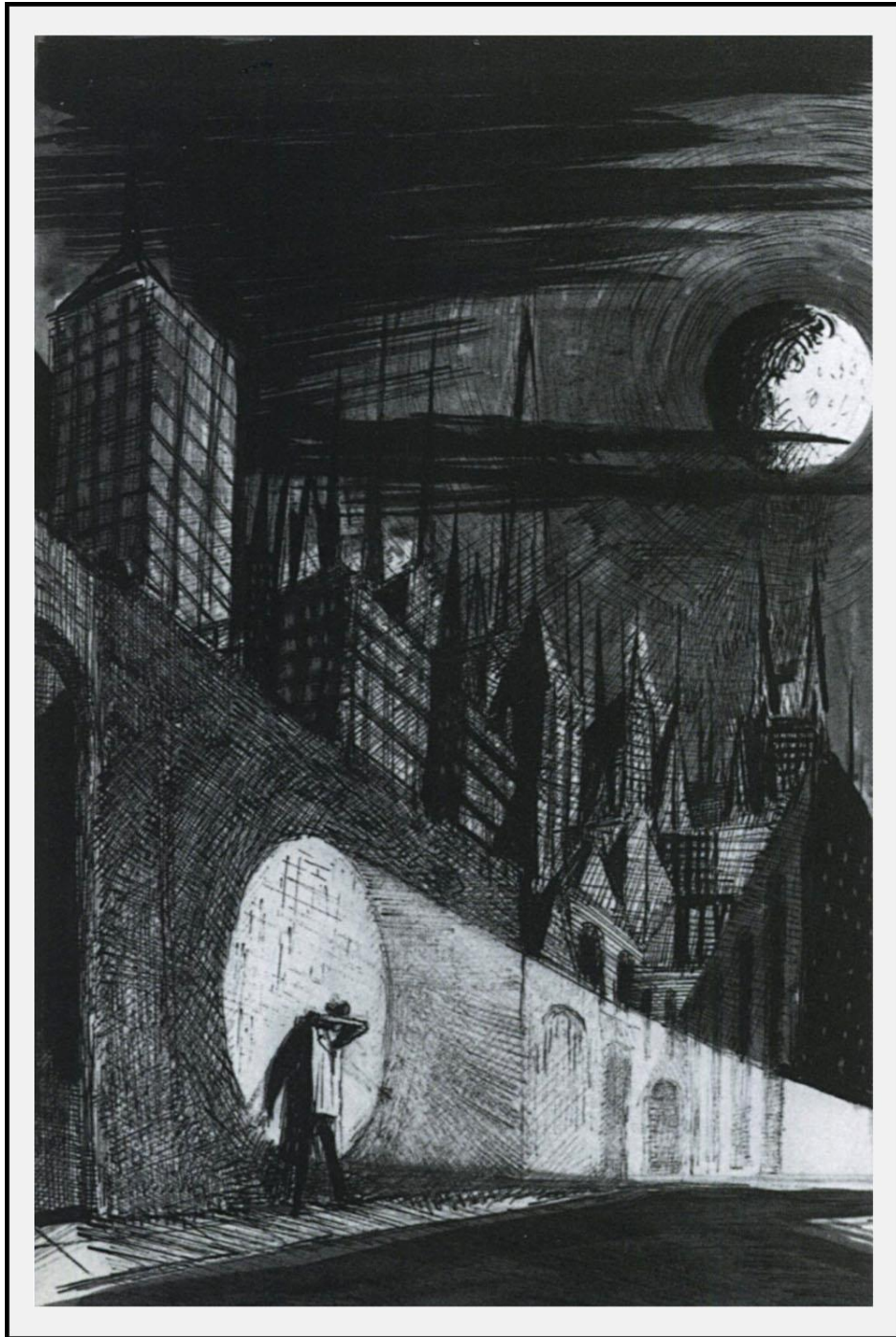


National 5 Critical Essay Unit



‘The Pedestrian’ by Ray Bradbury

Pre-Reading Tasks

Answer the questions on this page **before** reading the story.

1. 'The Pedestrian' was written by Ray Bradbury in 1951 and is set in 2053. Think about what the world might be like 100 years from **now**. What will people do with their time? How might society be different? Will anything be the same as it is now? Go into as much detail as possible:
2. How much time do you spend watching television? What are the benefits and downsides of television?
3. How do you feel about people who are viewed as "different" by society? Do you think it is important for people to try to fit in or can differences be positive?

Plot

A short story can be split into 4 stages:

1. Exposition – the beginning of a story where characters and setting are introduced.
2. Conflict – something happens that causes the story to move forward. The main character experiences some kind of struggle.
3. Climax – the turning point of a story. The point of highest tension and drama.
4. Resolution – the ending of a story, when the conflict is resolved.

Write a short summary of what happens at each of the 4 stages in 'The Pedestrian'.

<p style="text-align: center;">Exposition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Who is the main character? Where are they?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Conflict</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is the main character doing? What problems or hardships do they face?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Climax</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is the most dramatic part of the story? When does the main action happen?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Resolution</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What happens to the main character in the end?</p>	

Close Reading Questions

1. What does the writer mean when he says Mead “was alone in this world of 2053 AD, or as good as alone.”?
2. What are all the other inhabitants of the city doing?
3. Write down an example of the main image that the writer uses to picture the city Leonard Mead lives in. What atmosphere does this create? You should quote and explain.
4. Why did Leonard Mead wear sneakers when he went out?
5. We know from quite early on this story will not have a happy ending. Write about those parts of the story that foreshadow this.
6. Explain why the pavements were, “vanishing under flowers and grass.”
7. Why was it a, “rare and incredible thing,” for him to have encountered a police car?
8. Examine the imagery of the “moth” and the “specimen”. Say why the writer has chosen these images to describe what is happening to Leonard Mead. You should comment on each image and Mead’s predicament.

9. "I guess you'd call me a writer." "No profession" What is the place of writing and the writer in 2053 AD based on this extract of dialogue?

10. Explain in detail why the questioning voice finds it puzzling that Leonard Mead is out walking.

11. What else do we find out about Mead from his conversation with the car?

12. What does the fact that there is no-one in the car tell us?

13. Examine the description of the inside of the car: "a little cell ... There was nothing soft there." Comment fully on everything this description suggests to you about: (a) The car itself (b) How Leonard Mead is regarded by his society.

14. Where is Leonard Mead being taken?

15. How does society view a man like Mead, in the light of where he is being taken?

16. Leonard Mead's house is all lit up. Why is this?

Characterisation

Leonard Mead

Noted below are the descriptions we are given of main character, Leonard Mead. What do each of these tell us about him?

Quotation	Analysis
"To enter out into that silence... that was what Mr Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do."	
"He was alone in the world of 2053AD, or as good as alone."	
"Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and only return at midnight."	
"Mr Leonard Mead would pause, cock his head, listen, look and march on."	
"his feet making no noise... for long ago he had wisely changed to sneakers when strolling at night."	
"occasionally picking up a leaf as he passed, examining its skeletal pattern."	
" 'Hello in there,' he whispered to every house on every side as he moved. 'What's up on Channel 4, Channel 7, Channel 9?'"	
"If he closed his eyes and stood very still, frozen, he could imagine himself upon the centre of a plain, a wintry, windless Arizona desert... and only the street for company."	
"In ten years of walking by night or day, for thousands of miles, he had never met another person walking, not one in all that time."	
"He halted."	

" 'But-' he said."	
" 'I guess you'd call me a writer.' 'No profession,' said the police car."	
" 'Walking, just walking... Walking for air. Walking to see.'"	
" 'And there is air in your house. You have an air conditioner, Mr Mead?' 'Yes' 'And you have a viewing screen in your house to see with?' 'No.'"	
" 'Are you married Mr Mead?' 'No... Nobody wanted me,' said Leonard Mead with a smile."	
" 'I explained: for air, and to see and just to walk.'"	
"Every night for years."	
" 'Wait a minute! I haven't done anything!'"	
" 'I protest!'"	
" 'Where are you taking me?'"	
" ' To the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies.'"	

“this one house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness.”	
“ ‘That’s my house,’ said Leonard Mead.”	

Now that you have analysed the descriptions of Leonard Mead, create a mind map in the space below noting down all the important information you have learned about him.

The Police Car

Noted below are the descriptions we are given of the police car. What do they tell us about this character?

Quotation	Analysis
"the lone car"	
"flashed a fierce white cone of light"	
"Stunned by the Illumination"	
"metallic voice"	
"Stand still. Stay where you are! Don't move!"	
"Your hands up or we'll shoot!"	
"in a city of three million...police car left"	
"metallic whisper"	
"the light held him fixed"	
" like a museum specimen, needle thrust through the chest"	
"phonograph voice, hissing"	

"fiery beam"	
"Don't speak unless you're spoken to!"	
"there was no one in the front seat, no one in the car at all."	
"little black cell, a little black jail with bars"	
"It smelled of riveted steel...harsh antiseptic..."	
"smelled too clean and hard and metallic"	
"nothing soft there"	
"iron voice"	
"faint whirring click, as if information,...electric eyes."	

What do you notice about the dialogue between Leonard Mead and the police car?

Theme

A theme is an idea that a writer explores in a story. For example, war or friendship. 'The Pedestrian' explores a number of different themes. Fill out the table below with any themes you have identified and write down a quotation from the story that relates to each theme.

Theme	Quotation

Choose one of the themes you have identified and write a few sentences on what you learned about this theme from the story:

Important Quotations

Fill in the empty boxes in the table below. Add in any other quotations which you think are important to our understanding of the story and explain what they tell us.

QUOTATION	MEANING
"AD 2053"	This shows us that the story is set well in the future in a futuristic environment. At time of writing the story was set 102 years in the future.
"sidewalk", "highways", "sneakers", gas station", "intersection"	
"midnight", "graveyard", "grey phantoms", "tomb-like buildings" (Para 2)	Death/graveyard imagery and symbolism that runs throughout the story shows how there is little life left in the local community. People have learned to stay indoors.
	"He hadn't written in years. Magazines and books didn't sell well anymore."
"the people sat like the dead, the grey or multi-coloured lights touching their faces, but never really touching them."	Simile – continuation of death imagery/symbolism shown how people are lifelessly watching TV. They are all watching the same channels, there is no individuality – no real human contact. Idea of de-humanisation.
"hidden sea", "crystal frost", "tree/branches", "invisible snow", "autumn leaves", "skeletal pattern", "rusty smell" (Para 4)	All references to nature or natural objects – highlights Leonard Mead's interest in nature.
"fierce", "phonograph voice", "hissing", "metallic", "crackling"	
	Reference to a moth – again nature – moth is drawn to light just as LM is drawn to light of police car. A moth that is a museum specimen would always be dead = death imagery.

"in a city of three million, there was only one police car left"	
"nobody wanted me"	
"air conditioner", "viewing screen"	

Ensure that you have memorised quotations from the story to use in your critical essay. Some ways to do this include:

- Creating quotation cards – quotations on one side and analysis on the other.
- Grouping quotations by theme.
- Working with a classmate and testing each other.
- Drawing a picture to represent each quotation and writing the quotation beside it.

Potential Essay Tasks

In the exam, you will be asked to write a critical essay on the short story, 'The Pedestrian'. You should always choose a task from the **PROSE** section of the exam booklet. Each task will have a particular focus. Here are some essay tasks from previous exams. Think about how these questions relate to 'The Pedestrian'.

2015

1. Choose a novel or short story in which the writer creates a realistic or convincing character. By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the writer creates this character, and say why you find him or her to be realistic or convincing.
2. Choose a novel or short story or a work of non-fiction which explores a theme which you find interesting. By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the writer explores this theme.

2016

1. Choose a novel or short story or work of non-fiction which has a key moment. Give a brief account of the key moment and, by referring to appropriate techniques, show how it is significant to the text as a whole.
2. Choose a novel or short story in which there is an interesting character. By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author makes the character interesting.

2017

1. Choose a novel or a short story or a work of non-fiction which deals with an important issue or theme. By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the issue or theme is explored.
2. Choose a novel or a short story or a work of non-fiction which has a memorable character/person, place or event. By referring to appropriate techniques, explain how the writer makes the character/person, place or event memorable.

Essay Planning

When writing a critical essay it is important that your essay is structured clearly.

Introduction

This should include:

- The name of text and author.
- A few words to describe the story.
- A reference to the task you have chosen.
- Mention some of the techniques you will discuss in your essay.

Main paragraphs

These should include:

- **Topic sentence** – refers to essay task and explains what the paragraph is about.
- **Evidence** – a quotation from the story relating to the topic of the paragraph.
- **Analysis** – reference to any writers' techniques used in the quotation and an explanation of what the quotation tells us and how it relates to your essay task.

Conclusion

This should include:

- A summary of the main points you have made.
- A personal response to the text – how it made you feel/what you learned.

Practice

On the next page is an example of an essay plan for a critical essay on task 2 from the 2015 exam paper. After reading it, you should use it to help you create a plan for one of the other past paper questions.

Plans should generally be brief, using bullet points, but should show how your essay will flow clearly and should show how each paragraph is relevant to the task.

Example Essay Plan

T = Topic sentence, E = Evidence, A = Analysis

Bold font = reference to essay task/ Highlighted font = what paragraph is about

<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘The Pedestrian’/Ray Bradbury• Unsettling. Set in 2053AD. Only one police car. Leonard Mead is only person who leaves his home to walk.• Interesting theme is nonconformity.
<p><u>Main Paragraph One</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T – The reader is first introduced to the theme of nonconformity when Bradbury describes protagonist, Leonard Mead, in the first paragraph of the story.• E - “He was alone in this world of A.D. 2053, or as good as alone.”• A – word choice ‘alone’. Nobody else like him in his society
<p><u>Main Paragraph Two</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T – We learn about the society Mead lives in and how he is different from everyone else.• E - “not unequal to walking through a graveyard.”• A – imagery. Reference to death – the rest of the city is lifeless.
<p><u>Main Paragraph Three</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T - Leonard Mead’s nonconformity leads to trouble for him.• E - “He stood entranced, not unlike a night moth, stunned...”• A – simile reveals Mead is vulnerable.
<p><u>Main Paragraph Four</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T - We learn that Leonard Mead is not respected by his society because he is different.• E - “ ‘I guess you’d call me a writer.’ ‘No profession,’ said the police car.”• A – dialogue reveals writers are of no use to Mead’s society.
<p><u>Main Paragraph Five</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T - The reader is left feeling horrified by the fate Mead meets for failing to ‘fit in’.• E - “the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies.”• A - tells us how Mead is viewed for not fitting in.
<p><u>Main Paragraph Six</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T - Bradbury leaves us with a final message about nonconformity as Mead is taken away to meet his fate.• E - “this one particular house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness.”• A – symbolism highlights difference between Mead and rest of city.
<p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bradbury uses imagery and symbolism to explore theme of nonconformity.• Being different is not negative but people are often punished for not fitting in. Feel sympathy for Mead.