Unit 3

Title: The Fog Horn

Suggested Time: 5 days

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3; W.8.2, W.8.4, W.8.9; L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3; SL.8.1

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

* Loneliness and unrequited love can lead to feelings of anger and destruction.
* The past and present are not always compatible.

Synopsis

Johnny, the narrator, and McDunn, the lighthouse keeper (Johnny’s boss), are working in a lighthouse on a November evening. McDunn shares his experience of witnessing strange sea mysteries, including the sighting of a monster that appears at this time each year. The monster has been attracted by the lighthouse foghorn and mimics the sound while McDunn and Johnny watch the exchange. McDunn turns off the fog horn, and the monster destroys the lighthouse in anger as the two lighthouse workers escape. The lighthouse is rebuilt within a year with McDunn as the new master. The creature never returns to the light house, and McDunn mentions that it is probably waiting until man has left the world in order to search for companionship.

1. Read the “The Fog Horn” and “Ray Bradbury is on Fire” in *The Elements of Literature* keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the texts while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary for both pieces.

**During Teaching**

1. Read aloud the story to students while the students finger read along with the story. During the reading, have students complete the chart below to assist with a basic comprehension of the short story.

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| Characters | Setting:  Time period and location | Conflict | Resolution |
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1. Students reread the first seven paragraphs of “The Fog Horn” independently and answer the guiding question, “What mood is created by the author’s word choice? Highlight significant mood words or phrases and share with a partner.” You may take this opportunity to answer the first text-dependent question as a whole class using the gradual release model.
2. Teacher reads “The Fog Horn” aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)
4. After reading and analyzing the questions and vocabulary in “The Fog Horn,” students read “Ray Bradbury is on Fire” independently or in pairs.
5. Then have students work alone or in groups to gather evidence from the article. Focus the search for students by asking them to highlight or underline any insight about Ray Bradbury and his thoughts about technology.

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Who is the narrator of this story? From what point of view is the story told? | The story is told in first person point of view from the narrator, Johnny. Students can illustrate the point of view from sample sentences with “I.” On page 445 McDunn states, “You been here now for three months, Johnny, so I better prepare you.” |
| How does the narrator’s description of the setting on the first page (or first six paragraphs) of the story set the mood for the remainder of the story? | The setting depicts an eerie mood of loneliness and isolation. Phrases such as, “out there in the cold water, far from land,” and “feeling like two birds in the gray sky” in the first paragraph immediately set the mood. The author continues in paragraph six with phrases such as “a cold November evening,” and “the high throat of the tower.” In addition the author notes “there wasn’t a town for a hundred miles down the coast, just a road that came lonely through dead country to the sea……two miles of cold water out to our rock.” |
| Reread paragraph seven and use textual evidence to explain the significance of the lighthouse on the creatures of the sea. What does the Fog Horn symbolize for the fish? What is Bradbury saying about the Fog Horn through the use of this symbol? | The lighthouse has a significant impact on the creatures of the sea. McDunn tells the mysterious story of millions of fish leaving the sea and surfacing at the shore. The text states, “something made them swim in and lie in the bay, sort of trembling and staring up at the tower.” McDunn shares, “I kind of think maybe, in some sort of way, they came all those miles to worship. Strange. But think how the tower must look to them, standing seventy feet above the water, the God-like flashing out from it, and the tower declaring itself with a monster voice.” The paragraph ends with McDunn asking Johnny if “they thought they were in the Presence” suggesting the lighthouse could be a deity in the eyes of the creatures of the sea. |
| What effect does the repetition of “the Fog Horn blew” throughout the story have on the advancement of the plot? | “The Fog Horn Blew” is repeated seven times. The author brings in the phrase at important points to advance the plot. The first time it is introduced (page 446) it immediately follows the words “I’ll make me a sound and an apparatus and they’ll call it a Fog Horn and whoever hears it will know the sadness of eternity and the briefness of life.” The phrase is predominantly used to show the connection of the sea creature to the lighthouse and illustrate how the actions of the sea creature are a direct response to the sound of the Fog Horn. The text notes, “The monster cried out at the tower. The Fog Horn blew. The monster roared again. The Fog Horn Blew.” |
| The following statements are possible themes for the short story. Select one or create a statement on your own and use textual evidence to support the statement as the theme.   * Loneliness and unrequited love can lead to feelings of anger and destruction. * The past and present are not always compatible. | Answers will vary. A student who explores loneliness might cite the following textual evidence: The setting depicts an eerie mood of loneliness and isolation. Phrases such as, “out there in the cold water, far from land,” and “feeling like two birds in the gray sky” in the first paragraph immediately set the mood. The author continues in paragraph six with phrases such as “a cold November evening,” and “the high throat of the tower.” In addition the author notes “there wasn’t a town for a hundred miles down the coast, just a road that came lonely through dead country to the sea…two miles of cold water out to our rock.” When McDunn is asked if he is used to the loneliness, he responds, “Yes”. The story continues, showing how the characters McDunn and the sea creature respond to loneliness. While McDunn appears to have accepted it, the sea creature is seeking to end its loneliness. The creature seems to view the fog horn and lighthouse as a beacon of hope that others of its kind still exists. The sea creature responds each time the Fog Horn blows. “The Fog Horn Blew. And the monster answered. A cry came across a million years of water and mist. A cry so anguished and alone that it shuddered in my head and my body. The monster cried out at the tower. The Fog Horn blew. The monster roared again,” notes the narrator. The sea creature seeks out the lighthouse and the fog horn to end his loneliness. In the end, the sea creature discovers the Fog Horn is not a beloved mate, and is hurt. The creature mourns the loss of the fog horn, its only hope of companionship, and begins the slow descent to its home at the bottom of the sea. McDunn ends up “master of the new lighthouse” and perpetuates the loneliness. |
| How does the repetition of the phrase “the Fog Horn blew” relate to the theme(s) of the story? | The repetition of the phrase continually draws attention to the disconnect between the living, feeling creature and the unfeeling technology of the fog horn. The phrase emphasizes the misunderstanding and loneliness caused by the differences between the “past” (the monster) and the “present” (the Fog Horn): “A cry came across a million years of water and mist…Lonely and vast and far away. The sound of isolation, a viewless sea, a cold night, apartness. That was the sound.” |
| Explain what happens when the repetition of the phrase “the Fog Horn blew” is interrupted. What are the immediate effects of this interruption? | When the repetition of this phrase is interrupted the lighthouse is destroyed. The author details the response to the loss of the Fog Horn (an attack on the lighthouse) on pages 448 and 449. When McDunn and Johnny resume the Fog Horn the text describes it as “the Fog Horn cried; the monster cried.” The text continues, describing the monster’s emotional response: “The monster stopped and froze. Its great lantern eyes blinked. Its mouth gaped. It gave a sort of rumble, like a volcano. It twitched its head this way and that way, as if to seek the sounds now dwindled off into the fog. It peered at the lighthouse. It rumbled again. Then its eyes caught fire. It reared up, threshed the water, and rushed at the tower, its eyes filled with angry torment.” |
| As the sea creature becomes visible, McDunn replies to Johnny’s cry of “It’s impossible!” by stating, “No, Johnny, *we’re* impossible”. Explain why “we’re impossible” from McDunn’s perspective. | McDunn feels the past and present are not compatible. He states, “It’s like it always was ten millions years ago. It hasn’t changed. It’s us and the land that’ve changed, become impossible. Us!” McDunn challenges us to think about how we have changed and perhaps made things worse or at least not aligned with how things were in the past. For example, student responses could include evidence about creating a sound that would cause a creature to feel love and then intense pain. “I’ll make me a sound and an apparatus and they’ll call it a Fog Horn and whoever hears it will know the sadness of eternity and the briefness of life.” He makes the reader wonder if the changes are for the better by stating that it us who are impossible. |
| Reread the paragraph that begins “But the sound of the Fog Horn comes and goes…”. Based on the sea creature’s perception, what does it believe the lighthouse to be? Why is it taking the journey from the bottom of the Deeps to reach the lighthouse? What textual evidence supports your analysis? | The sea creature believes the lighthouse is another sea creature, a potential mate. The sea creature recognizes the sound. The text notes, “But that Fog Horn comes through a thousand miles of water, faint and familiar, and the furnace in your belly stokes up.” McDunn describes how the lighthouse looks like the sea creature. “with a long neck like your neck sticking way up out the water, and a body like your body, and, most important of all, a voice like your voice.” |
| Describe the emotions felt by the creature at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Support your answer with specific incidents from the story. | The sea creature starts off feeling lonely. It could be the last of his kind and longs to find another. McDunn notes, “All year long, Johnny, that poor monster there lying far out, a thousand miles at sea, and twenty miles deep.” It then moves to excitement and anticipation over hearing the Fog Horn and the possibility of finding a mate, another sea creature like himself. The text notes, “the furnace in your belly stokes up” and describes the treacherous journey the sea creature must endure but is willing to do. Finally the sea creature ends up tormented, anguished and returns to his loneliness. The text describes the sea creature as having “eyes caught fire. It reared up, threshed the water, and rushed the tower, its eyes filled with angry torment.” The text continues with “The huge eyes on the right side of its anguished head …” |
| “That’s life for you,” said McDunn, “Someone always waiting for someone who never comes home…”. What does this paragraph from the text reveal about McDunn’s understanding about the creature and himself? | This reveals McDunn’s feelings of isolation and loss. McDunn notes, “always someone loving some thing more than that thing loves them.” This quote shows how McDunn is identifying with the creature. Students might cite additional evidence about McDunn’s loneliness and parallels to the sea creature from the beginning of the story, when he tells Johnny that “it’s your turn on land tomorrow,” to which Johnny replies, “What do you think, McDunn, when I leave you out here alone?” “On the mysteries of the sea.” |
| In the article, the author notes, “Bradbury is a consistent champion of things human and real”. What evidence in the article supports this understanding of Ray Bradbury? What evidence in the story also supports this belief? | In Ray Bradbury is on Fire, the author shares that Bradbury stated, “Why go to a machine when you can go to a human being” when asked about what he thought of ATMs. In Fog Horn, this is presented in McDunn’s inability to see the present world honoring the past. McDunn states that we and the land (including conditions, technology, relationships, etc.) have changed and calls us “impossible.” In Fog Horn, this is also evident in McDunn’s connection with the sea creature. McDunn feels his loss noting, “And after a while, you want to destroy whatever that thing is, so it can’t hurt you no more.” |
| Explain Bradbury’s beliefs on technology after reading the article “Ray Bradbury is on Fire.” Use evidence from the article to support your answer. | The article makes it clear Bradbury is a critic of modern technology. The articles talks about how Bradbury claims he has never driven a car, and “he is scornful of the Internet.” In addition, the article talks about how Bradbury is not interested in computers stating, “I have two typewriters. I do not need another one.” |
| Now that you have read “Ray Bradbury is on Fire” and *The Fog Horn*, find an instance in the story that reflects Bradbury’s views on technology. What effect does this incident have on the outcome of the story? | Answers will vary. The technology Bradbury explores in the Fog Horn is the lighthouse and the Fog Horn itself. In the story, the lighthouse and Fog Horn are destroyed by the sea creature. It is interesting to note this occurs when the sea creature (the past) is finally about to meet up the lighthouse (the present). McDunn decides to “switch the Fog Horn off”. This emphasizes the belief that the present and past are not compatible and challenges us to think if the present is better than the past (modern technology). This is echoed in the incident of the text when McDunn states, “It’s us and the land that’ve changed, become impossible. Us!”. Other possible responses might include a reference to the monster’s eyes: “As the light hit them, the monster’s eyes were fire and ice, fire and ice” (which brings life/elemental qualities to the artificial lights of the lighthouse), or “One of the monster eyes caught and held and flashed back our immense light, red, white, red, white, like a disk held high and sending a message in primeval code”(referencing the existence of language/communication before technology) – or even a reference to the personification of the Fog Horn when it “cried.” |
| Based on what we have learned about Bradbury from the article, what are some commonalities between McDunn, the character, and Bradbury, the author? Additionally, what does McDunn do that is uncharacteristic of Bradbury? | Answers will vary. Both have demonstrated a belief that the past and present are not compatible and that modern things (technology) are not always good things. The story challenges us to think of McDunn as a manifestation of Bradbury and a reflection of his beliefs. Bradbury is speaking to the reader through McDunn. By choosing to rebuild the lighthouse from an even newer technology, McDunn deviates from Bradbury’s views on technology. The new lighthouse again has a Fog Horn which “sounded like the monster calling”. This perhaps is a commentary about the inevitability of technological advancement. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | daft  ascended  froth  isolation  brooding  anguished  abruptly  dwindled  reeked  RBF article  scornful | plain  subterranean  faint  torment  buckled  specifications  RBF article  championed  stunning |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | apparatus  flicker  pressurizing  lament  bewilderment  RBF article  consistent  dispersed | primeval  ensuing  gnashed  concussions\*  RBF article  human condition |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt

*The Fog Horn is a reflection of Ray Bradbury’s beliefs on technology and its impact on humanity as discussed in the article “Ray Bradbury is on Fire.” Identify the technology that Bradbury uses in the story and explain the emotional impact of the technology on both the creature and McDunn using one or both of the identified themes for the unit. Compare and contrast this effect on both characters.*

* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify the requirements of the writing task from the prompt provided by highlighting the key verbs and breaking down each component through a full-class discussion.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| The setting depicts an eerie mood of loneliness and isolation. Phrases such as, “out there in the cold water, far from land,” and “feeling like two birds in the gray sky” in the first paragraph immediately set the mood. The author continues in paragraph six with phrases such as “a cold November evening,” and “the high throat of the tower.” In addition the author notes “there wasn’t a town for a hundred miles down the coast, just a road that came lonely through dead country to the sea…two miles of cold water out to our rock.”  When the reader meets McDunn he explains his comfort in this solitude describing how is now used to the loneliness and tells tales “on the mysteries of the sea”. One such story depicts the lighthouse as a “Deity” in the eyes of fish. McDunn notes, “I think they came all those miles to worship.” | The depiction of the setting creates the mood of loneliness and isolation. The mood is maintained throughout the piece and is connected to the character of McDunn.  McDunn states he is used to the loneliness and even tells stories about the “mysteries of the sea” to enrich his lonely existence. He compares his existence as a separate level from mankind. Finally, in the end when faced with the destruction of the lighthouse, McDunn waits for it to return and becomes “master” of the new lighthouse. McDunn refuses to move on from the loneliness. (*supports loneliness theme*) |
| McDunn shares, “I kind of think maybe, in some sort of way, they came all those miles to worship. Strange. But think how the tower must look to them, standing seventy feet above the water, the God-like flashing out from it, and the tower declaring itself with a monster voice.” | This explains, as one example, how the lighthouse (technology) is not compatible with the past and present. (*supports past and present technology theme*) |
| “The Fog Horn Blew” is repeated seven times. | The author brings in the phrase at important points to advance the plot. The first time it is introduced it immediately follows the words “I’ll make me a sound and an apparatus and they’ll call it a Fog Horn and whoever hears it will know the sadness of eternity and the briefness of life.” The phrase is predominantly used to show the connection of the sea creature to the lighthouse and illustrate how the actions of the sea creature are a direct response to the sound of the Fog Horn. The text notes, “The monster cried out at the tower. The Fog Horn blew. The monster roared again. The Fog Horn Blew.” (*supports loneliness theme*) |
| “It’s like it always was ten millions years ago. It hasn’t changed. It’s us and the land that’ve changed, become impossible. Us!” | This offers insight about McDunn and his beliefs about us and the land (technology) and the impact it has on the past. (*supports past and present technology theme*) |
| “The ensuing minute of silence was so intense that we could hear our hearts pounding in the glassed area of the tower, could hear the slow greased turn of the light.” | The Fog Horn is turned off and the author chooses to emphasize what can now be heard when the technology is removed. We are challenged to think about what is being missed (the past taken for granted) because of modern technology. (*supports past and present technology theme*) |
| The sea creature responds each time the Fog Horn blows. “The Fog Horn Blew. And the monster answered. A cry came across a million years of water and mist. A cry so anguished and alone that it shuddered in my head and my body. The monster cried out at the tower. The Fog Horn blew. The monster roared again,” notes the narrator. | The creature, however, seems to view the fog horn and lighthouse as a beacon of hope that others of its kind still exists. The sea creature seeks out the lighthouse and the fog horn to end his loneliness. (*supports loneliness theme*) |
| “And after a while, you want to destroy whatever that thing is, so it can’t hurt you no more.” | This shows McDunn’s connection to the sea creature and his understanding of the destroyed lighthouse. McDunn identifies with the sea creature and feels his sense of loss and isolation. (*supports loneliness theme*) |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer
  + *Note that the sample answer integrates both themes of the story. Students are asked to write about one or both themes*
  + Optional Graphic Organizer: (Students will fill in responses. Some answers have been completed to assist teachers with understanding how to utilize the graphic organizer.)

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| **Identify Technology** | | **Select Theme from Big Ideas** |
| **The Fog Horn/Lighthouse** | | **Loneliness and unrequited love can lead to feelings of anger and destruction.** |
| **Compare and Contrast Impact on Characters** | | |
| **McDunn** | **The Creature** | |

The impact of technology is often a theme in Ray Bradbury’s writing. In the “Fog Horn,” Ray Bradbury illustrates through the characters of McDunn and a sea creature that the impact of technology is loneliness, which leads to feelings of anger and destruction. The author uses the fog horn as the catalyst to show the impact of technology on both mankind through the character of McDunn and nature through the sea creature, yielding differing emotional responses between the two characters.

When the lighthouse is first introduced, Bradbury describes the setting where the lighthouse is situated and the process the narrator must take to reach the destination. The setting depicts an eerie mood of loneliness and isolation. Phrases such as, “out there in the cold water, far from land,” and “feeling like two birds in the gray sky” in the first paragraph immediately set the mood. The author continues in paragraph six with phrases such as “a cold November evening,” and “the high throat of the tower.” In addition the author notes “there wasn’t a town for a hundred miles down the coast, just a road that came lonely through dead country to the sea…two miles of cold water out to our rock.” When the reader meets McDunn he explains his comfort in this solitude describing how is now used to the loneliness and tells tales “on the mysteries of the sea”. One such story depicts the lighthouse as a “Deity” in the eyes of fish. McDunn notes, “I think they came all those miles to worship.” The creature, however, seems to view the fog horn and lighthouse as a beacon of hope that others of its kind still exists. The sea creature responds each time the Fog Horn blows. “The Fog Horn Blew. And the monster answered. A cry came across a million years of water and mist. A cry so anguished and alone that it shuddered in my head and my body.” notes the narrator. The sea creature seeks out the lighthouse and the fog horn to end his loneliness.

Once the creature nears the fog horn, a sense of urgency is created by the repetition of the blowing of the fog horn, calling the creature closer. The first time it is introduced it immediately follows the words “I’ll make me a sound and an apparatus and they’ll call it a fog horn and whoever hears it will know the sadness of eternity and the briefness of life.” The phrase is predominantly used to show the connection of the sea creature to the lighthouse and illustrate how the actions of the sea creature are a direct response to the sound of the fog horn. The text notes, “The monster cried out at the tower. The fog horn blew. The monster roared again. The fog horn blew.” As the creature nears, McDunn passionately conveys his understanding of the creature’s lonely existence and the need to seek companionship. His empathy for the creature and nature is addressed in his excitement upon seeing the creature emerge by yelling, “No, *we’re* impossible! It’s like it always was ten million years ago. It hasn’t changed. It’s us and the land that’ve changed, become impossible. Us!” McDunn’s statements show his understanding that technology has created confusion in nature and the loneliness the creature is experiencing, and give the reader a glimpse of the creature’s long, lonely existence.

Once the creature begins calling out to the fog horn, McDunn responds by turning off the fog horn. The moment forces both characters to face the loneliness and shows the difference in how each responds. The text shows the importance of this moment by stating, “the ensuing minute of silence was so intense that we could hear our hearts pounding in the glassed area of the tower, could hear the slow greased turn of the light.” It can be inferred that McDunn silences the fog horn to help the creature realize it truly is alone and to abandon hope, or he simply wants the creature to accept the loneliness as McDunn has over his years in the lighthouse. However, the creature responds to the silence of the fog horn in confused anger by destroying the lighthouse, which forces McDunn to take refuge in the cellar under the stones of what was his fortress of solitude. The creature morns the loss of the fog horn, its only hope of companionship, and begins the slow descent to its home at the bottom of the sea.

While McDunn never mentions the creature and the reason behind the lighthouse’s destruction, he decides to stay on as the lighthouse keeper of the newly constructed, concrete reinforced home of the fog horn. McDunn returns to life as he knew it before without the hope of seeing the creature again, and the creature returns to its solitary home with a broken heart. McDunn states at one point “And after a while, you want to destroy whatever that thing is, so it can’t hurt you no more.” in which shows that both he and the creature struggle with the same affliction of loneliness. McDunn also notes, “That’s life for you. Someone always waiting for someone who never comes home”. Although the characters of McDunn and the sea creature respond differently, both feel a sense of loneliness in relation to the lighthouse.

Additional Tasks

* *Technology has advanced since Bradbury wrote “The Fog Horn” in the 1950’s, but many would argue that his theme of isolation/loneliness continues with modern technology. Provide an example of a current technology and discuss how Bradbury’s theme does or does not hold true today.*
  + Answer: Answers will vary. In an argumentative essay, students should identify a current technology and make a claim about whether the technology contributes to a sense of loneliness/isolation for humanity. Students should provide details about the technology and discuss how it is or is not contributing to a sense of loneliness for humanity. For example, some might argue a smart phone’s texting capabilities are resulting in even fewer communication opportunities. Some individuals, in fact, may prefer to communicate by text and remove the personal interaction. Is this technology contributing to a sense of isolation for humanity? Is a tool meant to bring individuals closer together in fact bringing them farther apart? The argumentative paper should also address counterclaims.
* *Read at least one additional short story by Ray Bradbury in The Elements of Literature (“The Flying Machine” and/or “The Dragon”) and identify how the technology advances the plot and impacts the characters in the story.* 
  + Answer: Students select one of the two additional short stories to read and analyze. Students are expected to revise the essay created during the culminating writing task for The Fog Horn using support and textual evidence from a second story by Ray Bradbury. Students must identify the technology explored in the text and cite examples of how the technology affects the plot and impacts the characters. Students should be reminded of the activities and discussions that occurred during the analysis of the Fog Horn and the requirements of the writing task.