

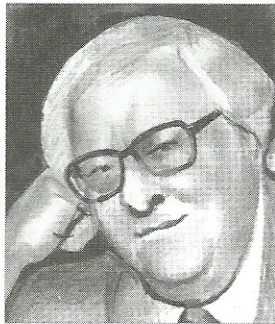
STORY 6

THE PEDESTRIAN

The pedestrian

by Ray Bradbury

About Ray Bradbury (1920–)



Ray (Douglas) Bradbury was born in Waukegan, in the USA, in 1920, but was educated at Los Angeles High School. There he was active in the drama club and planned to become an actor. However, two of his teachers recognised his writing talent and encouraged him to enter this field instead. He decided not to go on to college (university) and, instead educated himself further at the local library while selling newspapers to support himself. It was at the library that he came across science fiction heroes like Flash Gordon.

After publishing a numbers of stories in magazines, he became a full-time writer in 1942 and made a reputation as one of America's greatest creative geniuses, with over 500 works to his name. He wrote numerous fiction, fantasy, mystery and horror stories. Many of his works were adapted to films, live theatre, television, radio and comic books. His most famous story is Fahrenheit 451.

He received numerous awards for his writings, including the National Book Foundation's Medal (2000) and the Medal of Arts Award (2004), and even had a park, an asteroid and a crater on the moon named after him. Bradbury still writes daily and occasionally delivers lectures.

Background to *The pedestrian*

Have you noticed that people do not walk as much as they used to? This is especially true in city areas and is perhaps a result of the car and computer culture of today, although safety could also play a part, of course. People prefer to travel in vehicles and spend their leisure time watching TV or surfing the Internet. Very few people walk 'for fun' anymore and in a large city like Los Angeles (the probable setting of this story), solitary walkers can be regarded with suspicion.

The pedestrian is set in a futuristic city (somewhat similar to LA), but there are many aspects of the character's experience that we can relate to, especially if we have ever strolled around empty streets at night. One wonders how one can be so alone in the middle of a vast city! It also makes us wonder about the future ...

The pedestrian

To enter out into that silence that was the city at eight o'clock of a misty evening in November, to put your feet upon the buckling concrete walk, to step over grassy seams and make your way, hands in pockets, through the silences, that was what Mr. Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do. He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalks in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference; he was alone in this world of 2052 A.D., or as good as alone, and with a final decision made, a path selected, he would stride off, sending patterns of frosty air before him like the smoke of cigar.

Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and return only at midnight to his house. And on his way he would see the cottages and homes with their dark windows, and it was not unequal to walking through a graveyard where only the faintest glimmers of firefly light appeared in flickers behind the windows. Sudden gray phantoms¹ seemed to manifest upon inner room walls where a curtain was still undrawn against the night, or there were whisperings and murmurs where a window in a tomb-like building was still open.

Mr. Leonard Mead would pause, cock his head, listen, look, and march on, his feet making no noise on the lumpy walk. For long ago he had wisely changed to sneakers when strolling at night, because the dogs in intermittent² squads would parallel his journey with barkings if he wore hard heels, and lights might click on and faces appear and an entire street be startled by the passing of a lone figure, himself, in the early November evening.

On this particular evening he began his journey in a westerly direction, toward the hidden sea. There was a good crystal frost in the air; it cut the nose and made the lungs blaze like a Christmas tree inside; you could feel the cold light going on and off, all the branches filled with invisible snow. He listened to the faint push of his soft shoes through

Think / Talk

- What does this show about him and the setting?

Think / Talk

- Why is the area he walks through "not unequal to ... a graveyard"? Find a similar image.

Glossary

¹ phantoms: ghosts

² intermittent: not all the time

Think / Talk

- What is their lifestyle? Why is he different?

Think / Talk

- Why does he hesitate?
- What is frightening here?

Think / Talk

- Why is there only one police car?

Glossary

autumn leaves with satisfaction, and whistled a cold quiet whistle between his teeth, occasionally picking up a leaf as he passed, examining its skeletal³ pattern in the infrequent lamp-lights as he went on, smelling its rusty smell.

“Hello, in there,” he whispered to every house on every side as he moved. “What’s up tonight on Channel 4, Channel 7, Channel 9? Where are the cowboys rushing, and do I see the United States Cavalry over the next hill to the rescue?”

The street was silent and long and empty, with only his shadow moving like the shadow of a hawk in mid-country. If he closed his eyes and stood very still, frozen, he could imagine himself upon the center of a plain, a wintry, windless Arizona desert with no house in a thousand miles, and only dry river beds, the streets, for company.

“What is it now?” he asked the houses, noticing his wrist watch. “Eight-thirty P.M.? Time for a dozen assorted murders? A quiz? A revue? A comedian falling off the stage?”

Was that a murmur of laughter from within a moon-white house? He hesitated, but went on when nothing more happened. He stumbled over a particularly uneven section of sidewalk. The cement was vanishing under flowers and grass. 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 came to a cloverleaf intersection which stood silent where two main highways crossed the town. During the day it was a thunderous surge of cars, the gas stations open, a great insect rustling and a ceaseless jockeying⁴ for position as the scarab-beetles, a faint incense pattering from their exhausts, skimmed homeward to the far directions. But now these highways, too, were like streams in a dry season, all stone and bed and moon radiance.

He turned back on a side street, circling around toward his home. He was within a block of his destination when the lone car turned a corner quite suddenly and flashed a fierce white cone of light upon him. He stood entranced, not

³ skeletal: like a skeleton; extremely thin

⁴ jockeying: manoeuvring to get a better position

unlike a night moth, stunned by the illumination, and then drawn toward it.

A metallic voice called to him:

“Stand still. Stay where you are! Don’t move!”

He halted.

“Put up your hands!”

“But –” he said.

“Your hands up! Or we’ll shoot!”

The police, of course, but what a rare, incredible thing; in a city of three million, there was only one police car left, wasn’t that correct? Ever since a year ago, 2052, the election year, the force had been cut down from three cars to one. Crime was ebbing⁵; there was no need now for the police, save for this one lone car wandering and wandering the empty streets.

“Your name?” said the police car in a metallic whisper. He couldn’t see the men in it for the bright light in his eyes.

“Leonard Mead,” he said.

“Speak up!”

“Leonard Mead!”

“Business or profession?”

“I guess you’d call me a writer.”

“No profession,” said the police car, as if talking to itself. The light held him fixed, like a museum specimen, needle thrust through chest.

“You might say that,” said Mr. Mead. He hadn’t written in years. Magazines and books didn’t sell any more. Everything went on in the tomblike houses at night now, he thought, continuing his fancy⁶. The tombs, ill-lit by television light, where the people sat like the dead, the gray or multicolored lights touching their faces, but never really touching them.

“No profession,” said the phonograph voice, hissing.

“What are you doing out?”

“Walking,” said Leonard Mead.

“Walking!”

“Just walking,” he said simply, but his face felt cold.

“Walking, just walking, walking?”

“Yes, sir.”

Think / Talk

- Why is he recorded as having “no profession”?

Think / Talk

- What is significant about the repetition of the tomb image?

Glossary

⁵ ebbing: decreasing

⁶ fancy: idea created by the imagination

Think / Talk

■ What does the conversation show us?

Think / Talk

■ What is he accused of? Why is this a crime? What is the most frightening detail of this scene? Why?

Glossary

“Walking where? For what?”

“Walking for air. Walking to see.”

“Your address!”

“Eleven South Saint James Street.”

“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.”

“No?” There was a crackling quiet that in itself was an accusation.

“Are you married, Mr. Mead?”

“No.”

“Not married,” said the police voice behind the fiery beam. The moon was high and clear among the stars and the houses were gray and silent.

“Nobody wanted me,” said Leonard Mead with a smile.

“Don’t speak unless you’re spoken to!”

Leonard Mead waited in the cold night.

“Just *walking*, Mr. Mead?”

“Yes.”

“But you haven’t explained for what purpose.”

“I explained; for air, and to see, and just to walk.”

“Have you done this often?”

“Every night for years.”

The police car sat in the center of the street with its radio throat faintly humming.

“Well, Mr. Mead,” it said.

“Is that all?” he asked politely.

“Yes,” said the voice. “Here.” There was a sigh, a pop. The back door of the police car sprang wide. “Get in.”

“Wait a minute, I haven’t done anything!”

“Get in.”

“I protest!”

“Mr. Mead.”

He walked like a man suddenly drunk. As he passed the front window of the car he looked in. As he had expected, there was no one in the front seat, no one in the car at all. "Get in."

He put his hand to the door and peered into the back seat, which was a little cell, a little black jail with bars. It smelled of riveted steel. It smelled of harsh antiseptic; it smelled too clean and hard and metallic. There was nothing soft there.

"Now if you had a wife to give you an alibi," said the iron voice.

"But –"

"Where are you taking me?"

The car hesitated, or rather gave a faint whirring click, as if information, somewhere, was dropping card by punch-slotted card under electric eyes. "To the Psychiatric⁷ Center for Research on Regressive⁸ Tendencies."

He got in. The door shut with a soft thud. The police car rolled through the night avenues, flashing its dim lights ahead.

They passed one house on one street a moment later, one house in an entire city of houses that were dark, but 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.

"That's my house," said Leonard Mead.

No one answered him.

The car moved down the empty river-bed streets and off away, leaving the empty streets with the empty sidewalks, and no sound and no motion all the rest of the chill November night.

Think / Talk

- Why are they taking him there?

Think / Talk

- Why is his house different? How does this make you feel?

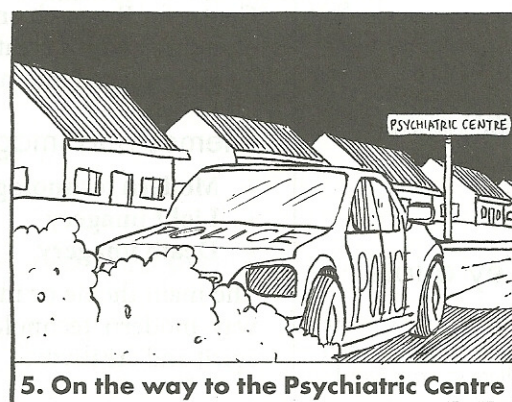
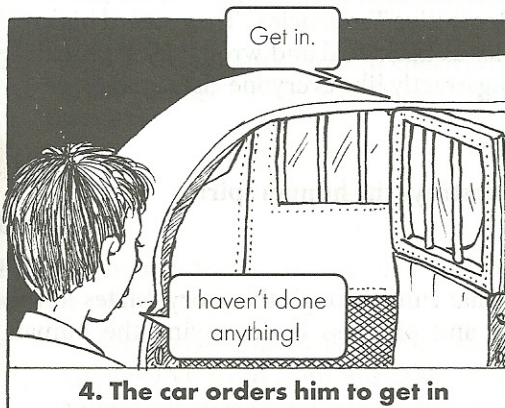
Glossary

⁷ Psychiatric: related to mental illnesses

⁸ Regressive: returning to a previous (less advanced) state

Take from Literature Study Guide, Maskew Miller Longman

Summary in pictures



The Pedestrian

Ray Bradbury

Glossary

pedestrian - a person who walks

intersection - a place where two roads meet or cross each other

buckling - breaking

sidewalk - (American) pavement

firefly - a kind of beetle that glows in the dark

phantoms - ghosts

manifest - show

sneakers - casual, soft shoes

intermittent squads - groups that appear or form now and then

skeletal - outline

infrequent lamplight - lamplights that did not appear often

plain - a large area of flat dry land

cloverleaf intersection - a network of curved roads that connect two main roads where they cross

surge - a sudden increase

gas stations - petrol stations

scarab-beetles - a large black beetle

jockeying - struggling to get the best position

incense - sweet smell

skimmed - moved quickly

radiance - shine

ebbing - getting less

museum specimen - an animal, plant or object on display in a museum

tomblike - like a grave or monument for the dead

antiseptic - a medicine that you use to stop a wound getting infected

alibi - proof that you were not doing anything wrong

Psychiatric Centre for Research - a place where mental illness is studied

regressive tendencies - behaviour that returns to a less-advanced state

Summary

This story is set in the future, in the year 2052. The only human character in this story is the pedestrian, Leonard Mead. He is unusual because, unlike everyone else in the city of three million people, he loves to walk. He spends his nights or days walking around the city. On this particular night he enjoys being on the cold, silent and empty streets. Everyone else is indoors, mindlessly watching television.

When a police car stops and calls out to him, Leonard is surprised. There is after all only one police car in the entire city, because there is so little crime. The police car interrogates Leonard. (There is no human being in the car, so this car talks.) It cannot understand why he is walking around and is not indoors like everyone else. When he admits that he's been walking like this for many years, the police car orders him to get into the car. He is reluctant to get in. The car tells him that he is going to the "Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies". He gets into the back seat, which is like a small cell. The car drives past his house, which is the only house with any light. The reader realises that Leonard Mead will soon be brainwashed into behaving exactly like everyone else!

Explanations

Critique When you assess or evaluate something. This story is a critique of our modern life and values.

Anno Domini 2052 The date emphasises that the story is set well in the future. When Bradbury wrote this story in the 1950s, A.D. 2052 was 100 years later.

Americanisms Because the author is American, he uses a number of Americanisms in this story, including "sidewalk" (pavement) and "gas stations" (petrol stations).



Key quote

The street was silent and long and empty, with only his shadow moving like the shadow of a hawk in mid-country.

Key quote

A metallic voice called to him: "Stand still. Stay where you are! Don't move!"

Explanation and analysis

Ray Bradbury was born in America in 1920. He started off as a newspaper seller but spent his nights reading in the library and doing his own writing. By 1943, he was writing full time. He is well known now, having published over 500 works. He published the science fiction story "The Pedestrian" in 1951. He uses the story to comment on and criticise modern life.

Background and setting

- **Empty streets on an autumn night**
- **In the future in 2052**

The story is set in the future – in the year 2052. When Bradbury wrote this story, he was writing about a time 100 years into the future. The action takes place on the empty streets on a cold autumn evening in November.

Character

- **Leonard Mead:** loves walking; sensitive to environment; unique; finally loses his freedom

Leonard Mead, the only human character we meet in the story, loves his freedom. In the opening paragraph we see how much he enjoys deciding for himself which way he should walk. He is sensitive to his environment and appreciates breathing in the cold fresh air. He is also aware of the sounds he hears as he walks, as well as what he sees all around him. He wants to have first-hand, real experiences.

He is different from everyone else in this city and therefore unique. Other people are inside, watching their television screens. Unlike him they are married and have "proper" professions. Leonard admits that although he is a writer he hasn't written for years because books and magazines don't sell.

At the end of the story, Leonard's freedom is taken away from him. He is forced to get into the police car, to be taken to the "Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies". They regard his love of nature and his creativity as backward and wrong. He'll probably be brainwashed into being exactly like everyone else.

Themes and imagery

- **Modern technology destroys the human spirit**
- **Light imagery**
- **Death imagery**

The main theme or idea that runs through this story relates to the way modern technology and progress is destroying the human spirit and creativity.

Bradbury uses light imagery to convey his message. Light is associated with both Leonard Mead and the police car. Light is warm and soft for Leonard. As a contrast to this, the light from the police car “flashed a fierce white cone of light upon him”.

He uses images of death (“... walking through a graveyard”) and refers to ghosts (“grey phantoms”) in houses that were “tomblike”. This is to show how the people in the houses have lost their humanity. At night they all shut themselves in their houses as if they were being buried in a tomb in a graveyard.

Key quote

He put his hand to the door and peered into the back seat, which was a little cell, a little black jail with bars.

Exam preparation

Sample contextual question

This question contains TWO extracts. Answer the questions on both extracts.

Extract 1

Read the opening two paragraphs of the story and then answer these questions:

1. In your own words, state what exactly Leonard Mead loved about the nights in the city. (3)
(Read the paragraphs carefully and underline in pencil what Mr Mead loved. Don't forget to use your own words in your answer.)
2. “... he was alone in this world of AD 2052, or as good as alone ...”
 - 2.1 What is the meaning of “AD 2052” in the above quotation? (2)
(Use a dictionary to look this up.)
 - 2.2 Explain the significance of this date to the story. (2)
(If you're asked for the “significance” you need to explain why the date is important in the story.)
 - 2.3 What is meant by “as good as alone”? (2)
 - 2.4 Explain why Leonard is alone? (3)
(The answer to this becomes clearer as the story goes on. If you're not sure, read on.)
3. “... where a window in a tomblike building was still open.”
 - 3.1 Name the figure of speech used in this above quotation and explain your choice. (3)
(Notice the word “like” in tomblike? That should help you identify the figure of speech!)
 - 3.2 Why is this figure of speech effective? (2)
(Here you need to say what makes this description and this image a good one.)

[17]

AND

Extract 2

Read the extract from “Your name?” to “Don't speak unless you're spoken to!” and answer these questions:

4. “Your name?’ said the police car in a metallic whisper.”
Quote ONE word from this sentence that emphasises that the car and not a person is speaking. Explain your choice. (2)

(Note that you are being asked for only ONE word. This word would be associated with a car in some way.)

5. Using your own words, explain why Mr Mead agrees with the police car when it says he has “No profession”. (2)
(To answer this question, look at the section where Mr Mead says these words to the police car.)
6. “The light held him fixed, like a museum specimen, needle thrust through chest.”
6.1 Examine the full sentence and then explain how the imagery effectively describes what Leonard Mead feels. (2)
(Imagery refers to the word-pictures created by the simile in the sentence.)
6.2 Quote another simile from the extract. (1)
7. Leonard Mead disapproved of television.
7.1 Is the above statement is true or false? (1)
7.2 Give a reason for your answer. (1)
8. Choose the correct answer. Write the correct letter only:
The police car repeats the word “walking” so often in this dialogue because:
 - a. It cannot hear what Mead is saying.
 - b. It cannot believe Mead dares to admit this.
 - c. Walking does not fit any of the options given to its system.
 - d. It thinks Mead is lying. (1)*(When you answer a multiple-choice question like this one, it’s usually best to eliminate or cross out those suggestions that are obviously wrong first. Then you’ll be left with one or two to choose from.)*
- 9.1 Fill in the missing words to complete the following sentence:
Mr Mead said that he was walking because he wanted to ... and he wanted (2)
(Notice that the first answer has the word ‘to’ in front of it. Make sure the word you choose here fits in.)
9.2 Why did the police car think these reasons for walking were ridiculous? (2)
10. Which of the following words best describes the way the police car questions Mr Mead. Write the correct letter only.
 - a. interrogate
 - b. examine
 - c. interview
 - d. quiz (1)
11. “‘Nobody wanted me,’ said Leonard Mead with a smile.”
11.1 Suggest a reason why nobody would have wanted Leonard Mead. (1)
(This is asking for your opinion. You need to think about why nobody from this place would have liked Mr Mead.)
11.2 Do you think Leonard was unhappy that no one wanted him? Give a reason for your opinion. (2)

[18]

Total marks: 35

Sample essay question

Write the following essay as well as the two paragraphs.

Structured essay

- A Discuss the following statement: “The Pedestrian” creates a depressing picture of our lives. Leonard Mead is shown to be very different from the rest of the people in the city. At the end he is forced to conform. (Length: 100–120 words) [15]

Before you write:

- First make sure you understand the question. Check the meanings of the words “depressing” and “conform”.
- Rephrase the topic in your opening paragraph.
- Plan your answer by writing short notes or making a mind map of your ideas.
- Jot down notes on:
 - a. Mr Mead being the only person who chooses to walk at night
 - b. the people sitting inside watching the usual programmes on television
 - c. what all the people do during the day
 - d. the only police car and the cell at the back
 - e. where Mr Mead is taken and why.
- Always substantiate (back up) your comments.

AND

Paragraph questions

- B Write a paragraph of 80–100 words in which you explain what the author is saying in the story about the role of television. [10]

Think about the negative effects of television; what people watch on television and the positive things people could do instead of watching television. Also think about what he suggests about the role of machines in human society.

AND

- C Write a paragraph of 80–100 words in which you talk about the crimes that Mr Mead was supposed to have committed and how he was punished. [10]

Use the following points to help you structure your paragraph. Write about how:

- Leonard was different from everyone else. Give examples
- his difference was seen as a crime
- he responded to the police car’s questions
- he didn’t have an alibi
- he was punished.

Total marks: 35

MEMORANDUM

The Pedestrian (page 158)

Contextual question

1. Silence;✓ the feeling of the cracked sidewalk (pavement) underfoot;✓ the walk through empty, silent streets.✓ (3)
- 2.1 Anno Domini 2052.✓ This is 2052 years after the death of Christ.✓ (2)
- 2.2 It emphasises that the story is set well in the future,✓ that this is a science fiction story.✓ (2)
- 2.3 It means he was so alone✓ that he's as good as completely alone in the world.✓ (2)
- 2.4 He is the only person that ever walks around at night.✓ Every other human being is inside✓ watching a television screen.✓ (3)
- 3.1 A simile✓ because the buildings are being compared✓ to a tomb.✓ (3)
- 3.2 The buildings are like tombs because the people inside✓ might as well be dead in their homes with their dark windows.✓ (2)

[15]

Extract 2

4. "metallic"✓ The car is made of metal and therefore its voice would be metallic.✓ (2)
5. He had not written for years because no one reads any more.✓ People prefer to spend their free time watching television.✓ (2)
- 6.1 He feels trapped.✓ The light holds him "fixed" so he cannot move. It is as if he is pinned down with a needle stuck in his chest.✓ (2)
- 6.2 "...the people sat like the dead ..."✓ (1)
- 7.1 True✓ (1)
- 7.2 He didn't own his own viewing screen.✓ OR He talked about the people who watched television being like the dead.✓ (1)
8. c✓ (1)
- 9.1 see ✓ air✓ (2)
- 9.2 He need not walk to see or get air since there was an air conditioner in his house✓ and the car assumed he had a viewing screen, on which to see.✓ (2)
10. a✓ (1)
- 11.1 He was too different from everyone else.✓ OR He didn't conform or do what others did.✓ (1)
- 11.2 He did not seem unhappy in the story.✓ He was content to walk alone.✓ OR He smiled when he made the comment.✓ (2)

[18]

Total marks: 35

Taken from Oxford Exam Success

Storyline:

It is AD 2053. Leonard Mead is a writer, but he has not written anything for years. In this society no one reads or takes walks anymore. People stay indoors, watch television, and breathe air-conditioned air. The sidewalks are "vanishing under flowers and grass".

Leonard Mead is **unique** as he sets out one frosty November evening for his regular walk. In ten years he has never met anyone on these nightly walks. The city of three million people is quiet and dark. The buildings are "tomb-like". It is so quiet that he can hear the sound his soft shoes make as he walks through the autumn leaves. He stops to examine the "skeletal pattern" on a fallen leaf. He breathes in the "good crystal frost" and his "lungs blaze like a Christmas tree". He passes the darkened houses and wonders what television channels are being watched. He pauses at an intersection that by day has a "thunderous surge of cars" as the "scarab-beetles" go in different directions. But now the unoccupied roads are like dry riverbeds.

When he is a block from his home a "fierce" shaft of light flashes at him. It comes from the single police car that is left in the city. The car is unoccupied but a metallic voice tells him to put up his hands or he'll be shot. Then Mead is **interrogated**. The police ask for his name, profession, address, if he is married, and the reason he is out on the streets. They arrest him when he says he is out "just to walk" and "for air" and "to see". The back seat of the car looks like a **gaol** cell with black bars and has a "harsh antiseptic" smell. On the way to the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies, the phonograph voice tells him things might have been different had he had a wife to give him an alibi. They pass the only house that is brightly lit with every window giving out a warm glow in the "cool darkness" of the graveyard-like city. It is Mead's house.

Setting:

- The future – AD 2053
- 20:00 on a frosty evening in early November
- Unnamed crime-free city of three million
- People do not socialise
- The single police car talks and arrests people

Themes:

- Man's progress (modern society and technology) has resulted in loss of humanity / soul and an anti-social impersonal society
- Death of thinking literate society
- Authoritarian society threatens individual freedom
- Lack of communication

Narrative technique:

- Third person narrator (omniscient)
- Detailed descriptions of the cold night ("crystal frost"), a seemingly dead unoccupied city, and the mechanical inhuman police car ("metallic whisper") contrast with the warmth and life of Mead (his house glows with "warm light")
- Metaphors ("a moon-white house") and similes ("tomb-like") create an image of an empty dead city
- Symbolism – "tomb-like" city represents death, robot car represents humankind's progress, Mead represents life

Characters:

- Leonard Mead – a writer, but official opinion is he has "no profession"; unmarried; keeps house lit up ("loud yellow illumination"); is close to nature (walking is greatest pleasure)
- Police car with a phonograph voice – hard and metallic; nothing soft inside, only a "gaol" cell with bars smelling of riveted steel and antiseptics; car's light is "fierce", "fiery"; the **robotic** "radio throat" creates picture of unfeeling progress; views Mead as a "museum piece"

Contextual questions

1. What is Leonard Mead's favourite activity?
2. Choose the correct answer.
When Mead whispers to the houses and their occupants about the TV programmes they are watching, his tone of voice is:
A friendly.
B envious.
C sarcastic.
D neutral.
3. Contrast Mead with other people in the city.
Present your answer in a table like this:

Mead	Others

4. "with only his shadow moving like the shadow of a hawk" (Paragraph 6)
 - a) Name the figure of speech used here.
 - b) Name the two things that are being compared.
 - c) What is the effect of this comparison?
5. a) Identify the **recurring** image the author uses in his description of the city.
b) What point is the author making by using this image?
6. The author uses a lot of *nature* imagery when describing Mead. Explain why he does this.
7. The story is set in "November" and Mead walks in a "westerly direction". Explain the significance of this.
8. How do you think Mead feels when he is told to get into the police car? Give a reason for your answer.

Essay questions and other activities

1. This story was published in 1953. In what ways is Bradbury's prediction of the way people live in the 21st century correct and in what ways is it wrong? Discuss this in an essay of 250–300 words.

(2)



Word check:

- unique:** one of a kind
interrogated: cross-examined; questioned in detail
gaol: an alternative spelling for jail
robotic: mechanical, stiff and unemotional; made by a machine
recurring: happening again and again

(1)

(10)



Did you know?

- A hawk is a fast-flying bird of prey with very strong eyesight and rounded wings.
- This story was first published in 1951. Computers had not yet been invented and television was only a recent invention. Ray Bradbury's novel called *Fahrenheit 451* has similar themes to "The pedestrian".

(1)

(2)

(2)

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(2)



Tip:

In a question like number 7, you must explain the importance of both "November" and the "westerly direction" and then link your explanation to the story.

(35)

**The pedestrian – Ray Bradbury
(page 18)**

Contextual questions

1. He loves to walk ✓ through the silent city at night. ✓ (2)
2. C (sarcastic) ✓ (1)
- 3

Mead	Others
Takes regular walks ✓	Never take walks ✓
Does not have a viewing screen ✓	Watch their viewing screens ✓
Likes to breathe in fresh air ✓	Stay indoors and breathe in air-conditioned air ✓
Takes an interest in his surroundings ✓	Lock themselves behind closed doors at night ✓
Keeps his house brightly lit ✓	Houses are in darkness except for the flickering light from the TV ✓

4. a) Simile ✓ (1)
- b) Mead's shadow ✓ is compared to the shadow of a hawk. ✓ (2)
- c) The effect is to highlight / draw attention to Mead's observations ✓ as he walks silently around the city. ✓ (2)

5. a) The city is tomb-like. ✓ / The city is like a cemetery. ✓ / The city is like a graveyard. ✓ (1)
 b) He is warning us that modern life / technology ✓ may very well destroy humanity. ✓ / He is warning us that humankind may cease to exist. ✓✓ (2)
6. Nature imagery suggests life / vibrancy. ✓ The author wants to contrast the dead city, reliant on technology, ✓ with the living humanity represented by Mead. ✓ (3)
7. The month of November indicates that it is late autumn in the northern hemisphere ✓ / the year is drawing to a close ✓ / it is nearly wintertime. ✓ The sun sets in the west. ✓ Both these things suggest the end of something. ✓ This is significant because one of the themes of this story is the death of humankind. ✓ (4)
8. Helpless. ✓ No one will listen to him. ✓ / He cannot make a robot see reason. ✓
 OR
 Angry. ✓ He has done nothing wrong. ✓
 OR
 Afraid. ✓ His freedom is being taken away. ✓ / He does not know what will happen to him. ✓ (2)

Essay questions and other activities

Question 1

- The AD 2053 world that Bradbury describes is one where the majority of people do not take walks, do not interact with one another, watch TV all the time, do not enjoy nature, are confined to homes where they breathe air-conditioned air, do not read, are arrested for being different, and robotic police are authoritarian.
- The 21st-century world we live in now is not that different from Mead's world. Today people seldom take walks, few people read, people are bound to technology (such as cellphones, DVDs, TV and ipods).
- Although we have more individual freedom (i.e. we have more choices and are allowed to exercise them) nowadays, there is a lot of pressure on people to conform (i.e. be like everyone else). If you do not, you are ostracised / stand out / are rejected.
- Mead is an individual. He behaves differently from others in his society. His lifestyle is rejected and so he is sent to the Psychiatric Centre.