

Burning Arguments Answer Key

Teacher Guidance

Since this is a debate activity, answers will vary. Strong student responses should include:

If Arguing Censorship Protects Society

- **Novel Evidence:** Beatty claims censorship prevents conflict by avoiding offensive books; Mildred and her friends avoid difficult emotions by focusing only on entertainment.
- **Claim:** Censorship protects people from disturbing ideas and maintains social "harmony."
- **Counterargument/Response:** While it may reduce conflict, it also prevents growth and critical thinking.

If Arguing Censorship Harms Society

- **Novel Evidence:** Clarisse's questions reveal how little people think; the old woman dies for her books, showing they hold deep meaning; Montag transforms only after confronting forbidden knowledge.
- **Claim:** Censorship harms society because it destroys individuality and suppresses truth.
- **Counterargument/Response:** Opponents may say censorship prevents chaos, but the novel shows society collapsing under shallow emptiness.

Broader Connections (Sample Ideas)

- Historical examples of banned books, art, or music.
- Modern debates about controlling media or online speech.
- Importance of free press and open access to knowledge.

Reflection (Sample)

"Hearing both sides made me realize censorship might feel safe, but safety without truth is emptiness. Bradbury's world warns us that without free thought, society cannot survive."