

Interview with

Ray Bradbury

Preparing to Read

Build Background

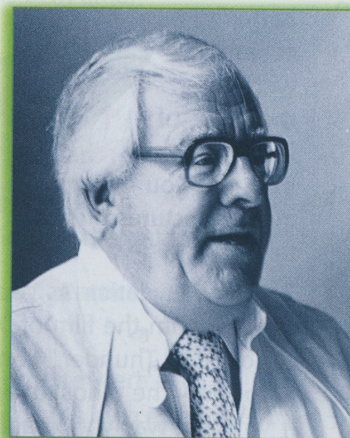
With the authority acquired from more than 60 years of constant story production, Bradbury often speaks frankly to young writers and students about the art of writing. Because of this, he is usually a good source for colorful quotes on the subject of writing and the way he approaches it. In this interview, the writer promotes “the old-fashioned virtues of hard, constant labor.”

Focus Your Reading

PRIMARY SOURCES INTERVIEW

An **interview** is a recorded conversation of questions and answers with a person having firsthand or expert knowledge on some subject. A good interviewer will be prepared with background knowledge on the interviewee. In addition, a good interviewer is armed with two essentials:

- a list of questions, most of which require thoughtful responses
- the flexibility to let the conversation stray if the interviewee goes off in an unexpected, interesting direction



Interview by FRANK FILOSA

Do you write every day?

Every day of my life except weekends, which are for the family: my wife and my four lovely daughters.

Could you describe a typical day, your process of writing?

I do a first draft as passionately and as quickly as I can. I believe a story is only valid when it is immediate and passionate; when it dances out of your subconscious.¹ If you interfere in any way, you destroy it. There's no difference between a short story and life. Surprise is where creativity comes. Allow your subconscious¹ to come out into the light and say what it has to say. Let your characters have their way. Let your secret life be lived. Then at your leisure, in the succeeding weeks, months or years, you let the story cool off, and then, instead of rewriting, you relive it. If you try to rewrite, which is a cold exercise, you'll wind up with all kinds of Band-aids on your story, which people can see. It's very important that a story have a skin around it just as we have a skin. A story must have the same sort of life we have though it is shorter. It has this fantastic entity² to itself, a need to run to its end, and you just have to let it go.

1. **subconscious:** the part of the mind below the level of conscious awareness.

2. **entity:** unique existence.