**Background**

**Venus** “All Summer in a Day” is set on Venus, the second planet from the sun. Today, we know that Venus has a surface temperature of almost 900° Fahrenheit. In 1950, when Ray Bradbury wrote this story, some scientists believed that the clouds of Venus concealed a watery world. That information may have led Bradbury to create a setting of soggy jungles and constant rain.

**Connecting to the Literature**

**Reading/Writing Connection** In “All Summer in a Day,” rain has fallen for seven years straight. Give three reasons to explain whether or not you could live in such a climate. Use at least three of the following words: benefit, survive, require, adjust.

**Meet the Author**

**Ray Bradbury** (b. 1920)

As a boy, Ray Bradbury loved magicians, circuses, and science-fiction stories. He began writing his own imaginative tales and by age seventeen had his first story published in a magazine called *Imagination!*

**A Science-Fiction Wonder** In 1950, Bradbury won fame for his book of science-fiction stories called *The Martian Chronicles.* One story describes how a group of Earhlings struggle on the rainy world of Venus. Bradbury began to wonder how a child might react to the sun’s brief appearance on Venus. Four years later, he answered his own question by writing “All Summer in a Day.”

**Fast Facts**

- Many of Bradbury’s stories have been adapted for the television series *The Twilight Zone.*
- He has served as a consultant to the Disney Company, the New York World’s Fair, and a number of architects.

**Go Online**

**Author Link**

For: More about the author
Visit: [www.PHSchool.com](http://www.PHSchool.com)
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All Summer in a Day

Ray Bradbury
“Ready?”
“Ready.”
“Now?”
“Soon.”
“Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?”
“Look, look; see for yourself!”

The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.

It rained.

It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

“It’s stopping, it’s stopping!”
“Yes, yes!”

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn’t rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.
That was Margot’s poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

“Aw, you didn’t write that!” protested one of the boys.

“I did,” said Margot. “I did.”

“William!” said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

“Where’s teacher?”

“She’ll be back.”

“She’d better hurry, we’ll miss it!”

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all fumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl, who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

“What’re you looking at?” said William.

Margot said nothing.

“Speak when you’re spoken to.” He gave her a shove. But she did not move: rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.
They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.
"No, it's not!" the children cried.
"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."
"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that,
dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

“Get away!” The boy gave her another push.
“What’re you waiting for?”

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

“Well, don’t wait around here!” cried the boy savagely. “You won’t see nothing!”

Her lips moved.

“Nothing!” he cried. “It was all a joke, wasn’t it?” He turned to the other children. “Nothing’s happening today. Is it?”

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. “Nothing, nothing!”

“Oh, but,” Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. “But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they know, the sun...”

“All a joke!” said the boy, and seized her roughly. “Hey, everyone, let’s put her in a closet before teacher comes!”

“No,” said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

“Ready, children?” She glanced at her watch.

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1. surged (surjd) v. moved in a violent swelling motion.

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Vocabulary Builder

vital

adj. extremely important or necessary

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Astronomy Connection

The Hothouse Planet The pressure of Venus’s atmosphere is ninety times greater than Earth’s. You would be crushed by its weight if you could stand on Venus’s surface. Breathing would be impossible because the atmosphere is mostly carbon dioxide.

The carbon dioxide on Venus traps heat like a greenhouse or hothouse. Because of this “greenhouse effect,” the planet’s average surface temperature is 900 degrees Fahrenheit—hot enough to melt lead. It never rains on Venus.

Connect to the Literature

How would “All Summer in a Day” be different if Bradbury’s setting were more like the real Venus?
"Yes!" said everyone.
"Are we all here?"
"Yes!"
The rain slackened still more.
They crowded to the huge door.
The rain stopped.
It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.
The sun came out.
It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.
"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them.
"You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"
But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.
"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"
"Much, much better!"
They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.
The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They
ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—
In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.
Everyone stopped.
The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.
“Oh, look, look,” she said, trembling.
They came slowly to look at her opened palm.
In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.
She began to cry, looking at it.

△ Critical Viewing
Do you think this picture illustrates emotions that the children felt while playing outside? Why or why not?
[Connect]
They glanced quietly at the sky.

“Oh, Oh.”

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane. They tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

“Will it be seven more years?”

“Yes. Seven.”

Then one of them gave a little cry.

“Margot!”

“What?”

“She’s still in the closet where we locked her.”

“Margot.”

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other’s glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

“Margot.”

One of the girls said, “Well . . . ?”

No one moved.

“Go on,” whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.
Apply the Skills

All Summer in a Day

Thinking About the Selection

1. Respond: What is your reaction to the way the other children treat Margot? Why?
2. (a) Recall: How does Margot know what the sun is like? (b) Infer: Why do the children reject her description of it?
3. (a) Recall: Why do the children want the teacher to hurry back to the classroom at the beginning of the story? (b) Infer: Who is the "leader" of the class when the teacher is out of the room? (c) Draw Conclusions: Why do the children go along with the prank that is played on Margot?
4. (a) Recall: How do the children react when they realize that Margot missed the sun because of their prank? (b) Draw Conclusions: Why do you think they react as they do? (c) Generalize: What do the children learn from their experiences?
5. (a) Speculate: How do you think Margot will respond to the children after the incident? (b) Support: Why do you think so? (c) Discuss: In a small group, discuss your responses. As a group, choose one answer to share with the class.

Reading Skill

6. What are two things the author might have wished to teach his audience?
7. (a) Did the author mean to entertain his audience? (b) Which details support your answer? Explain.
8. In your own words, what was the author’s main purpose in writing this story?

Literary Analysis

9. How does the setting of this story affect the events that occur?
10. Using a chart like the one shown, give two examples from the story to show how setting affects a character’s mood.

Quick Review

Who’s Who in the Story
Margot: a girl who once lived on Earth
William: a boy who has always lived on Venus

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Author’s Purpose:
an author’s reason for writing
Setting: the time and place of the action
Vocabulary Builder

Practice Analogies show relationships between word pairs. Use a word from the “All Summer in a Day” vocabulary list on page 90 to complete each analogy. Your choice should create a word pair whose relationship matches the relationship between the first two words given.

1. Quickly is to rapidly as noisily is to ____.
2. More is to increasing as less is to ____.
3. Steel is to unbreakable as rubber is to ____.
4. Singing is to optional as breathing is to ____.

Writing

Write a news report that tells about the day when the sun appeared on Venus. The report should answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how.

- First, list questions that your news report will answer. For example: When did the sun make its appearance?
- Answer each question. Use story details to help you.
- Write your report, based on your answers. Present the most important information in your opening paragraph.

For Grammar, Vocabulary, and Assessment, see Build Language Skills, pages 114–115.

Extend Your Learning

Listening and Speaking In a small group, hold a discussion about the message of the story. Use these questions to guide you:
- At the end of the story, did you feel more sorry for Margot or her classmates?
- What did the story teach you?
As a group, identify two lessons readers might learn from the story.

Research and Technology With a group, make an annotated bibliography for a report about the planet Venus. Use the Internet or the library to find possible resources. Compile a list of resources, using the MLA format for bibliographies, which you will find on page R25. Then, write a short description of each resource.
Background

**War Refugee Board**  "Suzy and Leah" is based on actual events. The United States established the War Refugee Board in January 1944 with the goal of rescuing victims of Nazi persecution from death in German-occupied Europe. In one rescue effort, 982 people from eighteen countries were brought to a refugee camp in Oswego, New York.

Review

For Reading Skill, Literary Analysis, and Vocabulary Builder, see page 90.

Connecting to the Literature

**Reading/Writing Connection**  In “Suzy and Leah,” Leah is a European war refugee who has recently come to America. Make a list of three hardships or challenges that you imagine a young person in a new country might face. Use at least three of the following words: adapt, interpret, participate, communicate. Making your list will help you appreciate Leah’s difficulties in adjusting.

Meet the Author

Jane Yolen (b. 1939)

Jane Yolen’s storytelling career began in first grade, when she wrote a class musical about vegetables. Since then, she has written more than two hundred books. “I am a person in love with story and with words,” says Yolen. “I wake up, and I have to write.”

**Finding Inspiration**  Yolen is never at a loss for ideas. Whenever an idea strikes her, she jots it down and places it in an “idea file” that she keeps. Then, when searching for a new story to write, she simply consults the file. “I don’t care whether the story is real or fantastical,” she explains. “I tell the story that needs to be told.”

**A Personal Interest**  Although Yolen is known primarily for her fantasy stories, her Jewish heritage inspired her to write “Suzy and Leah,” the story of a Holocaust survivor. Yolen wrote about the Holocaust so that her own children could understand and remember what happened to Jews in Europe during World War II.

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**Author Link**

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102  Fiction and Nonfiction