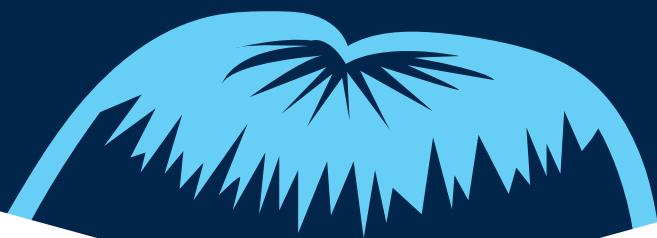


AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

FIELD REPORT 2016: **BANNED &** CHALLENGED BOOKS



ROBERT P. DOYLE



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Robert P. Doyle



Banned Books Week 2017 continues thirty-six years of celebrating—and protecting—the freedom to read. This freedom to choose what we read from the *fullest* array of possibilities is firmly rooted in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the amendment that guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Even as we enjoy a seemingly limitless and expanding amount of information, there is always a danger of someone else selecting what is available and to whom. Would-be censors, who come from all quarters and all political persuasions, threaten our right to choose for ourselves.

This list highlights a portion of public challenges from 2016. A “challenge” is an attempt to remove or restrict a book, whereas a “ban” is the actual removal of the book. The list includes many titles familiar from years past, as well as newly published books that caught a censor’s eye. Many of the books were retained through established processes of review. The challenges were brought by parents, by government bodies, and in some cases by school officials. The decisions on whether to retain the books were by school boards, courts, and committees.

In a number of cases, active protests resulted in books being retained in libraries and on reading lists.

- In Imperial, Pennsylvania, a fifteen-year-old West Allegheny High School student spoke out about the challenge to Jeannette Walls’ *The Glass Castle* at a school board meeting, while handing board members a petition signed by two hundred students to keep the book on the high school’s reading list.
- Daniel Radosh, a writer for *The Daily Show*, spotted the irony of his child having to get a signed permission slip to read *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury’s cautionary tale about censorship. In his own ironic twist, Radosh wrote a thank-you note to the teacher, saying the permission slip was “a wonderful way to introduce students to the theme of *Fahrenheit 451*.”
- When John Green’s *Looking for Alaska* was challenged by a parent in Marion County, Kentucky, educators, students, and even the author rallied to keep the book in the high school curriculum. A local public librarian built a banned books display that included all of Green’s titles, former students wrote to the local paper in defense of the book, and John Green encouraged readers to write letters of support to the high school teacher who stood by her decision to use the novel in her curriculum.

Many of the locales are also familiar—elementary, middle, and high school libraries, as well as recommended reading lists. But the range of places where these attempts at censorship occur may surprise you.

- Public libraries in Toronto and Westmont, Canada
- A public library in Montana
- A school library in Qatar
- A bookstore in Shanghai, China
- A private school in Kampala, Uganda
- Prison libraries in Texas and other states
- The entire country of Ireland, where the Irish Censorship Board banned a book for the first time in 18 years

Banned Books Week 2016 also saw some firsts. With support from the American Library Association, several organizations united to host Banned Books Week programs throughout London. In Washington, D.C., the public library scattered banned books around the city for a scavenger hunt and posted clues on social media. Not to

be outdone, seven bookstores across the United States hosted banned book read-outs on the same night for “A Night of Silenced Voices.”

Banned Books Week continues to focus on the diversity of authors and ideas that have prompted a disproportionate share of challenges. The American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom estimates that more than half of all challenged or banned books are either written by authors of color or contains content that represent groups or viewpoints outside the mainstream.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, in *Texas v. Johnson*, said, “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.” Objections to sex, profanity, and racism in literature are the most common examples of attempts to censor, and most objections occur in schools and school libraries. Individuals are free to choose what they themselves or their children read, but it is not a role for governmental or public agencies.

Book challenges and attempts to censor are not mere expressions of a point of view; rather, they represent requests to remove materials from schools or libraries, thus restricting access to them by others. Even when challenges are overturned and the book is allowed to stay on library shelves, the censorship attempt is real and has an impact. Teachers may be reluctant to place the book on future reading lists, and librarians may be hesitant to purchase “controversial” books.

This field report documents both challenges and banings, calling our attention to a practice that many think is no longer a threat. And in fact, it includes only a fraction of such attempts. Research shows that only about 3-18% of challenges are reported. The report is also limited to books and does not include challenges to magazines, newspapers, films, broadcasts, plays, performances, electronic publications, or exhibits.

Some of the titles on the list will seem predictable, others might be surprising. Because of the celebration of Banned Books Week since 1982, most of them are still available in schools and libraries. Don’t take their presence for granted.

This bibliography represents books challenged, restricted, removed, or banned in 2016 as reported in the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy (JIFP)*.

Angelou, Maya
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Random House

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because of objections from parents at a Nov. 21, 2016 school board meeting. The book was nominated for a National Book Award in 1970. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Asher, Jay
Thirteen Reasons Why
Penguin Books

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because a parent considered it “pornographic.” The novel was placed on the 2008 YALSA Best Books for Young Adults and 2009 International Reading Association Young Adults’ Choice list. Netflix adapted *Thirteen Reasons Why* into a 13-episode series in 2017, directed by Oscar winner Tom McCarthy. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Bagdasarian, Adam
First French Kiss
Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Challenged, but retained on the Taunton, Mass., High School optional ninth-grade summer reading list despite a parent’s complaint that it was “sexually explicit.” The book is written for grades 7-12 and discusses key topics such as “character and values” and “culture and diversity.” Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Baldacchino, Christine
Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress
Groundwood Books

Challenged, but retained at the Forest Hills Public School District in Ada Township, Mich., despite a parent’s concern that the “book is not just talking about accepting another viewpoint, it’s promoting another life.” The children’s book is about a boy who likes to wear dresses to school. The story aims to encourage acceptance and discourage bullying. It has won numerous awards, including the following in 2015 alone: the Stonewall Honor Book in Children’s and Young Adult Literature; selected for the American Library Association’s Rainbow List; finalist for the TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award; finalist for the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award; finalist for the Blue Spruce Award; a *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of the Year; and *Kirkus Reviews* selection for Best Picture Book Celebrating Diversity. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Baldwin, James
Go Tell It on the Mountain
Dell

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because a parent considered it “pornographic.” In 1998, the Modern Library ranked the novel 39th on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. *Time Magazine* included the novel in its list of the best English-language novels from 1923-2005. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Booth, Coe
Tyrell
Push

Challenged, but retained on the Chesterfield County, Va., Public Schools’ (CCPS) summer reading lists for middle and high school students. The novel is about an African American teen living in a homeless shelter. In response to the controversy, state Senator Amanda Chase said the books on the original lists were “pornographic” and “trash.” She said that librarians who continued to recommend books that were inconsistent with CCPS’ “core values” should be “dismissed” after a warning and that the offending books should be removed from school libraries. In the spring of 2016, a bill (HB 516) passed by the Virginia General Assembly, and then vetoed by the governor, would have required parental notification of any works deemed “sexually explicit.” The same matter was reviewed by the Virginia Board of Education, who overwhelmingly voted to deny similar regulations, citing the lack of definition of the term “sexually explicit,” saying this was a matter for local policy, not a state board. A similar bill (HB 2191) has been introduced in 2017. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016; Winter 2017.

Bruel, Nick
Bad Kitty for President
Square Fish

Challenged in the Henderson, Nev., James Gibson Elementary School because when talking about money in a campaign, it says “A billion dollars! Holy %#@\$.” The author of the chapter book said he believes the symbols

are vague and harmless. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Chbosky, Stephen
The Perks of Being a Wallflower
Pocket Books

Removed from the Pasco, Fla., Middle School because it was deemed “disgusting” for its explicit sexual references. A substitute teacher at Pasco Middle School had assigned the novel to seventh-graders in an advanced language arts class. The novel was adapted into a film in 2012, which received mainly positive reviews; *MTV*, *Us Weekly*, and *Complex* named it as one of the best films of the year. Challenged, but retained in the Dubuque, Iowa, School District after three hours of testimony at a school board meeting. While some parents complained about the book’s sex scenes and depictions of drugs and alcohol use, the overwhelming majority of those who spoke over the course of three hours defended the book. Many of the more than forty speakers talked about their personal connection to the book. The school will provide an alternative book if Advanced Placement students or their parents request it. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016; Winter 2017.

Cormier, Robert
After the First Death
Pantheon Books

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because a parent considered it “pornographic.” In 1979, the novel was included on the YALSA Best Books for Young Adults list. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

D’Adamo, Francesco
Iqbal
Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Retained in the Argyle, Tex., Independent School District sixth-grade lesson plans, despite six parents asserting that the book is not age appropriate and tackles tough concepts best discussed at home. The book is based on the true story of Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old Pakistani child who escapes from bonded labor in a carpet factory. He goes on to help others escape from the same imprisonment. The book won the 2001 Prize Cento award and 2004 Christopher Award. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Deuker, Carl
Gutless
HMH Books for Young Readers

Pulled from the Jay High School’s Celebrate Literacy Week reading list in Santa Rosa, Calif. The book features themes of bullying, overcoming failures, family illness, and growing up. Parents objected to a passage that discusses breasts and how boys reacted to them, calling it inappropriate. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Eggers, Dave
A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius
Simon & Schuster

Retained in the adult nonfiction collection at the Toronto Public Library in Ontario, Canada, despite complaints about the novel’s profanity, poor grammar and sentence structure. The memoir chronicles the author’s stewardship of younger brother Christopher “Toph” Eggers, following the cancer-related deaths of his parents. The book was listed on *The New York Times* 10 Best Books of the Year; in 2000, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction; and chosen as the twelfth best book of the decade by *The Times*. Source: *JIFP*,

Winter 2017.

Green, John
Looking for Alaska
Dutton Books

Challenged, but retained at the Marion County High School in Lebanon, Ky. Planning to use the novel in her senior English class, the teacher sent home permission slips so parents would have the option to keep their child from reading the book. One parent accepted the offer for her child to leave the room during those lessons. That parent, however, didn’t want other children discussing it either and filed a challenge against Green’s novel, igniting an overwhelming show of support for the book from students, alumni, community members—and even Green himself. Awarded the 2006 Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature, this coming-of-age story traces the journey of Miles Halter, a misfit Florida teenager, who leaves the safety of home for a boarding school in Alabama and a chance to explore the “Great Perhaps.” Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Green, John
Paper Towns
Dutton Books

Challenged, but retained in the Cumberland County, Tenn., School libraries. The novel is about the coming-of-age of the protagonist, Quentin “Q” Jacobson, and his search for Margo Roth Spiegelman, his neighbor and childhood sweetheart. During his search, Quentin and his friends Ben, Radar, and Lacey discover information about Margo, and themselves. The novel was awarded the 2009 Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Novel. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Harper, Kathryn
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
Pearson Education, Limited

Removed from a Qatar school library after a book based on Disney’s movie was deemed to contain “indecent” illustrations. Officials from Qatar’s Supreme Education Council intervened following a complaint from the father of a pupil at the Spanish SEK international school, based in the capital, Doha. It is not known which images caused offense, reported English-language website Doha News, but the book cover shows a smiling Snow White being held by the prince, who in the story revives her with a kiss after she eats a poisoned apple. Source: *JIFP*, Spring 2016.

Harris, Robie H
It’s Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health
Candlewick Press

Pulled from the Hudson Park Elementary School library in Rainier, Ore. Officials with the Rainier School District noted the title is on the state-approved list of books allowed at the school, but in a letter sent home to parents the school’s principal stated the books had been inappropriately passed out to fourth graders in the library. “Procedures have been put into place to make sure this doesn’t happen again. All questionable books have been pulled from library shelves,” the principal wrote in the letter. The book has received awards from at least ten distinguished publications, including *Publishers Weekly* and *School Library Journal* (both named it as a “Best Book of the Year”), the American Library Association and *The New York Times* (both named it as a “Notable Book of the Year”), and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (listed among “The Century’s Best Children’s Books”). Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Hernandez, Gilbert
The Troublemakers
Fantagraphics

Retained in the adult graphic book collection at the Toronto Public Library in Ontario, Canada, despite complaints of the book's "sexual language and depictions of prostitution and violence." The complainant wanted the library to institute a labeling system for graphic books so children can't borrow them and victims of violence can avoid them. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Hinton, S. E.
The Outsiders
Dell; Viking

Retained on the Williamsburg, Iowa, seventh-grade reading list. The book focuses on the life of a 14-year-old boy who struggles with concepts of wrong and right in a society in which he feels he is an outsider. The complainant said the book contained subjects that are socially, emotionally, and developmentally difficult for seventh-graders to deal with, including conflict, crime, death of a character, and gang fighting. The following reasons were cited for retaining the book in the seventh-grade curriculum: lower reading level allows the focus to be placed on the understanding and recognition of the themes that are developed in the book; favored by boys, who tend to be more averse to reading in general; and student members of the reconsideration committee both felt the book was something they enjoyed reading and that it dealt with topics that come up in movies, television, and video games, and a classroom discussion about those things is helpful. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

James, E. L.
Fifty Shades of Grey
Vintage

Retained at the Billings, Mont., Public Library, despite a patron's concerns that the book is "poor literature; very, very erotic" with "all kinds of sex, sex sadism and masochism." Sales of the book—numbering more than 100 million worldwide—is a significant reason the book is available at the library, according to the library's assistant director. "Our selection policy includes patron request, which figures heavily into what we buy." Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Karpiel, Frank,
and Kathleen Krull
My World History
Pearson Education, Inc.

Challenged in the Sullivan County, Tenn., school system because a parent said the textbook "promotes Islamic propaganda." The parent is being represented by Freedom X, a California-based, self-described conservative Christian group with a website that states it fights Islamic indoctrination in U.S. schools. "This will not go away. I will not go away," she told the board. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Knowles, John
A Separate Peace
Bantam; Dell; Macmillan

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because a parent considers it "pornographic." In 1961, the novel won the inaugural William Faulkner Foundation Award for Notable First Novel and was a finalist for the 1961 National Book Award for Fiction. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Lee, Harper
To Kill a Mockingbird
Lippincott/Harper;
Popular Library

Retained in the Accomack County, Va., Public Schools. A parent objected to racial slurs in the book. After being temporarily removed on Nov. 29, 2016, the book was reinstated on Dec. 6 by the school board. While the novel won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the film version is an award-winning icon of American films, the book's racial slurs, profanity, and frank discussion of rape have led people to challenge its appropriateness in libraries and classrooms across the United States since the mid-1970s. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Lubar, David
Weenies series
Starscape

Challenged in the Lower Nazareth Township, Kans., middle school libraries because "the chapter titles are sexually suggestive to middle-schoolers, contains anti-Christian concepts, and didn't have happy endings." Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Martin, Jean
The Raped Little Runaway
Star Distributors Ltd

Banned in Ireland for obscenity, over its multiple descriptions of child rape. Under Ireland's Censorship of Publications Act, texts can only be initially banned for a period of twelve years. Board members must read the submissions and then decide by majority on whether to censor a text. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Martineau, Paul
and Britt Salvesen
Robert Mapplethorpe:
The Photographs
J. Paul Getty Museum

Challenged, but retained at the Westmount Public Library in Quebec, Canada, following a complaint submitted by a library

member. The catalog provides a comprehensive retrospective of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, offering a fascinating overview of Mapplethorpe's universe: New York in the 1970s and '80s, portraits, flowers, and naked men. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

McEwan, Ian
Atonement
Jonathan Cape

Retained in the adult nonfiction collection at the Toronto Public Library in Ontario, Canada, despite complaints of the novel's poor grammar and sentence structure. Set in pre-World War II, wartime, and present-day England, it covers an upper-class girl's half-innocent mistake that ruins lives; her adulthood in the shadow of that mistake; and a reflection on the nature of writing. Widely regarded as one of McEwan's best works, it was shortlisted for the 2001 Booker Prize for Fiction. In 2010, *Time Magazine* included the novel in its list of the 100 greatest English-language novels since 1923. In 2007, the book was adapted into a British Academy of Film and Television Arts- (BAFTA) and Academy Award-nominated film. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Merriam-Webster
Collegiate Dictionary
Merriam-Webster, Inc.

At the state-run Foreign Language Bookstore in Shanghai, China, it was noticed that two entire pages were removed from every copy of the dictionary to cover up the entry for Taiwan because it contradicts China's official line on the disputed island. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Morrison, Toni
Beloved
Knopf

Challenged on the Fairfax County, Va., senior English reading list by a parent claiming “the book includes scenes of violent sex, including a gang rape, and was too graphic and extreme for teenagers.” The controversy led to legislation (House Bill 516) that calls for the Virginia Department of Education to create a policy that notifies parents of the content and then allows them to review the materials. The novel is inspired by the story of an African American slave, Margaret Garner, who escaped slavery in Kentucky in late January 1856 by fleeing to Ohio, a free state. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, was a finalist for the 1987 National Book Award, and was adapted into a 1998 movie of the same name starring Oprah Winfrey. A *New York Times* survey of writers and literary critics ranked it the best work of American fiction from 1981 to 2006. Source: *AL Direct*, February 9, 2016 and March 4, 2016; *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016; Winter 2017.

Morrison, Toni
The Bluest Eye
Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Challenged, but retained as part of Northville, Mich., High School’s Advanced Placement (AP) English course despite a parent’s objection to the novel’s content, including depiction of a sexual assault. The 1970 novel was the first by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and the book has been part of the Northville AP English and Composition course since the early 1990s. The school board voted that AP students and parents now have the option of choosing between three works that cover themes such as oppression and poverty. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Mulligan, Andy
Trash
David Fickling Books; Random House Children’s Books

Retained in the Argyle, Tex., Independent School District sixth-grade lesson plans, despite six parents asserting that the book is not age appropriate and tackles tough concepts best discussed at home. The novel is set in the garbage dump of a large unnamed Third World city and tells the story of young Raphael, who becomes mixed up in police corruption. It was shortlisted for the 2012 Carnegie Medal, awarded by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Murugan, Perumal
One Part Woman
Penguin Books

India’s Madras High Court refused to ban the novel, which has been the target of public protests including a book burning in 2015. Right-wing nationalists from the author’s native state of Tamil Nadu were offended at the historical novel’s depiction of a fertility ceremony formerly practiced in the village of Tiruchengode, whereby women unable to conceive children with their husbands could try with another man in the context of an annual Hindu festival. Although Murugan is Tamil himself and a respected scholar of the region’s history and culture, the would-be censors claimed that he “defamed Tiruchengode town and the womenfolk and the community.” In its decision, the court offered an easy non-judicial solution for those who were troubled by the novel: “If you do not like a book, simply close it. The answer is not its ban.” Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Myers, Walter Dean
Dope Sick
Push

Challenged, but retained on the Chesterfield County, Va., Public Schools’ (CCPS) summer reading lists for middle and high school students. The book is about a young man who has been shot during a drug deal and is on the run from the police. A parent complained that, “It’s a very disparaging book that does not help eliminate racism. It separates and divides. It’s trash.” The author has won the Coretta Scott King Book Award for African American authors five times. In response to the controversy, state Senator Amanda Chase said the books on the original lists were “pornographic” and “trash.” She said that librarians who continued to recommend books that were inconsistent with CCPS’ “core values” should be “dismissed” after a warning and that the offending books should be removed from school libraries. In the spring of 2016, a bill (HB 516) passed by

the Virginia General Assembly, and then vetoed by the governor, would have required parental notification of any works deemed “sexually explicit.” The same matter was reviewed by the Virginia Board of Education, which overwhelmingly voted to deny similar regulations, citing the lack of definition of the term “sexually explicit.” The board stated that this was a matter for local policy, not a state board. A similar bill (HB 2191) has been introduced in 2017. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016; Winter 2017.

Myracle, Lauren
TTFN
Grosset & Dunlap

Challenged at the Yulee Middle School in Nassau County, Fla. Two parents complained; one said, “It’s telling kids to rebel against parents. It’s telling them it’s OK to party, drink, cuss and do other obscene things in the book.” Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.



Myracle, Lauren
TTYL
Grosset & Dunlap

Challenged at the Yulee Middle School in Nassau County, Fla. Two parents complained; one said, “It’s telling kids to rebel against parents. It’s telling them it’s OK to party, drink, cuss and do other obscene things in the book.” Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Niven, Jennifer
All the Bright Places
Knopf

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because a parent considered it “pornographic.” The novel won the 2015 Goodreads Choice Award for Young Adult Fiction. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Rowell, Rainbow
Eleanor & Park
St. Martin’s Press

Challenged, but retained on the Chesterfield County, Va., Public Schools’ (CCPS) summer reading lists for middle and high school students. Parents called the book “pornographic” and filled with “vile, vile, nasty language.” The novel is a love story between two misfit teenagers in Nebraska. The book has received multiple accolades including being named a 2014 American Library Association Michael L. Printz Award honor book and Young Adult Library Services Association Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults.

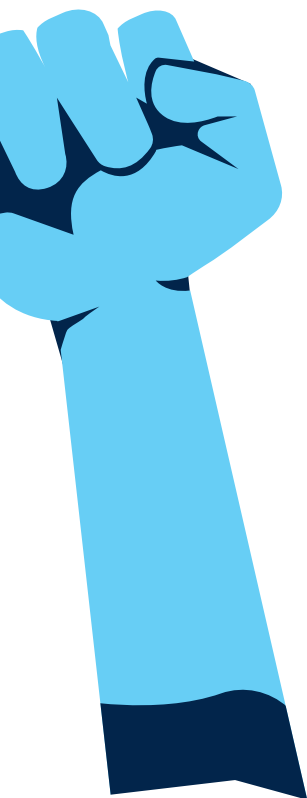
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Roy, Arundhati
The God of Small Things
Indialink

Challenged and removed in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because the book “contains subject matter in some sections that is not appropriate for our students,” according to the school’s principal. It won the Booker Prize in 1997. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Sebold, Alice
The Lovely Bones
Little, Brown and Company

Challenged and under review in the sophomore-level Academic English II classes at Lemont, Ill., High School District 210 because a parent considers it “pornographic.” The 2009 film received numerous accolades, including Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild, British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA), and Academy Award nominations. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.



Slater, Dan
Wolf Boys:
Two American Teenagers
and Mexico's Most
Dangerous Drug Cartel
Simon & Schuster

Banned in the Texas prison system by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The book joins the list of 15,000 books banned within the state's prison system. The story is about two American boys recruited as killers for the Zetas, a Mexican drug cartel. The book recounts the teens' fall from all-American status into the dark and violent world of drug trafficking and staying one step ahead of local law enforcement. Included on the list of more than 15,000 books—a list Human Rights Defense Center Executive Director Paul Wright notes is “growing exponentially”—are books by politicians and celebrities such as Bob Dole's *World War II: An Illustrated History of Crisis and Convergence* and Jon Stewart's *America*, as well as literary classics such as *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, Flannery O'Connor's *Everything That Rises Must Converge*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Dante's *Inferno*, and even a collection of Shakespeare's sonnets. “Texas is less rational than other states,” said Michelle Dillon, program coordinator of the Seattle-based non-profit Books to Prisoners, although it's a national problem she adds, particularly in more conservative states in the South. Wright said federal prisons have even banned former President Obama's books. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Tamaki, Mariko and
Jillian Tamaki
This One Summer
First Second

Removed, but returned to a separate section and available only to tenth- to twelfth-graders at the pre-K-12 Henning,

Minn., School District libraries in response to a complaint from a parent. Removed from three elementary schools in Seminole County, Fla. because it “contained inappropriate content.” It is a coming-of-age story about two preteen friends, Rose and Windy, during a summer in Awa-go, a small beach town. The book was named a 2015 American Library Association Michael L. Printz honor book and Caldecott honor book. It won the 2014 Eisner Award and the 2014 Ignatz Award for Outstanding Graphic Novel. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Taylor, Mildred D.
The Land
Phyllis Fogelman

Challenged and retained in a Marion County, Fla., high school English class because a group of parents objected to a racial slur used in historical context. The book does not shy away from the ugly reality of racism and discrimination, and includes multiple uses of racial slurs in context. Taylor, who based the books on her own family history, includes an author's note at the beginning of the book that addresses the sometimes-difficult language and events covered inside. Marion County School District's Kevin Christian said, “To say we're not going to use this book because it upsets you and it doesn't upset me or vice versa, I'm not sure that's a valid argument, to take a piece of highly respected and award-winning piece of American historical literature out of the classroom and never expose students to that.” The book won the 2002 Coretta Scott King Award, the 2002 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, and was named a 2002 YALSA Best Book for Young Adults. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Twain, Mark. [Samuel L. Clemens]
The Adventures of
Huckleberry Finn
Bantam; Bobbs-Merrill; Grosset;
Harper; Holt; Houghton;
Longman; Macmillan; NAL;
Norton; Penguin; Pocket Books

Retained in the Accomack County, Va., Public Schools. A parent objected to racial slurs in the book. After being temporarily removed on Nov. 29, 2016, the book was reinstated on Dec. 6 by the school board. The book has caused controversy when it was banned in Concord, Mass., in 1885, one year after its publication, and deemed “trash and suitable only for the slums.” Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Walls, Jeannette
The Glass Castle:
A Memoir
Scribner

Challenged on the West Allegheny High School reading list in North Fayette, Pa. The novel is about a woman persevering after a dysfunctional childhood and includes graphic descriptions of abuse, including sexual abuse. This year was the first time the book appeared on the district's high school reading list. Concerned about its content, a group of parents requested that it and other titles be removed from the list. District officials responded, saying the reading assignment was altered to require students to read only excerpts from the memoir instead of the whole text. Students organized a petition campaign asking that the novel be returned to the reading list in its entirety and that other titles that might be considered controversial remain on the list. Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.

Wilson, Jacqueline
Love Lessons
Doubleday

Seized by Ugandan officials at the prestigious Greenhill Academy in Kampala because of the complaint that it exposes children to sex at too young an age. It tells the story of 14-year-old Prudence, who escapes the misery of life at home with a controlling father by falling in love with her handsome art teacher. Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Wilson, Kris, and Rob DenBleyker,
Matt Melvin, and Dave McElfrick
Cyanide and Happiness:
Punching Zoo
Boom! Box

Retained at the Toronto Public Library in Ontario, Canada, but transferred to the adult graphic book collection. The complaint was that the book contains “vulgar language, humor related to pornography, racism, and sex.” Source: *JIFP*, Winter 2017.

Zinn, Howard
A People's History
of the United States
HarperCollins

Challenged in the Chatham, N.J., High School curricula because it's a “biased account.” The book presents an alternative view of American history characterized by the influence of an elite minority over the rest of the population. Excerpts from the book, not the book in its entirety, have been assigned reading in U.S. history classes at the high school for at least fifteen years. Superintendent Michael LaSusa said, “It is important to expose kids to multiple perspectives and have them understand that primary sources are the critical ingredient for any historian or any critical consumer of information.” Source: *JIFP*, Summer/Fall 2016.



The First Amendment guarantees all of us the right to express our views—including our opinions about particular books—and ensures that no one has the right to control or limit another's ability to read or access information.

But when individuals or groups demand that libraries and schools remove specific books from the shelves, they're trying to do just that.

When we speak up to protect the right to read, we not only defend our individual right to free expression, we demonstrate tolerance and respect for opposing points of view. And when we take action to preserve our freedoms, we become participants in the ongoing evolution of our democratic society.

Want to know how you can help? Here are a few suggestions:



ASK people on the front lines—librarians, teachers, and school principals—if there are any current attempts to challenge or ban books or other materials. If they have support groups or information lists, join them.

SUBSCRIBE to print and online news publications that cover censorship issues.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM (ala.org/oif) publishes the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* and provides news updates through the Intellectual Freedom Blog (oif.ala.org/oif) and the weekly Intellectual Freedom News e-newsletter.

FIRST AMENDMENT CENTER (firstamendmentcenter.org) maintains an online First Amendment library (firstamendmentcenter.org/research-articles) and provides breaking news about First Amendment issues.

READ a challenged or banned book. Buying these books or checking them out from your library not only registers your support for these titles, but can also give you a firsthand view of content that provokes people to attempt to keep some books out of others' hands.

JOIN groups that are committed to preserving the right to read. Most have e-newsletters that will alert you to current issues and legislation.

AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS FOR FREE EXPRESSION (bookweb.org/abfe) promotes and protects the free exchange of ideas by opposing restrictions on the freedom of speech.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (aclu.org) defends the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, including the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Local chapters and affiliates (aclu.org/affiliates) provide assistance to communities.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PUBLISHERS (publishers.org) works to protect intellectual freedom and the rights of free expression.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND (cblbf.org) works to protect free speech in comics.

FREEDOM TO READ FOUNDATION (ftrf.org) is the only organization in the United States whose primary goal is to protect and promote the First Amendment in libraries by participating in related litigation.

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST CENSORSHIP (ncac.org) is an alliance of fifty national nonprofit organizations that work to educate members and the public about the dangers of censorship and how to oppose it.

PEN AMERICA (pen.org) is an international community of writers, editors, translators, and readers working to defend free expression, support persecuted writers, and promote literary culture.

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY (pfaw.org) is dedicated to equality, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to seek justice in a court of law, and the right to cast a vote that counts.



SHARE censorship-related stories, action alerts, and issues via social media.

PARTICIPATE in the American Library Association's Banned Books Virtual Read-Out by making a video for the YouTube channel. Find information at ala.org/bbooks/bannedbooksweek/events/virtualreadout/participate.

TWEET AND RE-TWEET news stories and blog posts about censorship issues. Be sure to include links and hashtags.

POST relevant stories on your blog or Facebook page. Make them interactive by asking your friends and followers to share your post and offer their opinions and suggestions for action.

CREATE a LinkedIn group or a Google+ circle to discuss the topic. Ask your friends and followers to share the invitation.

ATTEND school board, library board, and parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings. You'll learn about your community's policies governing access to books and materials, and you'll be there to speak up when someone demands that a school or library remove a book or restrict access to books.

REPORT censorship to the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF). OIF tracks attempts to remove or restrict books across the country, and uses this data to release its annual Top Ten Most Challenged Books list. You can file a confidential report online by going to ala.org/challengereporting.

PARTICIPATE in public hearings to let your elected officials know that there are citizens actively opposed to demands to restrict or remove books in schools and libraries. These attempts seldom succeed when concerned citizens speak out.

CONTACT public officials, including your mayor, city council members, city officials, library board members, school board members, and school superintendents. Officials who introduce legislation to restrict access to books and other materials in libraries, schools, and bookstores need to know that you oppose demands to restrict or remove books in schools and libraries.

SEND a letter or an op-ed piece to local news organizations so reporters and editors know that there are members of your community who oppose censorship and the official suppression of ideas.

NETWORK with local organizations such as professional associations, civic organizations, and religious groups about attempts to remove books from your community's library or school. Ask to speak to their membership about the importance of preserving First Amendment freedoms, or to contribute an article to the group's newsletter or website. Speak with the group's leaders and ask them to lend public support to protect the right to read in your community.

START a local coalition to oppose censorship in your community. Even a small number of people can form an effective group to oppose censorship and become a resource for the community as a whole.

ASK national organizations for support. Check out the organizations listed on page 10 for assistance, resources, and referrals whenever your community faces a demand to remove books from libraries or schools.



JOIN your local Friends of the Library groups and PTAs, which rely on volunteers to advocate for libraries and schools and help with many learning-related tasks.

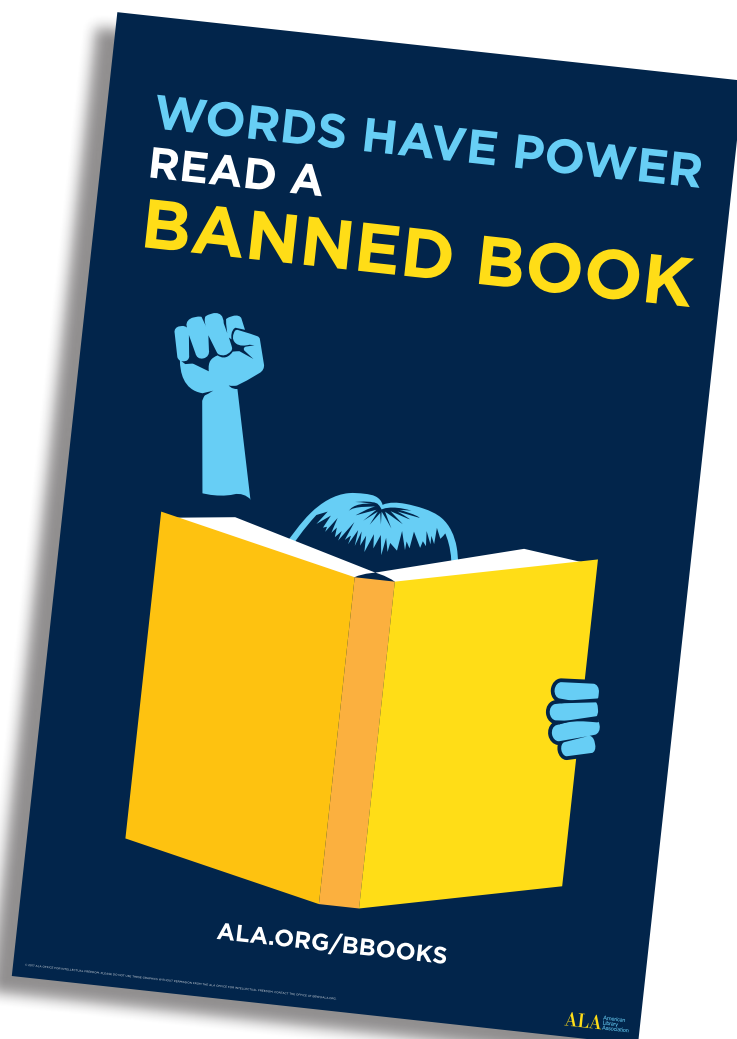
CELEBRATE Banned Books Week. Each year, libraries, schools, and bookstores across the nation observe Banned Books Week in

September with events such as author visits and readings from banned or challenged books. For more information, visit ala.org/bbooks and connect on Facebook (facebook.com/bannedbooksweek)



SUPPORT BANNED BOOKS WEEK

Buy Banned Books Week merchandise—such as posters, T-shirts, buttons, and bookmarks—at the online ALA Store: alastore.ala.org. Sales benefit the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, dedicated to defending First Amendment rights in libraries.



BANNED BOOKS WEEK COALITION

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People for the American Way

CONTRIBUTORS:

Association of Journalists and Authors
National Coalition Against Censorship
PEN America
Project Censored

ENDORSED BY:

Center for the Book in the Library of Congress



82-97% of challenges remain unreported, according to the Office for Intellectual Freedom.

***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie has been challenged every year since its publication in 2007.**

More than 70% of the challenged books recorded by the American Library Association in 2016 contained diverse content.

***The Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy outsold the seven-book *Harry Potter* series on Amazon UK in August 2012. Both are challenged book series.**

The author of the frequently challenged book *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Stephen Chbosky, is also the co-author of the screenplay for Disney's live-action *Beauty and the Beast*.