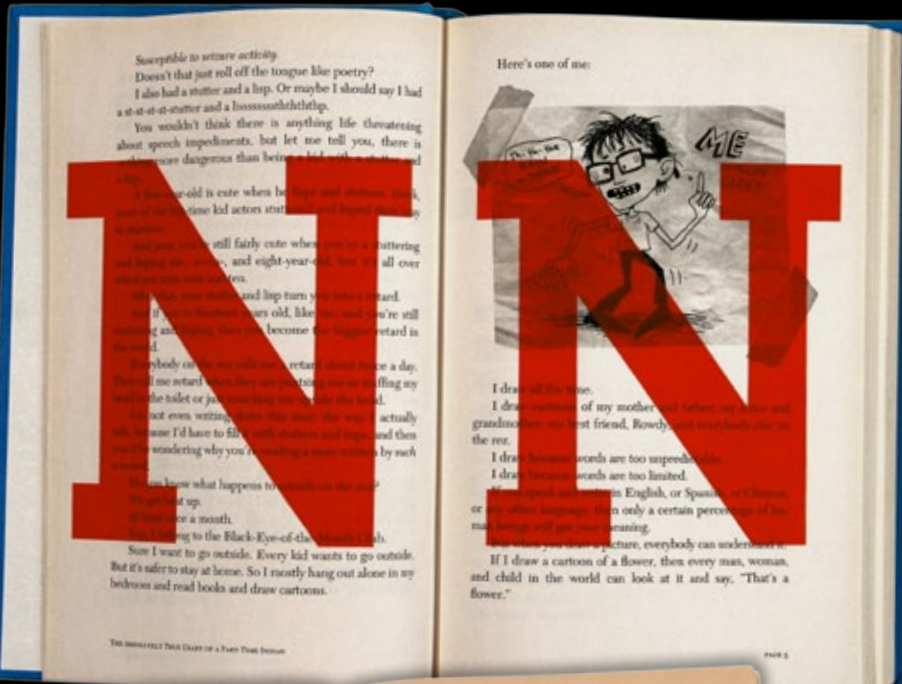


# BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED 2011-2012

Robert P. Doyle



# BANNED BOOKS WEEK

CELEBRATING THE FREEDOM TO READ

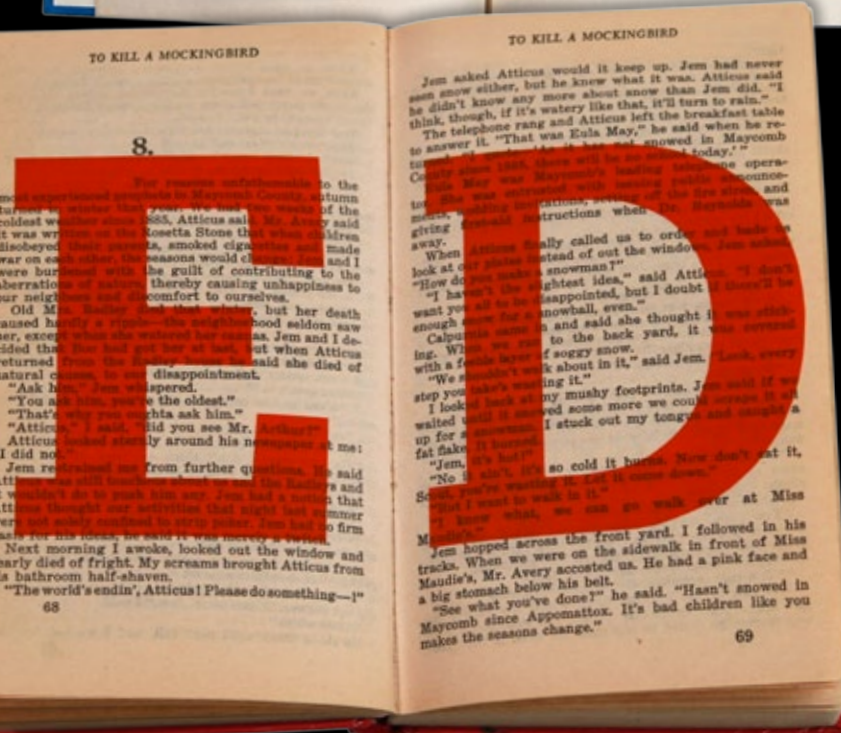
[ala.org/bbooks](http://ala.org/bbooks)

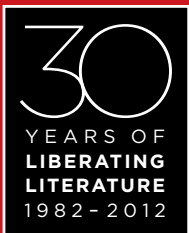
Sponsored by:

- American Booksellers Association
- American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
- American Library Association
- American Society of Journalists and Authors
- Association of American Publishers
- Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
- Freedom to Read Foundation
- National Association of College Stores
- National Coalition Against Censorship
- National Council of Teachers of English
- PEN American Center

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- Center for the Book in the Library of Congress
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**Banned Books Week 2012** marks 30 years of celebrating the freedom to read. This freedom, not only to choose what we read, but also to select from a full array of possibilities, is firmly rooted in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Although we enjoy an increasing quantity and availability of information and reading material, we must remain vigilant to ensure that access to this material is preserved; would-be censors who continue to threaten the freedom to read come from all quarters and all political persuasions. Even if well intentioned, censors try to limit the freedom of others to choose what they read, see, or hear.

Sex, profanity, and racism remain the primary categories of objections, and most occur in schools and school libraries. Frequently, challenges are motivated by the desire to protect children. While the intent is commendable, this method of protection contains hazards far greater than exposure to the “evil” against which it is leveled. 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.” Individuals may restrict what they themselves or their children read, but they must not call on governmental or public agencies to prevent others from reading or viewing that material.

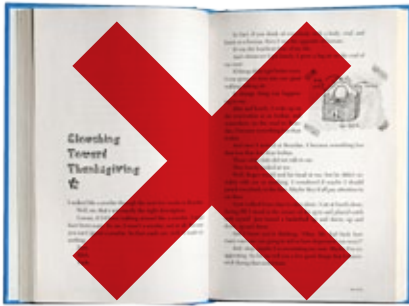




The challenges documented in this list are not brought by people merely expressing a point of view; rather, they represent requests to remove materials from schools or libraries, thus restricting access to them by others. Even when the eventual outcome allows the book to stay on the library shelves and even when the person is a lone protester, the censorship attempt is real. Someone has tried to restrict another person's ability to choose. Challenges are as important to document as actual bannings, in which a book is removed from the shelves of a library or bookstore or from the curriculum at a school. Attempts to censor can lead to voluntary restriction of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy; in these cases, material may not be published at all or may not be purchased by a bookstore, library, or school district.

It should be noted that this bibliography is incomplete because many prohibitions against free speech and expression remain undocumented. Surveys indicate that approximately 85 percent of the challenges to library materials receive no media attention and remain unreported. Moreover, this list is limited to books and does not include challenges to magazines, newspapers, films, broadcasts, plays, performances, electronic publications, or exhibits.

This **bibliography** represents books challenged, restricted, removed, or banned in 2011 and 2012 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2011–May 2012. (Dates prior to May 2011 indicate the controversy began earlier, but continues into 2012.)



**Alexie, Sherman**  
**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**

THORNDIKE PRESS; LITTLE, BROWN  
 Banned, but later returned to the Richland, Wash. school district's reading list (2011) despite objections to the "coarse themes and language in the young-adult novel." Pulled from the Dade County, Ga. library shelves and the required high school reading list (2011) because of complaints about "vulgarity, racism, and anti-Christian content." Challenged at the Old Rochester Regional Junior High School in Mattapoisett, Mass. as an eighth-grade English assignment (2011). Challenged as required reading in at least three freshmen English classes at Westfield, N.J. High School (2012) because of "some very sensitive material in the book including excerpts on masturbation amongst other explicit sexual references, encouraging pornography, racism, religious irreverence, and strong language (including the f- and n-words)."

Source: Sept. 2011, pp. 196–97; Jan. 2012, pp. 9, 13; May 2012, pp. 105–6.

**Anderson, Laurie Halse**  
**Speak**

FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX  
 Challenged, but retained in the Republic, Mo. schools (2010) despite complaints that it is "soft-pornography," "glorifies drinking, cursing, and premarital sex," and "teaches principles contrary to the *Bible*."

Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 243–44; Sept. 2011, pp. 175–76.

**Berger, John**  
**To the Wedding**

VINTAGE  
 Challenged as assigned reading for juniors in the International Baccalaureate program at Murrieta Valley, Calif. High School (2011) because some parents said students shouldn't be exposed to the mature content, which includes, on at least three occasions, the use of the f-word to describe sexual relations that take place.

Source: Mar. 2012, p. 59.

**Bhagavad-Gītā as It Is\***

BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST  
 A Russian court has dismissed a call to ban an edition of the Hindu holy book, in a case that triggered protests in India. The commentary, not the text itself, was the cause for scrutiny, according to prosecutors in the Siberian city of Tomsk who wanted the edition to be ruled "extremist." The Russian translation of the book was at risk of being placed on the Federal List of Extremist Materials, which bans more than 1,000 texts, including *Mein Kampf* and publications by the Jehovah's Witness and Scientology movements.

Source: Mar. 2012, p. 82.

\*With the original Sanskrit text, roman transliteration, English equivalents, translation, and elaborate purports by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

**Brown, Laurie Krasny and Marc Brown**

**What's the Big Secret?**  
**Talking about Sex with Girls and Boys**

LITTLE, BROWN, AND CO.  
 Challenged, but retained at the Oak Harbor, Wash. School District No. 201 (2011) despite a parent's concern that the book discusses sex and "it's completely too graphic."

Source: July 2011, p. 137.

**Butler, Dori Hillestad**  
**My Mom's Having a Baby**

ALBERT WHITMAN & CO.  
 Challenged in the Carrollton, Tex. Library (2011) because it is inappropriate for children. The book won an Editor's Choice award from *Booklist* in 2005 and was named a Top Ten Sci-Tech Book for Youth by *Booklist*. Retained at the Hillsborough County, Fla. Public Library System (2011). Published in 2005, the book tells of a little girl named Elizabeth who is curious about childbirth and how her mother became pregnant. Throughout the book's thirty pages, little Elizabeth learns about these topics in great detail.

Source: May 2011, pp. 95, 116.

**Capote, Truman**  
**In Cold Blood:**  
**A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences**

MODERN LIBRARY; RANDOM; VINTAGE; G.K. HALL; TRANSACTION  
 Some Glendale, Calif. Unified School District officials and parents (2011) attempted to block a request by a high school English teacher to add the text to the district's advanced English curriculum because the nonfiction book was "too violent for a young audience;" the school board voted 4–0 to approve the book for Advanced Placement students. Since its publication in 1965, it has been widely recognized as a seminal work in American literature, frequently appearing on high school and college reading lists.

Source: Nov. 2011, p. 204; Jan. 2012, pp. 35–36.

**Card, Orson Scott**

### **Ender's Game**

TOR SCIENCE FICTION

A teacher at Schofield Middle School in Aiken, S.C. (2012) will not face criminal charges for reading to his students from the science-fiction book. In addition to the Card novel, which has won several science-fiction awards and is listed on numerous children's literary review websites as appropriate for children twelve and older, the teacher read excerpts from an Agatha Christie novel and a young adult novel set in the Old West, officials said. The incident came to light after the materials were characterized by one student and one parent as pornographic, according to a press release issued by the school district.

Source: May 2012, p. 107.

**Cast, P.C., and Kristin Cast**

### **Betrayed**

ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN

Challenged in the North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, Alaska high school libraries (2011) because, "It simply causes kids to think even more of things sexual." The teenage vampire novel is part two of the "House of Night" series.

Source: May 2011, p. 93.

**Chbosky, Stephen**

### **The Perks of Being a Wallflower**

POCKET BOOKS

Challenged, but retained, at the Clarkstown, N.Y. North High School (2011) despite a parent's complaint about the coming-of-age novel, which deals graphically with teenage sex, homosexuality, and bestiality.

Source: May 2011, pp. 97-98; July 2011, p. 161.

**Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan**

### **A Study in Scarlet**

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Removed from the Albermarle County, Va. School sixth-grade required reading list (2011) because the book casts Mormonism in a negative light. The complaint cited the novel's reference to Mormons as "murderous" and "intolerant," as reason to remove the work. The complaint also alleged that the work unfairly characterized Mormons as murderous kidnappers. The classic novel was the first to present the character of the brilliant sleuth Sherlock Holmes and his friend, Dr. Watson.

Doyle wrote the novel in three weeks;

it was published in 1886.

Source: Sept. 2011, pp. 177, 200-01; Nov. 2011, p. 205-6.

**Ehrenreich, Barbara**

### **Nickel and Dimed:**

#### **On (Not) Getting by in America**

HOLT

Challenged, but retained on the Easton, Pa. Area High School's Advanced Placement English reading list (2012) despite several residents and persons from outside the district calling the book "faddish," of "no moral value," and even "obscene."

Source: May 2012, pp. 128-29.

**Findley, Timothy**

### **The Wars**

CLARK, IRWIN

Challenged, but retained in the Bluewater, Ont., Canada, classrooms (2011) despite requests to ban the book because it "includes a number of very explicit and detailed descriptions of sexual encounters, most of them exploitive and violent." Several parents "objected especially to details about the hero's visit to a 'whorehouse' and to a vivid description of the young Canadian soldier's gang rape by fellow soldiers." The book is not compulsory and is on the list of books that can be used in the Grade Twelve curriculum, the final year of secondary school in Canada with students being seventeen or eighteen years old.

Source: July 2011, p. 139; Jan. 2012, p. 36.

**Green, John**

### **Looking for Alaska**

SPEAK

Challenged as required reading for Knox County, Tenn. High Schools' Honors and as Advanced Placement outside readings for English II (2012) because of "inappropriate language." School Superintendent Dr. James P. McIntyre, Jr. said that a parent identified this as an issue and the book was removed from the required reading list. He didn't say whether the book was still in the schools.

Source: May 2012, pp. 107-8.

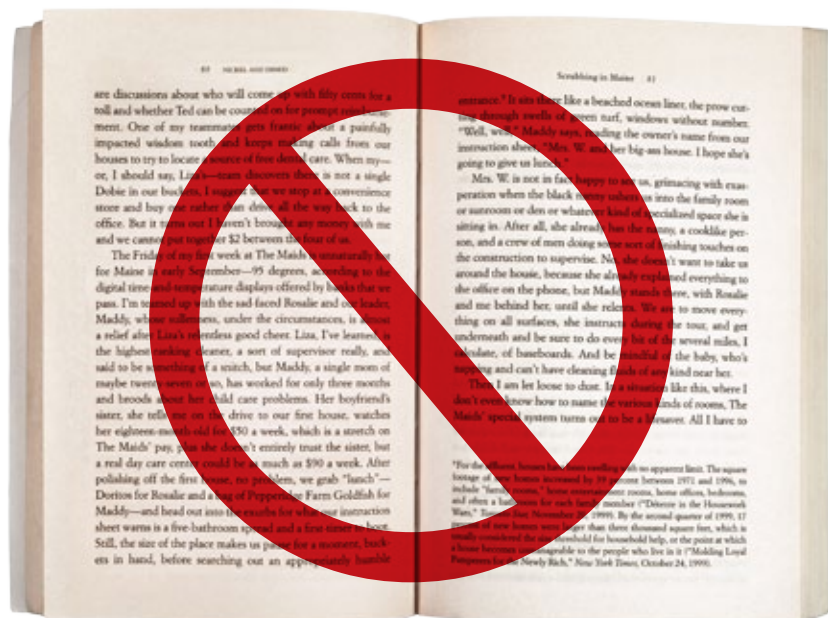
**Gruen, Sara**

### **Water for Elephants**

ALGONQUIN BOOKS

Removed from a spring break elective course at the Bedford, N.H. School District (2010) after a parent complained about the novel's sexual content. The complainant further suggested that the school only allow "youth versions" of particular books or organize a parental review system over the summer that would look at books that students need parental permission to read. A checklist has been proposed that Bedford school officials would use to rate books and other instructional materials.

Source: May 2011, pp. 96-97.





**Harris, Robie H.**  
**It's Perfectly Normal:**  
**A Book about Changing**  
**Bodies, Growing Up, Sex,**  
**and Sexual Health**

CANDLEWICK PRESS

Challenged, but retained at the Lee County, Fla. libraries (2011) despite the book's explicit illustrations.

Source: Nov. 2011, p. 218.

**Hergé [Georges Remi]**  
**Tintin in the Congo**

A Belgian court (2012) rejected a five-year-old bid by a Congolese student to have the 1946 edition of Hergé's book banned because of its racist depictions. "It is clear that neither the story, nor the fact that it has been put on sale, has a goal to ... create an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment," the court said in its judgment. Bienvenu Mbutu Mondondo, who launched the campaign in 2007 to ban the book, plans to appeal.

Source: Jan. 2012, pp. 17-18; May 2012, p. 130.

**Hosseini, Khaled**  
**The Kite Runner**

BLOOMSBURY

Challenged, but retained as part of Senior Advanced Placement English at the Valley View High School in Jonesboro, Ark. (2011). The issue arose after two patrons disapproved of the novel because of a scene depicting male-on-male rape, sexual innuendo, and vulgar language, as well as religious content throughout the book. Challenged as optional reading in the tenth-grade honors class at Troy, Pa. Area Schools (2012) because the novel depicts a sodomy rape in graphic detail and uses vulgar language.

Source: Mar. 2012, p. 79; May 2012, pp. 106-7.

**Kehret, Peg**  
**Stolen Children**

DUTTON

Challenged, but retained at the Central York, Pa. School District (2011) despite a parental concern that the book "was too violent." The book centers on the kidnapping of thirteen-year-old Amy and her three-year-old babysitting charge. The kidnapers videotape the pair and send the DVDs to their parents for ransom; Amy works to send clues through the videos to help police find them.

Source: Mar. 2011, p. 52; May 2011, p. 114.

**LaCour, Nina**  
**Hold Still**

DUTTON BOOKS

Pulled from the Blue Springs, Mo. School District library and classrooms (2011) because the book is "riddled with obscenities." The novel is about a young girl coping with the suicide of her best friend. The book, according to parents, was read as part of an extra credit assignment in a freshman English class. The local chapter of the ACLU is threatening to get involved if the book is permanently removed.

Source: Jan. 2012, pp. 9-10.

**Lelyveld, Joseph**  
**Great Soul:**  
**Mahatma Gandhi and**  
**His Struggle with India**

KNOPF

Banned in parts of India (2011). A Santa Cruz, Calif. educational organization, Foundation for Excellence, canceled an event planned in honor of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author (2011). The foundation provides scholarships for students in India and canceled the event after the biography hinted a homosexual relationship between Gandhi and a German named Hermann Kallenbach. The foundation "didn't want to be involved with any controversy."

Source: July 2011, pp. 141-42.

**Lott, Bret**  
**The Hunt Club**

HARPER PERENNIAL

Challenged as one option for the required summer reading at Wando High School in Mount Pleasant, S.C. (2011) because it "uses foul language, degrades women, and people of color." The novel is set in the South Carolina Lowcountry and tells the story of a teenage boy and his uncle who find a dead body and have to figure out what happened.

Source: Nov. 2011, pp. 204-5.

**Mackler, Carolyn**  
**Tangled**

CANDLEWICK PRESS

Banned from the Borger, Tex. Independent School District intermediate and middle school library and removed from class reading lists (2011) because of concerns over sexual content and profanity.

Source: Nov. 2011, pp. 203-4.

**Martinez, Elizabeth**  
**500 Years of Chicano History**  
**in Pictures**

SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Banned from the Tucson, Ariz. Unified School District (2012) along with *Critical Race Theory*, by Richard Delgado; *Message to Aztlan*, by Rodolfo Corky Gonzales; *Chicano! The History of the Mexican Civil Rights Movement*, by Arturo Rosales; *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by Paulo Freire; *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, edited by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson; and *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, by Rodolfo Acuña. In a district with over sixty percent of the students coming from Mexican-American backgrounds, the school board "dismantled its Mexican-American Studies program, packed away its offending books, shuttled its students into other classes," according to an editorial in the *New York Times*, because "it was blackmailed into doing so." The *Times* referred to measures taken by Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal, who threatened to withhold millions of dollars if the school district didn't terminate the nationally acclaimed program immediately. The superintendent has spent years crusading against ethnic-studies programs that he claims are "brainwashing" children into thinking that Latinos have been victims of white oppression.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 49, 51, 82-84; May 2012, pp. 102-3.

**Morrison, Toni**  
**Beloved**

KNOPF; NAL

Challenged, but retained as a text in Salem, Mich. High School Advanced Placement English courses (2012). The complainants cited the allegedly obscene nature of some passages in the book and asked that it be removed from the curriculum. District officials determined the novel was appropriate for the age and maturity level of Advanced Placement students. In reviewing the novel, the committee also considered the accuracy of the material, the objectivity of the material, and the necessity of using the material in light of the curriculum.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 79-80; May 2012, p. 127-28.



**Morrison, Toni**  
**The Bluest Eye**

KNOPF; NAL

Challenged in the Brookfield, Conn. High School curriculum (2011) because of sex scenes, profanity, and age-appropriateness of the book. Students in the high school have been reading Morrison's book since 1995.

Source: Jan. 2012, pp. 11-12.

**Murakami, Haruki**  
**Norwegian Wood**

FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX

Pulled from the required summer reading list for middle school and high school students at the Monroe Township Schools in Williamstown, N.J. (2011) after parents complained about a gay sex scene.

Source: Nov. 2011, p. 204.

**Nasrin, Taslima**  
**Lajja (Shame)**

MOTILAL UK BOOKS OF INDIA

The head teacher at the K.C. Technical and Business Management College in Dhaka, Bangladesh (2012) was arrested after the book, considered blasphemous by some Muslims, was found in the school's library. The teacher could face up to three years in jail if he is found guilty of authorizing the book's inclusion in the library. The *Prothom Alo* newspaper said the teacher denied having the book and said he was the victim of a conspiracy. The novel was banned a year after its publication in 1993, and Nasrin was forced to flee Bangladesh to escape death threats from radical Muslims who considered it blasphemous for advocating secularism.

Source: Mar. 2012, p. 63.

**Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds**  
**Lovingly Alice**

ATHENEUM

Removed from the Quail Run Elementary library in the Paradise Valley, Ariz. Unified School District (2011) after the mother of an eight-year-old student complained about its sexual content.

Source: July 2011, pp. 136-37.

**Ockler, Sarah**  
**Twenty Boy Summer**

LITTLE, BROWN

Removed from Republic, Mo. High School (2011), but later returned and stored in a secure section of the library only accessible to parents. Teachers cannot require the book nor read it aloud in school. A Republic resident filed a complaint about the appropriateness of the book because it sensationalizes "sexual promiscuity, questionable language, drunkenness, lying to parents, and a lack of remorse by the characters."

Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 243-44; Sept. 2011, p. 175; Nov. 2011, p. 203.

**Pilkey, Dav**  
**The Adventure of Super Diaper Baby**

SCHOLASTIC

Banned from the Channelview, Tex. Independent School District (2011) because it contained the phrase "poo poo head."

Source: Sept. 2011, p. 176.

**Richardson, Justin, and Peter Parnell**  
**And Tango Makes Three**

SIMON

Pulled from the Gibbs Elementary School in Rochester, Minn. (2011) as inappropriate for elementary school students and removed from school library shelves. This decision was later reversed as a mistake for failing to follow district policy. Eventually, a "temporary resolution" was reached requiring that one of the parents who challenged the book be present when their child checks out books from the school media center in the future.

Source: May 2012, p. 127.

**Sapphire [Ramona Lofton]**  
**Push**

VINTAGE

Challenged on an extracurricular reading list in the Horry County, S.C. school library (2011). The 1996 novel is based on the story of Precious Jones, an illiterate sixteen-year-old, who grows up in poverty. Precious is raped by her father, battered by her mother, and dismissed by social workers. The story follows Precious, pregnant with a second child by her father, through her journey of learning how to read and be on her own. The novel was made into a critically acclaimed movie, *Precious*, in 2009, which received six Oscar nominations, including Best Picture.

Source: May 2011, p. 94.

**Schrag, Ariel**  
**Stuck in the Middle: 17 Comics from an Unpleasant Age**

VIKING

Challenged, but retained in three Maine towns—Dixfield, Mexico, and Buckfield—middle school libraries (2011) despite "objectionable sexual and language references." The book, however, will be placed in the libraries' professional collection, which means a student may take out the book only if parental permission is granted.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 57-58.

**Semencic, Carl**  
**Pit Bulls and Tenacious Guard Dogs**

THOMASSON GRANT & HOWELL

Banned at the Logan, Australia West Library (2011) because it contains information on restricted dog breeds. In 2001, under Local Law 4 (Animal Management) the Logan City Council placed a ban on, among others, pit bull terriers and American pit bulls. Therefore, Logan City Council libraries do not stock literature on any of the prohibited breeds.

Source: May 2011, p. 118.

**Shakespeare, William**  
**No Fear Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet**

SPARKNOTES

Some parents in Liberty, S.C. (2012) are furious about the book their kids are reading in middle school. They say it's too mature for their kids because of the sex. The book in question is an easy-to-read version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Source: May 2012, p. 107.

**Sheff, Nic**  
**Tweak:**  
**Growing Up on Methamphetamines**

ATHENEUM

Pulled from the required summer reading list for middle school and high school students at the Monroe Township Schools in Williamstown, N.J. (2011) because the book includes "depictions of drug usage and a homosexual orgy."

Source: Nov. 2011, p. 204.

**Swift, Graham**  
**Waterland**

VINTAGE

Challenged as a text in Salem, Mich. High School Advanced Placement English courses (2012) due to the book's sexual content. Superintendent Jeremy Hughes immediately pulled the book, but later decided to put the book through the district's review process. The book was reviewed and retained.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 59–60; May 2012, pp. 127–28.

**Vonnegut, Kurt**  
**Slaughterhouse-Five**

DELL; DIAL

Removed from Republic, Mo. High School (2011), but later returned and stored in a secure section of the library accessible only to parents. Teachers cannot require the book nor read it aloud in school. A Republic resident filed a complaint about the appropriateness of the book arguing that it teaches principles contrary to the *Bible*.

Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 243–44; Sept. 2011, p. 175; Nov. 2011, p. 203.

**Von Ziegesar, Cecily**  
**Only in Your Dreams:**  
**A Gossip Girl Novel**

LITTLE

Challenged at the Lake County, Fla. Public Library (2011) by a county commissioner because the book explicitly details the lives and loves of privileged adolescent girls in New York City. The book inspired a popular television series, which premiered in 2007. Removed from all libraries in the Picayune, Miss. school district due to the book's explicit language.

Source: Nov. 2011, pp. 202–3.

**Walls, Jeannette**  
**The Glass Castle:**  
**A Memoir**

SCRIBNER

Challenged, but retained as part of the tenth-grade English curriculum in the Sade-Central City High School classrooms in Cairnbrook, Pa. (2012). The 2005 best-selling memoir in which Walls describes her hardscrabble upbringing includes sexual assault, casual profanity, drunkenness, seeing the family cat pitched from a moving car, and having to drink ditch water. Even critics of the graphic book praise its theme—overcoming adversity.

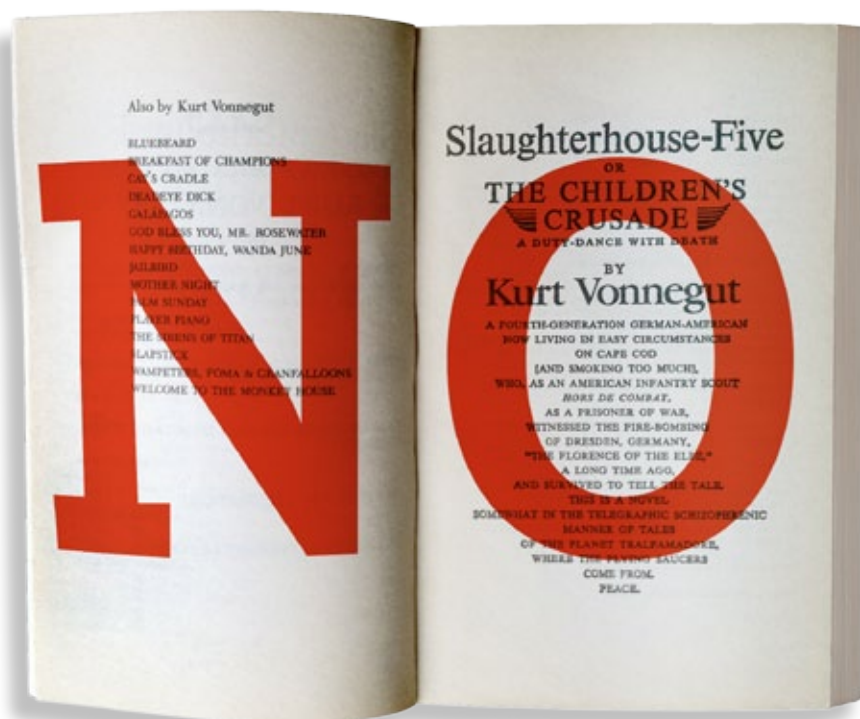
Source: May 2012, p. 128.

**Watson, Larry**  
**Montana 1948:**  
**A Novel**

MILKWEED EDITIONS

Challenged, but eventually retained at the Merrill, Wis. High School (2011) despite some parents complaining that it is "questionable reading material for their tenth-grade students because of language, and sexual and racist themes." School leaders added it to the curriculum twelve years ago, saying it was a less controversial substitute for *Catcher in the Rye*. School leaders also said students have the option of reading a different book if they don't feel comfortable with the one they're assigned.

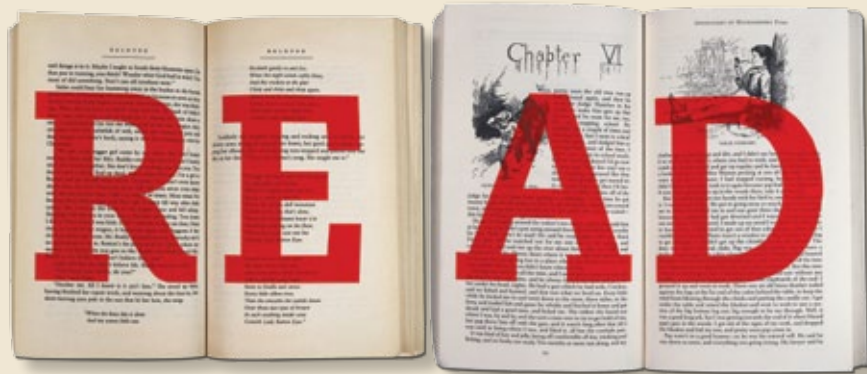
Source: July 2011, pp. 161–62; Nov. 2011, p. 206; Jan. 2012, p. 35.





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## Protect Your Right to ...



Each day, all across the country, one of our most basic freedoms—the right to read—is in danger. In communities large and small, censorship attempts threaten to undermine our freedom to read. Without our constant support, the First Amendment freedoms that we so often take for granted—the right to read, explore ideas, and express ourselves freely—are at risk.

The First Amendment guarantees that each of us has the right to express our views, including opinions about particular books. At the same time, the First Amendment also ensures that none of us has the right to control or limit another person's ability to read or access information. Yet, when individuals or groups file formal written requests demanding that libraries and schools remove specific books from the shelves, they are doing just that—attempting to restrict the rights of other individuals to access those books.

The rights and protections of the First Amendment extend to children and teens as well as adults. While parents have the right—and the responsibility—to guide their own children's reading, that right does not extend to other people's children. Similarly, each adult has the right to choose his or her own reading materials, along with the responsibility to acknowledge and respect the right of others to do the same.

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 precious freedoms, we become participants in the ongoing evolution of our democratic society.

**Act now** to protect your right to read.  
Here are three ways that you can get involved:

## Stay Informed

### Be aware of what's happening

The best way to fight censorship is to be aware that it's happening. When you encounter it, be prepared to speak up or let others know.

Ask the 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, ask to join them.

Legislators and public officials often introduce legislation to restrict access to books and other materials in libraries, schools, and bookstores. Let officials know that there are citizens actively opposed to demands to restrict or remove books in schools and libraries.

### Attend school board, library board, and PTA meetings

*You can speak up about the importance of free speech to education in a democratic society.*

As a regular participant in gatherings, you have the opportunity to learn about policies governing access to books and materials. You can witness firsthand when someone demands that a school or library remove a book or restrict access to books.

### Subscribe to print and online news publications

*You can stay current on First Amendment rights and censorship issues.*

**The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom** ([www.ala.org/oif](http://www.ala.org/oif)) publishes the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* ([www.ala.org/nif](http://www.ala.org/nif)) and provides regular news updates via the OIF blog ([www.oif.ala.org/oif](http://www.oif.ala.org/oif)), Twitter ([twitter.com/oif](https://twitter.com/oif)) and the IFACTION mailing list ([lists.ala.org/sympa/info/ifaction](http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/ifaction)).

**The First Amendment Center** ([www.firstamendmentcenter.org](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org)) maintains an online First Amendment library ([www.firstamendmentcenter.org/research-articles/](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/research-articles/)) and provides breaking news about First Amendment issues via its RSS newsfeed.

### Join groups committed to preserving the right to read

*You can participate by joining these nonprofit organizations.*

**The Freedom to Read Foundation** ([www.ftrf.org](http://www.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 litigation dealing with free expression in libraries and other venues. Members receive a quarterly newsletter, *The FTRF News*.

**The American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression** ([www.abffe.org](http://www.abffe.org)) promotes and protects the free exchange of ideas, particularly those contained in books, by opposing restrictions on the freedom of speech.

**The National Coalition Against Censorship** ([www.ncac.org](http://www.ncac.org)) is an alliance of fifty national non-profit organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups, that works to educate both members and the public at large about the dangers of censorship and how to oppose it.

**The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund** ([www.cbldf.org](http://www.cbldf.org)) works to protect free speech in comics by supporting First Amendment rights for members of the comics community, fans, and professionals alike.

**The American Civil Liberties Union** ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)) works daily to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, including the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Local chapters and affiliates ([www.aclu.org/affiliates](http://www.aclu.org/affiliates)) provide assistance to local communities.

# Challenge Censorship

## Report censorship to ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom

*You can help raise awareness of censorship in your local community.*

ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracks attempts to remove or restrict books across the country. By reporting censorship incidents, you can help to identify trends in censorship cases and document responses and solutions to censorship. All identifying information is kept strictly confidential. You can file reports online by going to [www.ala.org/challengereporting](http://www.ala.org/challengereporting).

## Attend and participate in public hearings

*You can inform public officials that censorship won't be tolerated in the community.*

By attending hearings, you can speak out in support of free expression and the right to read freely. You can let officials know that there are citizens actively opposed to demands to restrict or remove books in schools and libraries. Such attempts seldom succeed when concerned citizens speak out against censorship.

## Write letters to public officials

*You can write to public officials encouraging them to preserve the freedom to read.*

Let them know that your rights and your views are entitled to the same respect as those who seek to censor books. Write to any public official you believe can

prevent the suppression of books in your community: your mayor, city council, other city officials, library board members, school board members, superintendent of schools, etc.

## Send a letter or an op-ed article to local news organizations

*You can update community news outlets with information and opinion.*

Make sure you let reporters and editors know that there are members of the community who oppose censorship and the official suppression of ideas. Like letters to public officials, letters sent to local news outlets and comments posted on websites and blogs are effective ways to raise awareness.

## Work with community groups

*You can network with local organizations for support.*

Inform professional associations, civic organizations, and religious groups about attempts to remove books from the community's library or school. You can ask to speak to their membership about the importance of preserving First Amendment freedoms. Or ask if you can contribute an article to the group's newsletter or website. You can speak with the group's leaders and ask them to lend public support to efforts to protect the right to read in the community.

## Form a coalition to oppose censorship in your community

*You can partner with others who support the right to read freely.*

Even a small number of persons can form an effective group to oppose censorship. Such groups allow members to share responsibility for attending meetings and conducting outreach efforts. By joining together you can become a resource for the community as a whole. To read the story of one exemplary community coalition, visit their website at [www.westbendparentsforreespeech.webs.com](http://www.westbendparentsforreespeech.webs.com).

## Seek assistance from national groups

*You can get guidance and support from experienced organizations.*

Get started by researching existing groups so that you can benefit from their expertise. Check out the national organizations listed on page 10 for assistance, resources, and referrals whenever you or your organization address demands to remove books from libraries or schools.

# Support Your Local Schools and Libraries

## Join Library Friends Groups and PTAs

*You can become an advocate for community education groups.*

Libraries and schools rely on volunteers and advocates to accomplish their mission of educating young people. These groups also provide information and lifelong learning opportunities to adults in the community. You can contribute by participating in Friends groups, PTAs, or volunteering directly where your help will strengthen these vital institutions.

## Participate in Banned Books Week

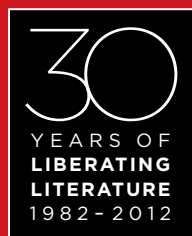
*You can promote the right to read by joining in the celebration.*

Each year, libraries, schools, and bookstores across the nation celebrate the freedom to read by observing Banned Books Week. This public event in September features author visits and readings from banned books. You can show your support for the freedom to read by attending these events. Please visit [www.ala.org/bbooks](http://www.ala.org/bbooks) for more resources and information.



## SUPPORT **BANNED BOOKS WEEK**

Banned Books Week merchandise to help celebrate the freedom to read—such as posters, t-shirts, buttons, and bookmarks—is available for purchase at the ALA Store Online at [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org), or by calling toll-free at **1-866-SHOP ALA** (1-866-746-7252).



For more information on Banned Books Week, please visit [www.ala.org/bbooks](http://www.ala.org/bbooks)