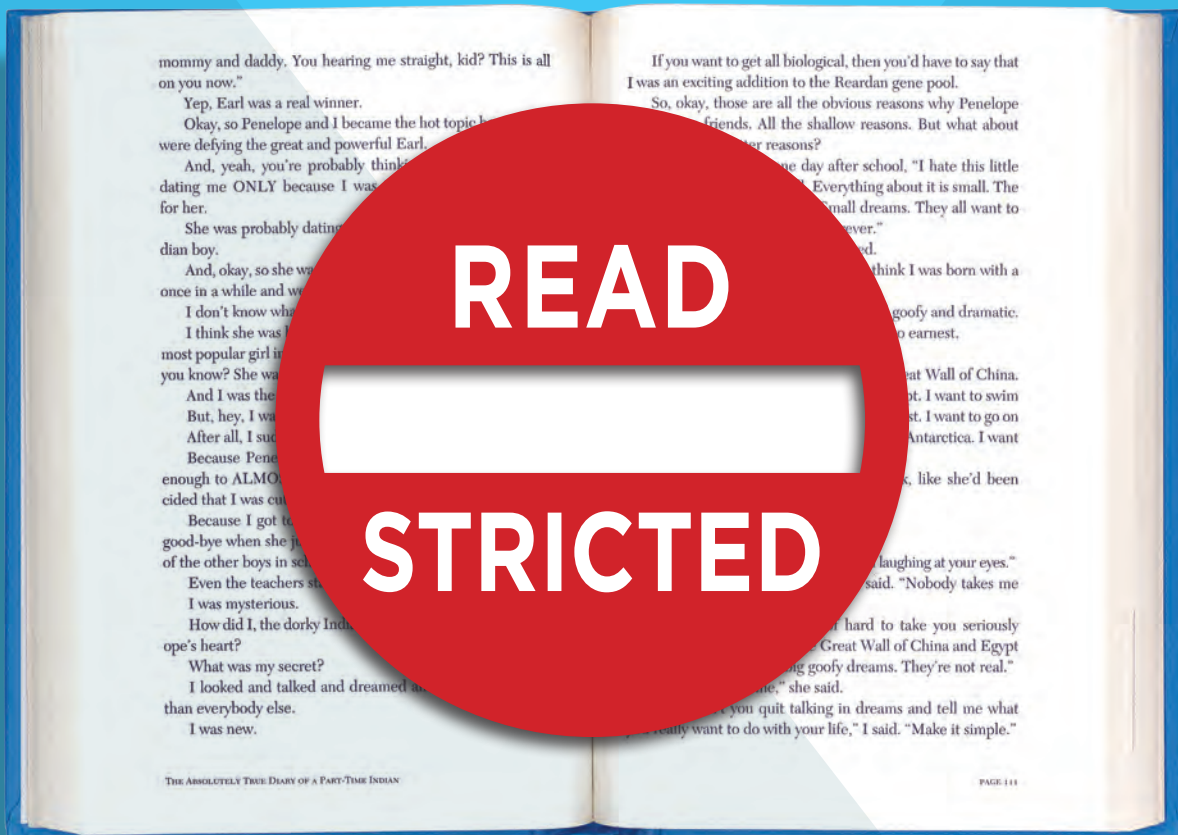
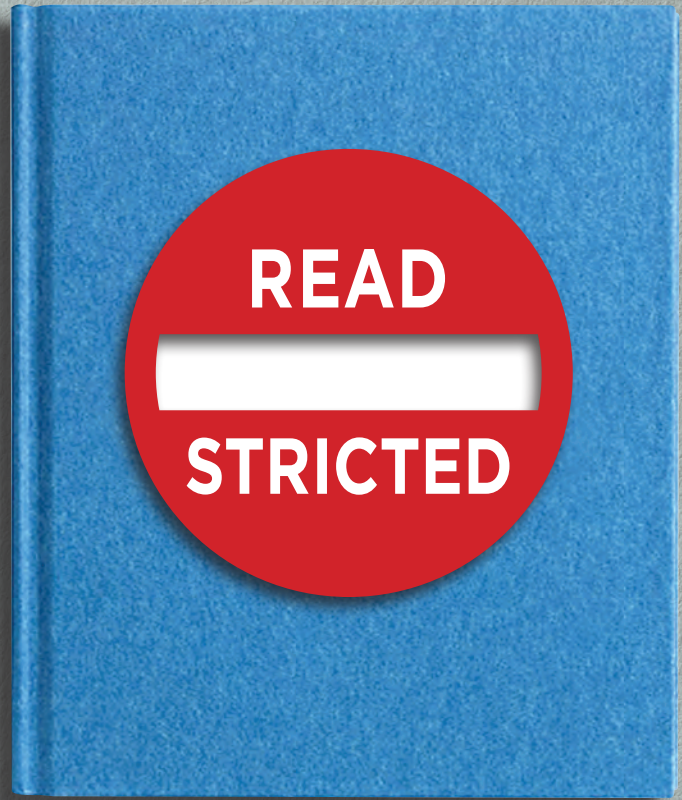


# BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED 2014-2015



Robert P. Doyle



## Books **Challenged** or **Banned** in 2014-2015

Banned Books Week 2015 is celebrating more than thirty years of 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 up to 85 percent of actual 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.



**WARNING**

**BANNING BOOKS  
RESTRICTS  
OUR FREEDOM  
TO READ**

This bibliography represents **books challenged, restricted, removed, or banned** in 2014 and 2015 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2014 to March 2015 and in *American Libraries Direct (AL Direct)*.

(Dates prior to May 2014 indicate the controversy began earlier, but continued into 2014 or 2015.)

**Alexie, Sherman**

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**

THORNDIKE PRESS; LITTLE, BROWN

Pulled from the Meridian, Idaho, high school supplemental reading list (2014) after some parents complained that the novel “discusses masturbation, contains profanity, and has been viewed as anti-Christian.” School board members rejected a committee recommendation that the book should stay on the tenth-grade English supplemental reading list with parental permission required. Challenged at the Cedar Grove Middle School in Wilmington, N.C., (2014) because “the book contains numerous depictions of sexual behavior, as well as instances of racism, vulgar language, bullying, and violence.”

Attached to the complaint was a petition signed by 42 members of the complainant’s church, Soldier Bay Baptist. The complainant is not the parent or grandparent of a child at Cedar Grove. District policy states that parents or guardians who do not approve of school reading materials may request alternative texts. Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District’s approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and

handles parents’ objections. The challenged contemporary young adult book is a National Book Award winner. It tells the story of a teenager who grows up on the Spokane Indian Reservation but leaves to attend an all-white high school in a farm town. The book has strong language, including racial slurs.

Source: May 2014, pp. 80-81; July-Sept. 2014, p. 119; Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.

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

**The House of Night series**

ST. MARTIN’S PRESS

Challenged at the Austin Memorial Library in Cleveland, Tex. (2014), along with other young adult books that have a vampire theme. A local minister requested that the “occultic (sic) and demonic room be shut down, and these books be purged from the shelves, and that public funds would no longer be used to purchase such material, or at least require parents to check them out for their children.”

Source: *AL Direct*, August 27, 2014.

**Crutcher, Chris**

**Chinese Handcuffs**

GREENWILLOW PRESS

Challenged, but retained in the Waukesha, Wis., West High School library (2014) despite concerns about “extreme violence.” A 1990 ALA Best Books for Young Adults, the novel addresses issues of suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and sexual abuse including gang rape.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 171-72.



**Danforth, Emily M.**  
**The Miseducation of  
Cameron Post**

BALZER + BRAY

Removed from the Cape Henlopen school district's summer reading list in Lewes, Del. (2014), due to language deemed inappropriate for entering high school freshmen. The book is set in rural Montana in the early 1990s. The parents of the main character, a teenage girl named Cameron Post, die in a car accident before finding out she's gay. Orphaned, the girl moves in with her old-fashioned grandmother and ultra-conservative aunt; she falls in love with her best friend—a girl. Selected for the 2013 Best Fiction for Young Adults list by the Young Adult Library Services Association, the list includes recommended books for ages 12-18 that meet "the criteria of both good quality literature and appealing reading for teens."

Source: July-Sept. 2014, pp. 118-19.

**DeClements, Barthe**  
**Sixth Grade Can Really Kill You**

VIKING KESTREL

Challenged by a parent in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, Minn., elementary school libraries (2014) because it uses the "r-word" (retarded) to refer to students with special needs.

Source: May 2014, p. 79.

**Doctorow, Cory**  
**Little Brother**

TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES

Cancelled as the approved reading assignment in the Pensacola, Fla. (2014), One School/One Book summer reading program by a high school principal because it promoted hacker culture. The principal "made it clear that the book was being challenged because of its politics and its content." In response Doctorow and his publisher sent 200 complimentary copies of the book directly to students at the school.

Source: July-Sept. 2014, p. 119.

**Geisel, Theodor Seuss**  
**Hop on Pop: The Simplest Seuss  
for Youngest Use**

RANDOM HOUSE

Challenged, but retained at the Toronto, Canada, Public Library (2014) despite a patron's concern that the book "encourages children to use violence against their fathers." The patron requested that the library apologize to local fathers and pay damages resulting from the book's message. Written in 1963, the classic children's picture book ranked sixteenth on *Publishers Weekly's* 2001 list of the all-time best-selling hardcover books for children. Based on a 2007 online poll, the National Education Association named the book one of its "Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children."

Source: *AL Direct*, April 30, 2014.

**Geisel, Theodor Seuss**  
**If I Ran the Zoo**

RANDOM HOUSE

Challenged, but retained at the Vancouver, Canada, Public Library (2014) despite a line in the poem about helpers who "all wear their eyes at a slant," accompanied by illustrations that are racial stereotypes of Asians. The book is often credited with the first printed modern English use of the word "nerd" in a sentence. The library will no longer read it at storytime or promote it other than as resource material in a study of how the portrayal of other cultures has changed over time.

Source: *AL Direct*, May 14, 2014.

**Green, John**  
**An Abundance of Katherines**

DUTTON BOOKS

Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District's approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and

handles parents' objections. The challenged contemporary young adult book is about a boy who has dated and been dumped by multiple girls named Katherine; it includes sexual references.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.

**Green, John**  
**The Fault in Our Stars**

DUTTON BOOKS

Pulled from library shelves at the Frank Augustus Miller Middle School in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. (2014), because the subject matter involves teens dying of cancer who use crude language and have sex. Removed from the Riverside, Calif., Unified School District middle schools (2014) after a parent complained the teen love story was inappropriate for that age group. The *New York Times* best seller was released in June 2014 as a PG-13 movie. In 2014 Green was included in *Time* magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

Source: Nov. 2014, p. 159; *AL Direct*, Sept. 24, 2014.

**Green, John**  
**Looking for Alaska**

DUTTON BOOKS

Challenged, but retained in the Waukesha, Wis., South High School (2014) despite claims the book is "too racy to read." 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: Nov. 2014, pp. 171-72.

**Green, John**  
**Paper Towns**

DUTTON BOOKS

Removed from the eighth-grade reading list at Dr. John Long Middle School in Wesley Chapel, Fla. (2014), after a parent complained that the book contained F-bombs, several discussions about teen sex, and references to girls as "honey bunnies," which the parent

considered misogynistic. The young adult book was a *New York Times* best seller, received the 2009 American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults award, received the 2009 Edgar Award for best young-adult novel, and is to be released as a film in July 2015.

Source: *AL Direct*, June 24, 2014.

**Haddon, Mark**

**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time**

DOUBLEDAY

Banned from the ninth-grade honors-level English reading list in the Wilson County, Tenn., schools (2014) due to offensive language. The book was removed from libraries and the possession of students soon after. The decision was later rescinded on the advice of the school board attorney due to possible conflict with a board policy. The award-winning book is about a 15-year-old autistic child who investigates the death of a neighbor's dog.

Source: May 2014, pp. 81-82; Nov. 2014, p. 134.

**Harris, Robie H.**

**It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex & Sexual Health**

CANDLEWICK PRESS

Challenged as an e-book at the Francis Howell middle school libraries in St. Charles, Mo. (2014), because of cartoon nudity.

Source: May 2014, pp. 79-80.

**Harris, Robie H.**

**Who's in My Family?: All About Our Families (Let's Talk About You and Me)**

CANDLEWICK PRESS

One of three books about gay couples withdrawn from libraries in Singapore (2014), where gay sex is illegal. In a statement, the National Library Board suggested that gayness and family values are incompatible. The book is about a journey to the zoo with Nellie,

Gus, and their family, where they learn about where people live, what they eat, their habits and hobbies, and how their families are composed, including references to single parents and same-sex couples. Copies of the book will be pulped. It was announced later that authorities in Singapore reversed their decision and stopped the national library from destroying the children's books, after its decision in July produced a public outcry over literary censorship. Information Minister Yaacob Ibrahim ordered that the books be moved to the adult section, where parents can borrow them for their children.

Source: July-Sept. 2014, 119-20.

**Herge. [Georges Remi]**

**Tintin in America**

FRENCH & EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS

Pulled by the Winnipeg, Canada Public Library (2015) pending review due to stereotypical and racist depictions of indigenous peoples.

Source: *AL Direct*, March 19, 2015.

**Hesse, Hermann**

**Siddhartha**

BANTAM CLASSICS

Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District's approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and handles parents' objections. This classic novel, written in 1922, is about the spiritual journey of a man living in the time of Buddha. In the book, the main character fathers a child out of wedlock and has sexual encounters with prostitutes. The novel is on the College Board's reading list for Advanced Placement English Literature.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.



**Hopkins, Ellen**

**Identical**

SIMON & SCHUSTER

Challenged in the Appoquinimink School District in Middletown, Del. (2014). A parent complained about the young adult book and then began circulating a petition to require the school district to adopt a process for ensuring that all material was age appropriate. The *New York Times* best seller deals with the story of a child who was sexually abused by her father.

Source: Jan. 2015, p. 7.

**Hosseini, Khaled**

**The Kite Runner**

BLOOMSBURY

Challenged, but retained as part of the Waukesha, Wis., West High School curriculum (2014) despite claims the book "desensitizes students to violence." The *New York Times* best seller is set against a backdrop of tumultuous events, from the fall of Afghanistan's monarchy through the Soviet military intervention, the exodus of refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the rise of the Taliban regime. A number of adaptations were created following publication, including several stage performances and a graphic novel. The film of the same name was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2007.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 171-72.

**Huxley, Aldous**  
**Brave New World**

HARPER

Challenged in an Advanced Placement language composition class at Cape Henlopen High School in Lewes, Del. (2014). Two school board members contend that while the book has long been a staple in high school classrooms, students can now grasp the sexual and drug-related references through a quick Internet search.

Source: May 2014, p. 80.

**Levithan, David**  
**Two Boys Kissing**

ALFRED A. KNOPF

Challenged by a parent in the Fauquier County, Va., public high school library (2014). The book tells the story of Harry and Craig, two 17-year-olds who are about to take part in a 32-hour marathon of kissing to set a new Guinness World Record—all of which is narrated by a Greek chorus of the generation of gay men lost to AIDS.

Source: May 2014, p. 80.

**Meyer, Stephanie**  
**Twilight series**

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

Challenged at the Austin Memorial Library in Cleveland, Tex. (2014), along with other young adult books that have a vampire theme. A local minister requested that the, “occultic (sic) and demonic room be shut down, and these books be purged from the shelves, and that public funds would no longer be used to purchase such material, or at least require parents to check them out for their children.”

Source: *AL Direct*, August 27, 2014.

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

HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON

Challenged, but retained in the Durant, Okla., high school library (2014), despite a parent's concerns over sexual and violent content. The 1970 novel was the first by the Pulitzer Prize winner.

Source: *AL Direct*, May 28, 2014.

**Morrison, Toni**  
**Song of Solomon**

PLUME

Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District's approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and handles parents' objections. The challenged coming-of-age novel, written by a Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize winner, is about a young black man who grows up in Michigan. It has profanity, sexual imagery, and a story line about an incestuous relationship. The novel is on the College Board's reading list for Advanced Placement English Literature.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.

**Murugan, Perumal**  
**Madhorubhagan**  
**(One Part Woman)**

PENGUIN

Various Hindu political organizations in New Delhi, India (2014) have demanded a ban on the Tamil writer's novel. They allege the novel portrays the Kailasanathar temple in Tiruchengode and women devotees in a “bad light.” *Madhorubhagan* tells the tale of a childless couple, Kali and Ponna. Their predicament is discussed in the backdrop of the “traditional free, consensual sex rituals” during the festival of the temple. After receiving threats and abuse, the author has sought police protection for himself and his family. In turn, various Hindu political organizations have called for the arrest of both the author and the publisher.

Source: March 2015, p. 55.

**Okimoto, Jean Davies and Elaine M. Aoki**  
**The White Swan Express:**  
**A Story about Adoption**

CLARION BOOKS

One of three books about gay couples withdrawn from libraries in Singapore (2014), where gay sex is illegal. In a statement, the National Library Board suggested that gayness and family values are incompatible. The book is about four couples—one of which is a lesbian couple—who travel to China to adopt baby girls. Copies of the book will be pulped. It was announced later that authorities in Singapore reversed their decision and stopped the national library from destroying the children's books, after its decision in July produced a public outcry over literary censorship. Information Minister Yaacob Ibrahim ordered that the books be moved to the adult section, where parents can borrow them for their children.

Source: July-Sept. 2014, pp. 119-20.

**Picoult, Jodi**  
**Nineteen Minutes**

ATRIA BOOKS

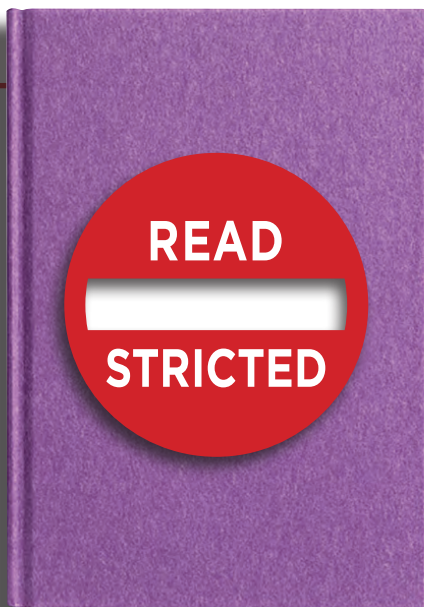
Challenged at the Gilford, N.H., High School (2014). The award-winning novel depicts a school shooting in a fictional New Hampshire high school. The novel contains depictions of physical violence in public schools and a scene of graphic sexual activity. It has been a reading selection available to Gilford High School students in the past. Challenged, but retained at the Kennett, Pa., High School (2014) despite a parent's complaint that the content in the book is not suitable for high school students.

Source: May 2014, p. 81; Jan. 2015, p. 18.

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

SIMON & SCHUSTER

One of three books about gay couples withdrawn from libraries in Singapore (2014), where gay sex is illegal. The children's book was inspired by a real-life story of two male penguins raising a baby chick. In a statement, the National



Library Board suggested that gayness and family values are incompatible. Copies of the book will be pulped. It was announced later that authorities in Singapore reversed their decision and stopped the national library from destroying the children's books, after its decision in July produced a public outcry over literary censorship. Information Minister Yaacob Ibrahim ordered that the books be moved to the adult section, where parents can borrow them for their children.

Source: July-Sept. 2014, pp. 119-20; *AL Direct*, July 23, 2014.

**Satrapi, Marjane**  
**Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood**

PANTHEON BOOKS

Challenged, but retained on the Glenwood High School reading list in Chatham, Ill. (2014). A parent condemned the images of dismembered bodies and a guard using urine as a form of torture. The book tells the story of a young girl growing up in Iran during the Islamic revolution of 1979 and the reintroduction of a religious state. The graphic novel has been praised for teaching students about diversity and different points of view, but it also contains intense language, images, and themes.

Source: Nov. 2014, p. 171.

**Shipler, David K.**  
**The Working Poor: Invisible in America**

VINTAGE BOOKS

Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District's approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and handles parents' objections. Written by a Pulitzer Prize winner, the challenged book is about Americans in low-skilled jobs who struggle because of economic and personal obstacles. Some parents objected to the nonfiction book because it has a passage about a woman who was sexually abused as a child and later had an abortion.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.

**Stein, Garth**  
**The Art of Racing in the Rain**

HARPER

Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District's approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and handles parents' objections. The challenged *New York Times* best seller about a racecar driver grieving the loss of his wife includes a sex scene that made some parents uncomfortable.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.

**Steinbeck, John**  
**Of Mice and Men**

BANTAM; PENGUIN; VIKING

Retained in the Brainerd, Minn., School District curriculum (2014) despite the complaints of two parents who objected to the use of "Jesus Christ" as a curse word, the use of the n-word to describe African Americans, and the term "Japs." They argued this type of language undermines the values of respect they try to instill in their children and the novel should be pulled from the curriculum. Parents and students who object to the language may choose an alternate book by the Nobel Prize-winning author.

Source: *AL Direct*, April 30, 2014.

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

SCRIBNER

Suspended from the Highland Park, Tex., Independent School District's approved book list (2014) by the school superintendent. The decision sparked a backlash and drew national attention. The superintendent then reinstated the book. In February 2015, the school district trustees approved policy changes on how the district selects books and handles parents' objections. The challenged memoir is about growing up in poverty with a father who spent his money on alcohol and a mother who became homeless.

Source: Nov. 2014, pp. 162, 174-76; March 2015, p. 47.







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.

Protect your right to read.  
Here are three ways that you can get involved:

**ACT NOW!**

# 1 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** ([ala.org/oif](http://ala.org/oif)) publishes the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* and provides regular news updates via the OIF blog, Twitter ([twitter.com/oif](https://twitter.com/oif)) and the IFACTION mailing list.

**The First Amendment Center** ([firstamendmentcenter.org](http://firstamendmentcenter.org)) maintains an online First Amendment library ([firstamendmentcenter.org/research-articles](http://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** ([ftrf.org](http://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 for Free Expression** ([bookweb.org/abfe](http://bookweb.org/abfe)) 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** ([ncac.org](http://ncac.org)) is an alliance of fifty national nonprofit organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups, that work to educate both members and the public about the dangers of censorship and how to oppose it.

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

**The American Civil Liberties Union** ([aclu.org](http://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 ([aclu.org/affiliates](http://aclu.org/affiliates)) provide assistance to local communities.

**The Association of American Publishers** ([publishers.org](http://publishers.org)) works to protect intellectual freedom and the right of free expression so that American publishers can continue to flourish in a free marketplace of ideas.



## 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 [ala.org/challengereporting](http://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 that 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. 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.

### 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 addresses 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 [ala.org/bbooks](http://ala.org/bbooks) for more resources and information or connect on Facebook ([facebook.com/bannedbooksweek](https://facebook.com/bannedbooksweek)).

**Sponsored by:**

American Booksellers Association  
American Booksellers 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  
People for the American Way Foundation  
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**SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 3**

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