

Books Challenged or Banned in 2007-2008

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Banned Books Week 2008 is the twenty-seventh annual celebration 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 seeing 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can lead to voluntary restriction of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy; in these cases, material may not be published at all or may not be purchased by a bookstore, library, or school district.

We have reason to celebrate. Due to the commitment of parents, students, librarians, teachers, and other concerned citizens, more and more challenges are unsuccessful, and the reading material remains available.

It should be noted that this bibliography is incomplete because many prohibitions against free speech and expression remain undocumented. Surveys indicate 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 2007–2008 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2007–May 2008. (A date prior to May 2007 indicates the controversy began earlier, but continues in 2007–2008.)

Adler, C. S. *The Shell Lady's Daughter*. Coward-McCann. Challenged, but retained at the Campbell County junior high school libraries in Gillette, Wyo. (2007) despite "objectionable subjects: sexual relations between teenagers, sexual thoughts, promiscuity, masturbation, deceiving parents, suicide by overdosing on sleeping pills, suicide by drowning oneself and self-inflicted pain." The book won the 1983 Best Books for Young Adults Award from the American Library Association. Source: Nov. 2007, p. 241; Mar. 2008, pp. 79–80.

Allan, Nicholas. *Where Willy Went*. Knopf. Challenged at the Chandler, Ariz. Public Library (2007) along with complaints about the *Phoenix New Times*, comedian George Carlin's audio book, *When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?*, and a fairy tale DVD narrated by Robin Williams. A parent requested that Allan's children's picture book be moved from the children's area to a restricted parenting collection because Willy is a sperm and the book is about sex. Source: Nov. 2007, pp. 239–40.

Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. Plume. Removed from Johnston County, N.C. school libraries (2007) after a parent challenged its sexual content and profane language. The county school's staff then launched a district-wide book title review. Source: Mar. 2008, pp. 59–60.

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Bantam. Challenged in the Manheim Township, Pa. schools (2007) due to sexual references. The book was retained in the ninth-grade English curriculum, but it was decided to teach the book later in the school year, after a public forum was held with parents to discuss that book and the entire literary canon of the English department. Challenged in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District (2007). Some parents say the book, along with five others, should require parental permission for students to read them. Source: July 2007, pp. 149–50; Sept. 2007, p. 181.

Anonymous. *Go Ask Alice*. Avon; Prentice-Hall. Challenged as a reading assignment at Hanahan Middle School in Berkeley County, S.C. (2008) because of blatant, explicit language using street terms for sex, talk of worms eating body parts, and blasphemy. The anonymously written 1971 book is about a fifteen-year-old girl who gets caught up in a life of drugs and sex before dying from an overdose. Its explicit references to drugs and sex have been controversial since it was first published. Source: May 2008, pp. 98–99.

Atkins, Catherine. *Alt Ed*. Putnam. Challenged as an optional reading in a bullying unit at the Lake Oswego, Ore. Junior High School (2007) because the novel is "peppered with profanities, ranging from derogatory slang terms to sexual encounters and violence." Students are given a list of book summaries and a letter to take to their parents. Four of the eight optional books offered are labeled as having "mature content/language." Source: July 2007, p. 149.

Barnes, Derrick. *The Making of Dr. Truelove*. Simon Pulse. Removed from the Liberty High School in Bedford County, Va. (2007) because of "sexually explicit content." Administrators pulled the book from the shelf after a parental complaint. While the school system's general policy on content challenges calls for a formal committee's review of the book, that policy was not followed. Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 14, 35.

Baron, T. A. *Child of the Dark Prophecy*. Philomel Bks. Restored by the Lackawanna, N.Y. School Board (2008) along with several other books following accusations of censorship by some parents and teachers. The books were pulled from the middle school library recommended list because of concerns that the books deal with the occult. Source: May 2008, p. 116.

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Houghton. Challenged, but retained in the adult fiction section of the Marshall, Mo. Public Library (2006) despite being deemed "pornographic" by some members of the community. Source: Nov. 2006, p. 289; Jan. 2007, pp. 9–10; May 2007, p. 117; July 2007, pp. 163–64.

Beiderwell, Bruce, and Jeffrey M. Wheeler, eds. *The Literary Experience*. Thomson/Wadsworth. Retained in the Grand Rapids, Mich. Advanced Placement English classes (2007) despite considerations of returning the 1,846 page anthology to its publisher or clipping out about seventy pages with objectionable material, including a drama, "Topdog/Underdog" by Suzan-Lori Parks that contained profanity and descriptions of sexual activity. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 29.

Bradford, Richard. *Red Sky at Morning*. Harper. Challenged, but retained on the reading list for freshman English classes in Billings, Mont. School District 2 (2007) despite concerns that the book contains excessive profanity and includes sexually suggestive passages that the complainant thought were not appropriate for fourteen-year-olds. The book has been used in the district for more than twenty years. Source: July 2007, pp. 164–65.

Burrows, Augusten. *Running with Scissors*. St. Martin. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) along with several other books because of strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic, or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the Livingston County prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: May 2007, pp. 117–18.

Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Pocket Bks. Challenged on the Commack, N.Y. High School summer reading list (2007) because the novel contains a two-page date rape scene. Educators in Commack revamped their reading list after finding students weren't interested in the choices and Chbosky's novel was added to attract "reluctant readers." Source: Sept. 2007, pp. 184–85.

Colfer, Eoin. *The Supernaturalist*. Hyperion. Restored by the Lackawanna, N.Y. School Board (2008) along with several other books following accusations of censorship by some parents and teachers. The books were pulled from the middle school library recommended list because of concerns that the books deal with the occult. Source: May 2008, p. 116.

Comfort, Alex. *The New Joy of Sex*. Pocket Bks. Relocated to the director's office at the Nampa, Idaho Public Library (2008) to be accessed by patrons who specifically request the book. Originally challenged in 2005 along with seven other books because "they are very pornographic in nature and they have very explicit and detailed illustrations and photographs which we feel don't belong in a library." Source: May 2008, pp. 96–97.

Conroy, Pat. *Beach Music*. Bantam; Houghton. Suspended from the Nitro High School, Kanawha County, W.Va. honors English and Advanced Placement literature classes (2007) after parents complained about the book's scenes of violence, sexual assault, child rape, suicide, and more. A Kanawha County Board of Education member suggested the institution of a book rating system. Eventually, the book was approved for return to the classroom, as long as students are offered alternative texts. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 42; Mar. 2008, p. 80.

_____. *The Prince of Tides*. Bantam; Houghton. Suspended from the Nitro High School in Kanawha County, W.Va. honors English and Advanced Placement literature classes (2007) after parents complained about the book's scenes of violence, sexual assault, child rape, suicide, and more. A Kanawha County Board of Education member suggested the institution of a book rating system. Eventually, the book was approved for return to the classroom, as long as students are offered alternative texts. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 42; Mar. 2008, p. 80.

Cormier, Robert. *The Chocolate War*. Dell; Pantheon. Removed from the Harford County, Md. High School curriculum (2007) because its message on the dangers of bullying is overshadowed by instances of vulgar language, including homophobic slurs. In November 2007, the Harford County's school superintendent reversed her decision to bar Cormier's novel and returned it to the classroom. Teachers now have the option of using the novel in a course that deals with harassment and decision making, but must get permission from all parents of students in the class. Challenged as an optional reading in a bullying unit at the Lake Oswego, Ore. Junior High School (2007) because the novel is "peppered with profanities, ranging from derogatory slang terms to sexual encounters and violence." Students are given a list of book summaries and a letter to take to their parents. Four of the eight optional books offered are labeled as having "mature content/language." Challenged in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District (2007). Some parents say the book, along with five others, should require parental permission for students to read them. Challenged as required reading for seventh-grade students at the John H. Kinzie Elementary School in Chicago, Ill. (2007). Challenged at the Northridge School District in Johnstown, Ohio (2007) because "if these books were a movie, they would be rated R, why should we be encouraging them to read these books?" Source: July 2007, pp. 147–49; Sept. 2007, p. 181; Nov. 2007, pp. 242–43; Jan. 2008, pp. 28–29.

Crutcher, Chris. *Whale Talk*. Greenwillow. Challenged at the Missouri Valley, Iowa High School (2007) because the book uses racial slurs and profanity. Challenged as an optional reading in a bullying unit at the Lake Oswego, Ore. Junior High School (2007) because the novel is "peppered with profanities, ranging from derogatory slang terms to sexual encounters and violence." Students are given a list of book summaries and a letter to take to their parents. Four of the eight optional books offered are labeled as having "mature content/language." Source: May 2007, p. 98; July 2007, p. 149.

de Haan, Linda, and Stern Nijland. *King & King*. Tricycle Pr. Parents of a Lexington, Mass. (2006) second-grader protested that their son's teacher read the fairy tale about gay marriage to the class without warning parents first. The book was used as part of a lesson about different types of weddings. "By presenting this kind of issue at such a young age, they're trying to indoctrinate our children," stated the parent. The incident renewed the efforts of Waltham-based Parents' Rights Coalition to rid the state's schools of books and lessons that advance the "homosexual agenda" in public schools. U.S. District Court Judge Mark Wolf ruled February 23, 2007, that public schools are "entitled to teach anything that is reasonably related to the goals of preparing students to become engaged and productive citizens in our democracy." Wolf said the courts had decided in other cases that parents' rights to exercise their religious beliefs were not violated when their children were exposed to contrary ideas in school. Retained at the Lower Macungie, Pa. Library (2007). The donated book was challenged because, "let them be kids ... and not worry about homosexuality, race, religion. Just let them live freely as kids." Source: July 2006, pp. 186–87; May 2007, pp. 105–6; Jan. 2008, pp. 25–26; Mar. 2008, p. 79.

Dessen, Sarah. *Just Listen*. Viking. Challenged in the Hillsborough County, Fla. school system (2007) because it was considered too intense for teens. Source: Mar. 2008, p. 59.

Doig, Ivan. *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*. Atheneum; Perennial Library; Scribner. Challenged in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District (2007) because sexual descriptions in the book were not appropriate. Some parents say the book, along with five others, should require parental permission for students to read them. Source: Sept. 2007, p. 181.

Frank, E. R. *America*. Atheneum. Challenged in the Ravenna, Ohio schools (2007) because "what we kept finding and going over was sexual content and profanity," said the complainant. The novel has received several awards including the *New York Times* Notable Book Award. It also was a Garden State Teen Book Award nominee. Source: May 2007, p. 93.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. *Whispers from the Dead.* Laurel-Leaf Bks. Restored by the Lackawanna, N.Y. School Board (2008) along with several other books following accusations of censorship by some parents and teachers. The books were pulled from the middle school library recommended list because of concerns that the books deal with the occult. Source: May 2008, p. 116.

Norton, Jim. *Happy Endings: The Tales of a Meaty-Breasted Zilch.* Simon. Available upon request, but not placed in general circulation at the Jackson-George Regional Library System in Pascagoula, Miss. (2007) after complaints that the comedian's best-selling book is "garbage that doesn't belong in a library." Source: Nov. 2007, p. 263.

Oates, Joyce Carol. *Sexy.* Harper. Retained at Jefferson High School in Boulder, Mont. (2007) despite objections to "inappropriate" language and sexually explicit passages in the novel. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 25.

Opie, Iona Archibald, and Peter Opie, eds. *I Saw Esau: The Schoolchild's Pocket Book.* Candlewick Pr. Challenged at the Cedar Grove Elementary School in Murfreesboro, Tenn. (2007). The complainant stated, "I understand that it is a book of poetry, but there is a fine line between poetry art and porn and this book's illustrations are absolutely offensive in every way." The book is a collection of schoolyard jokes, riddles, insults, and jump-rope rhymes and is illustrated by Maurice Sendak. Source: May 2007, p. 94.

Patterson, James. *Cradle and All: A Novel.* Little. Removed from the Westhampton Beach, N.Y. High School's ninth-grade reading list (2007) because of "inappropriate sexual content." The reading list contains more than three hundred books from which ninth-graders must choose to read for course credit. Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 37-38; Mar. 2008, p. 63.

Picoult, Jodi. *The Tenth Circle.* Atria Bks. Removed from the Westhampton Beach, N.Y. High School's ninth-grade reading list (2007) because of "inappropriate sexual content." The reading list contains more than three hundred books from which ninth-graders must choose to read for course credit. Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 37-38; Mar. 2008, p. 63.

Pullman, Philip. *The Golden Compass.* Knopf. Removed, but later returned to the library shelves at dozens of schools in the publicly funded Halton, Ontario, Canada, Catholic School District (2007) despite that the books were challenged as being "written by an atheist where the characters and text are anti-God, anti-Catholic, and anti-religion." The book and two other Pullman titles from the *Dark Materials* trilogy were pulled from public display for review, but are available to students upon request. The publicly funded Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Catholic School District (2007) returned the book to its library shelves two months after ordering its removal. Detractors accused the book of having antireligious content. Similar concerns prompted the Catholic League, a Roman-Catholic anti-defamation organization in the U.S., to urge parents to boycott a movie version of the book that was released in December 2007. Challenged at the Conkwright Middle School in Winchester, Ky. (2007) because the main character drinks wine and ingests poppy with her meals, and the book presents an anti-Christian doctrine. Pulled from the St. John Neumann Middle School and Lourdes High School in Oshkosh, Wis. (2007) because of concerns about what critics call its "anti-Christian message." Challenged at the Shallowater Middle School in Lubbock, Tex. (2007) because of the book's "anti-religious messages." Pulled from the library shelves at Ortega Middle School in Alamosa, Colo. (2007) for what critics regard as the book's anti-religious views. District officials later returned the book to circulation. Retained by the publicly funded Dufferin-Peel Catholic School District in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada (2008) with a sticker on the inside cover telling readers "representations of the church in this novel are purely fictional," and are not reflective of the real Roman Catholic Church or the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 13-14, 36; Mar. 2008, pp. 61, 63, 77-78; May 2008, pp. 99, 116.

Richardson, Justin, and Peter Parnell. *And Tango Makes Three.* Simon. Challenged at the Lodi, Calif. Public Library (2007) by a resident deriding what she called its "homosexual story line that has been sugarcocated with cute penguins." Returned to the general circulation shelves in the sixteen elementary school libraries in Loudoun County, Va. (2008) despite a complaint about its subject matter. Source: July 2007, p. 163; May 2008, pp. 116-17.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. On May 29, 2007, Superior Court judge Ronnie Batchelor upheld the Georgia Board of Education's decision to support local school officials. County school board members have said the books are good tools to encourage children to read and to spark creativity and imagination. Removed from the St. Joseph School in Wakefield, Mass. (2007) because the themes of witchcraft and sorcery were inappropriate for a Catholic school. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-8; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73; July 2007, p. 151; Sept. 2007, pp. 205-6; Jan. 2008, pp. 36-37.

_____. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. On May 29, 2007, Superior Court judge Ronnie Batchelor upheld the Georgia Board of Education's decision to support local school officials. County school board members have said the books are good tools to encourage children to read and to spark creativity and imagination. Removed from the St. Joseph School in Wakefield, Mass. (2007) because the themes of witchcraft and sorcery were inappropriate for a Catholic school. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-8; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73; July 2007, p. 151; Sept. 2007, pp. 205-6; Jan. 2008, pp. 36-37.

_____. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. On May 29, 2007, Superior Court judge Ronnie Batchelor upheld the Georgia Board of Education's decision to support local school officials. County school board members have said the books are good tools to encourage children to read and to spark creativity and imagination. Removed from the St. Joseph School in Wakefield, Mass. (2007) because the themes of witchcraft and sorcery were inappropriate for a Catholic school. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-8; Sept. 2006, pp. 229-31; Nov. 2006, pp. 287-89; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73; July 2007, p. 151; Sept. 2007, pp. 205-6; Jan. 2008, pp. 36-37.

_____. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. On May 29, 2007, Superior Court judge Ronnie Batchelor upheld the Georgia Board of Education's decision to support local school officials. County school board members have said the books are good tools to encourage children to read and to spark creativity and imagination. Removed from the St. Joseph School in Wakefield, Mass. (2007) because the themes of witchcraft and sorcery were inappropriate for a Catholic school. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-8; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73; July 2007, p. 151; Sept. 2007, pp. 205-6; Jan. 2008 pp. 36-37.

_____. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. On May 29, 2007, Superior Court judge Ronnie Batchelor upheld the Georgia Board of Education's decision to support local school officials. County school board members have said the books are good tools to encourage children to read and to spark creativity and imagination. Removed from the St. Joseph School in Wakefield, Mass. (2007) because the themes of witchcraft and sorcery were inappropriate for a Catholic school. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-8; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73; July 2007, p. 151; Sept. 2007, pp. 205-6; Jan. 2008, pp. 36-37.

Sanchez, Alex. *Rainbow Boys.* Simon. Removed from the Webster, N.Y. Central School District summer reading list for high-school students (2006) after receiving complaints from parents about explicit sexual content. The book won the International Reading Association's 2003 Young Adults' Choice Award, and the American Library Association selected it as a Best Book for Young Adults. A year later the book returned to the list after district officials reviewed the process used to select books on the list. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 291-92; July 2007, p. 165.

Schniedewind, Nancy. *Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Affirm Diversity and Promote Equity.* Allyn & Bacon. Challenged at the publicly funded Waterloo, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, Catholic School District (2007) because it presents homosexuality as "morally neutral." The book is used as an optional resource for teachers, and students never see the book. A citizens' organization in Kitchener, Defend Traditional Marriage and Family, objected because the book could lead people "to reject scriptural teaching on homosexual acts." Source: Nov. 2007, p. 240.

Schreier, Alta. *Vamos a Cuba (A Visit to Cuba).* Heinemann. Removed from all Miami-Dade County school libraries (2006) because of a parent's complaint that the book does not depict an accurate life in Cuba. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Florida filed a lawsuit challenging the decision to remove this book and the twenty-three other titles in the same series from the district school libraries. In granting a preliminary injunction in July 2006 against the removal, Judge Alan S. Gold of U.S. District Court in Miami characterized the matter as a "First Amendment issue" and ruled in favor of the ACLU of Florida, which argued that the books were generally factual and that the board should add to its collection, rather than remove books it disagreed with. When the district court entered a preliminary injunction ordering the school district immediately to replace the entire series on library shelves, the Miami-Dade School Board appealed the decision to the Eleventh Circuit Court in Atlanta. Oral arguments were heard on June 6, 2007. Source: July 2006, p. 207; Sept. 2006, pp. 230-31; Nov. 2006, p. 288; Jan. 2007, p. 8; May 2007, pp. 91-92; Sept. 2007, pp. 178, 181.

Sebold, Alice. *The Lovely Bones.* Little. Moved to the faculty section of the John W. McDewitt Middle School library in Waltham, Mass. (2008) because its content was too frightening for middle school students. Source: May 2008, p. 97.

Silverstein, Charles, and Edmund White. *The Joy of Gay Sex.* Crown; Simon & Schuster/Fireside. Relocated to the director's office at the Nampa, Idaho Public Library (2008) to be accessed by patrons who specifically request the book. Originally challenged in 2005 along with seven other books because "they are very pornographic in nature and they have very explicit and detailed illustrations and photographs which we feel don't belong in a library." Source: July 2006, p. 183; May 2008, pp. 96-97.

Sittenfeld, Curtis. *Prep: A Novel.* Random. Pulled from the accelerated reading program in the Heritage Oak School in Yorba Linda, Calif. (2008). A parent complained that the book was "pornographic." Source: May 2008, p. 95.

Freedom Writers. *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World around Them.* Doubleday. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) along with several other books because of strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic, or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the Livingston County prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." The best-selling book has achieved national acclaim and was made into a recent hit movie. Source: Mar. 2007, pp. 51-52; May 2007, pp. 117-18.

Giles, Gail. *Shattering Glass.* Roaring Brook Pr. Challenged as an optional reading in a bullying unit at the Lake Oswego, Oreg. Junior High School (2007) because the novel is "peppered with profanities, ranging from derogatory slang terms to sexual encounters and violence." Students are given a list of book summaries and a letter to take to their parents. Four of the eight optional books offered are labeled as having "mature content/language." Source: July 2007, p. 149.

Going, K. L. *Fat Kid Rules the World.* Putnam. Removed from the Pickens County, S.C. middle- and high-school library shelves (2007) because "the language, the sexual references, and drug use are not appropriate for middle-school students." In 2004, the book was named a Michael Printz honor book for excellence in young-adult literature by the Young Adult Library Services Association. Challenged as a suggested summer reading at the Alsip, Ill. Prairie Junior High (2007) because the book is "laced with profanity and other mature content." The District 126 superintendent plans to retain the award-winning selection as one of the many titles offered to students to read, preferably from the recommended summer reading list, before school begins. Source: May 2007, pp. 93-94; Nov. 2007, pp. 242-43.

Gordon, Sharon. *Cuba.* Benchmark Bks. Removed from the Norma Butler Bossard Elementary School library in Miami, Fla. (2007) by a parent complaining that the book does not depict an accurate life in Cuba. Source: May 2007, pp. 91-92.

Green, John. *Looking for Alaska.* Dutton. Challenged, but retained for the eleventh-grade Regents English classes in Depew, N.Y. (2008) despite concerns about graphic language and sexual content. The school sent parents a letter requesting permission to use the Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature novel and only three students were denied permission to read the book. Source: May 2008, p. 117.

Grove, Vicki. *The Starplace.* Putnam. Challenged at the Turner Elementary School in New Tampa, Fla. (2008) because the novel contains a racial epithet. The book about an interracial middle-school friendship in 1960s Oklahoma was highly recommended by *Children's Literature Review*. Source: May 2008, p. 96.

Guterson, David. *Snow Falling on Cedars.* Harcourt; Thorndike Pr.; Vintage. Challenged in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District (2007). Some parents say the book, along with five others, should require parental permission for students to read them. Source: Sept. 2007, p. 181.

Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal: A Book about Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health.* Candlewick Pr. A Lewiston, Maine patron refused to return the acclaimed sex education book from the Lewiston and Auburn public libraries (2007) because she was "sufficiently horrified by the illustrations and sexually graphic, amoral, abnormal contents." A police investigation found the library did not violate the town ordinance against obscenity and the patron who removed the book from the library will stand trial for theft. Source: Nov. 2007, p. 240; Jan. 2008, p. 13; Mar. 2008, p. 78.

Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner.* Bloomsbury. Challenged as appropriate study in tenth-grade honors English class at Freedom High School in Morgantown, N.C. (2008) because the novel depicts a sodomy rape in graphic detail and uses vulgar language. Source: May 2008, pp. 97-98.

Howe, James. *Totally Joe.* Atheneum. Removed from the Jefferson Elementary School in Bedford County, Va. (2007) because of "inappropriate content." Administrators pulled the book from the shelf after a parental complaint. While the school system's general policy on content challenges calls for a formal committee's review of the book, that policy was not followed. Rather, officials decided the book was not appropriate for elementary-school students, but did not decide whether to allow the book in middle or high schools. Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 14, 35.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal Dreams.* HarperCollins; G.K. Hall. Challenged in the Manheim Township, Pa. schools (2007) due to sexual references. The book was moved from the ninth-grade English curriculum to the eleventh-grade curriculum. Source: July 2007, pp. 149-50.

Koertge, Ronald. *The Brimstone Journals.* Candlewick Pr. Challenged, but retained at the William Chrisman High School library in Independence, Mo. (2007). A parent was concerned about profanity as well as some of the subjects discussed in the book. Source: Sept. 2007, p. 205.

Korman, Gordon. *Jake Reinvented.* Hyperion; Scholastic. Challenged in the Higley Unified School District in Gilbert, Ariz. (2007) because the novel contains themes of teen drinking, sex, and violence. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 36.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird.* Lippincott/Harper; Popular Library. Retained in the English curriculum by the Cherry Hill, N.J. Board of Education (2007). A resident had objected to the novel's depiction of how blacks are treated by members of a racist white community in an Alabama town during the Depression. The resident feared the book would upset black children reading it. Source: Mar. 2008, p. 80; May 2008, pp. 117-18.

Lowry, Lois. *The Giver.* Dell; Houghton. Appalled by descriptions of adolescent pill-popping, suicide, and lethal injections given to babies and the elderly, two parents demanded that the Mt. Diablo School District, headquartered in Concord, Calif. (2007), eliminate the controversial but award-winning book from the school reading lists and libraries. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 8.

Mackler, Carolyn. *Vegan Virgin Valentine.* Candlewick Pr. Challenged in the Mandarin High School library in Jacksonville, Fla. (2007) because of inappropriate language. Source: May 2007, p. 91.

Mathabane, Mark. *Kaffir Boy.* NAL. Banned from the Burlingame, Calif. Intermediate School (2007). The book has been challenged frequently since its publication in 1986 because of two graphic paragraphs describing men preparing to engage in anal sex with young boys. It earned the 1987 Christopher Award for literature, "affirming the highest values of the human spirit." It was also a finalist for the Robert F. Kennedy Award for books representing "concern for the poor and the powerless." Source: July 2007, pp. 145-46.

McCarthy, Cormac. *Child of God.* Random. Removed as an appropriate pre-Advanced English Placement reading at the Jim Ned High School in Tuscola, Tex. (2007). Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 41-42.

McNally, John, ed. *When I Was a Loser: True Stories of (Barely) Surviving High School by Today's Top Writers.* Free Pr. Challenged as a Cumberland, R.I. high school reading assignment (2007) because the entire compilation is filled with essays that are "lewd, contain profanity, and references to bestiality." Source: Jan. 2008, pp. 38-39.

Mercado, Nancy E., ed. *Tripping over the Lunch Lady and Other Short Stories.* Dial. After a challenge and three appeals, the York County School Board chose to keep the collection of short stories in the Magruder Elementary School library in Williamsburg, Va. (2007) despite claims that it is offensive to children with loved ones serving in the military and inappropriate for elementary school students. A parent wanted the book removed because one of the short stories contained references to war, bombs, and soldier casualties. Source: Jan. 2008, p. 27.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved.* Knopf; NAL. Pulled from the senior Advanced Placement (AP) English class at Eastern High School in Louisville, Ky. (2007) because two parents complained that the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about antebellum slavery depicted the inappropriate topics of bestiality, racism, and sex. The principal ordered teachers to start over with the *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne in preparation for upcoming AP exams. Challenged in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District (2007). Some parents say the book, along with five others, should require parental permission for students to read them. Source: May 2007, pp. 98-99; July 2007, p. 147; Sept. 2007, p. 181.

_____. *The Bluest Eye.* NAL. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) along with several other books because of strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic, or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the Livingston County prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: Mar. 2007, pp. 51-52; May 2007, pp. 117-18.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Fallen Angels.* Scholastic. Challenged on the accelerated reading list at Chinquapin Elementary School in Duplin County, N.C. (2008) because the book is littered with hundreds of expletives, including racial epithets, and slang terms for homosexuals. Challenged in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho School District (2007). Some parents say the book, along with five others, should require parental permission for students to read them. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11; Sept. 2007, p. 181; May 2008, p. 97.

Myracle, Lauren. *TTYL.* Grosset & Dunlap. Challenged at the William Floyd Middle School library in Mastic, N.Y. (2007) because the book includes "curse words, crude references to the male and female anatomy, sex acts, and adult situations like drinking alcohol and flirtation with a teacher that almost goes too far." A spokesman for the William Floyd School District said the book will remain in the library, and that the book is very popular with students across the country. The spokesperson also said unlike many books that young people read, the book deals with controversial subjects without glorifying negative behaviors. Source: May 2007, p. 92.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Alice on Her Way.* Atheneum. Restricted to students who have parental consent at the Icicle River Middle School library in Leavenworth, Wash. (2008) due to its depiction of sexuality. One other book, Gary Paulsen's *Harris and Me*, has been similarly restricted at the school for almost a decade. Parents challenged the book's use during classroom reading because of "two cuss words." Source: May 2008, p. 97.

Newman, Felice. *The Whole Lesbian Sex Book.* Cleis Pr. The father of two teenage boys asked city officials to fine the Bentonville, Ark. Public Library (2007) for keeping the book on open shelves. He wanted the city to pay him \$10,000 per child, the maximum allowed under Arkansas obscenity law. After receiving the original complaint, the library advisory committee board voted to remove the book from circulation and look for a similar, less graphic resource for the open stacks. The library director said she disagreed with the complainant's conclusion that having Newman's book in the library follows an "immoral social agenda." Source: July 2007, p. 143.

Smith, Lee. *Fair and Tender Ladies.* Ballantine; Putnam. Challenged in the Washington County, Va. schools (2007) because of a few "crude" words deemed too graphic for teenage honor students. The author claimed the book provides teens with a safe forum to address issues such as unwanted pregnancy. The novel demonstrates the necessity of a good education and highlights the importance of southwestern Virginia's heritage. Source: Jan., 2008, pp. 35-36.

Sones, Sonya. *What My Mother Doesn't Know.* Simon. Available only to seventh- and eighth-graders at the Spring Hill, Wis. School library (2007) after a parent wanted the book, which deals with masturbation, groping, and sexual fantasy, among other themes, to be removed from the library and the accelerated reading program. Source: July 2007, pp. 144-45.

Steer, Dugald. *Wizardology: The Book of the Secrets of Merlin.* Candlewick Pr. Challenged at the West Haven, Conn. Molloy Elementary School library (2007) because the book exposes children to the occult. Source: May 2007, p. 91.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men.* Bantam; Penguin; Viking. Challenged at the Newton, Iowa High School (2007) because of concerns about profanity and the portrayal of Jesus Christ. Newton High School has required students to read the book since at least the early 1980s. In neighboring Des Moines, it is on the recommended reading list for ninth-grade English, and it is used for some special education students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. Retained in the Olathe, Kans. ninth-grade curriculum (2007) despite a parent calling the novel a "worthless, profanity-riddled book" which is "derogatory towards African Americans, women, and the developmentally disabled." Source: July 2007, pp. 146-47; Jan. 2008, pp. 27-28.

Strasser, Todd. *Give a Boy a Gun.* Simon. Retained at the Bangor, Pa. Area Middle School (2007) despite a student's aunt's concerns about the book's depiction of school violence. Source: Mar. 2008, p. 79.

Stroud, Jonathan. *The Golem's Eye.* Hyperion. Restored by the Lackawanna, N.Y. School Board (2008) along with several other books following accusations of censorship by some parents and teachers. The book was pulled from the middle school library recommended list because of concerns that the book deals with the occult. Source: May 2008, p. 116.

_____. *Ptolemy's Gate.* Hyperion. Restored by the Lackawanna, N.Y. School Board (2008) along with several other books following accusations of censorship by some parents and teachers. The book was pulled from the middle school library recommended list because of concerns that the book deals with the occult. Source: May 2008, p. 116.

_____. *The Amulet of Samarkand.* Hyperion. Restored by the Lackawanna, N.Y. School Board (2008) along with several other books following accusations of censorship by some parents and teachers. The book was pulled from the middle school library recommended list because of concerns that the book deals with the occult. Source: May 2008, p. 116.

Taylor, Mildred D. *The Land.* Phyllis Fogelman Bks. Removed from the Turner Elementary School media-center shelves in New Tampa, Fla. (2008) as age-inappropriate. A parent challenged the book because the novel contains a racial epithet. The book was a 2002 Coretta Scott King Author Award recipient. Source: May 2008, p. 96.

Thompson, Craig. *Blankets.* Top Shelf. Challenged in the Marshall, Mo. Public Library (2006) because some members of the community deemed the book "pornographic." The book was moved to the adult book section, rather than the young adult area where it had been shelved before. Source: Nov. 2006, p. 289; Jan. 2007, pp. 9-10; May 2007, p. 117; July 2007, pp. 163-64.

Twain, Mark [Samuel L. Clemens]. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* Bantam; Bobbs-Merrill; Grosset; Harper; Holt; Houghton; Longman; Macmillan; NAL; Norton; Penguin; Pocket Bks. Challenged, but retained in the Lakeville, Minn. High School (2007) and St. Louis Park High School in Minneapolis, Minn. (2007) as required reading for sophomores. The district will conduct staff training about race issues and revise the way it weighs requests for curriculum changes. The district will also let its staff offer alternative assignments on racially sensitive issues in ways which "students do not feel ostracized because they have opted out of the assignment." Challenged at Richland High School in North Richland Hills, Tex. (2007) because of racial epithets. Challenged at the Manchester, Conn. High School (2007) "because the 'N' word is used in the book 212 times." Source: May 2007, p. 99; July 2007, p. 164; Jan. 2008, pp. 40-41; Mar. 2008, pp. 61-62.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five.* Dell; Dial. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) along with several other books because of strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic, or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the Livingston county prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: May 2007, pp. 117-18.

Welch, James. *Fools Crow.* Doubleday; Viking; Penguin. Challenged at the Helena, Mont. High School (2007) because of disturbing descriptions of rape, mutilation, and murder. Supporters of the book say its literary value — specifically its insights into American Indian society and Montana history — outweighs the controversial passages. Source: July 2007, p. 148.

West, Stanley Gordon. *Finding Laura Buggs.* Lexington-Marshall Pub. Challenged in the Fargo, N.Dak. School District classrooms (2007) because the book includes passages on such topics as sexual bondage, incest, murder, and infanticide. According to district policy, the complainant does not have standing to request either formal or informal reviews because she doesn't have a child in classes using the book. The complainant also contacted the Montana Department of Public Instruction and several state legislators. Source: July 2007, pp. 148-49.

_____. *Until They Bring the Streetcars Back.* Lexington-Marshall Pub. Challenged in the Fargo, N.Dak. School District classrooms (2007) because the book includes passages on such topics as sexual bondage, incest, murder, and infanticide. According to district policy, the complainant does not have standing to request either formal or informal reviews because she doesn't have a child in classes using the book. The complainant also contacted the Montana Department of Public Instruction and several state legislators. Source: July 2007, pp. 148-49.

Wittlinger, Ellen. *Sandpiper.* Simon. Challenged at the Brookwood, Ala. High School's library (2007) due to a complaint that the book has sexual content and language. The grandmother stated that the school should "teach abstinence and no sex before marriage." Wittlinger, the book's author, said in a letter to the school system that she was very surprised to learn that her book was being called "offensive" and "sick" because she said the purpose of the book is not meant to be a how-to guide for oral sex. Instead, it is a cautionary tale to teach kids that oral sex is "real" sex and not just the "cool thing to do." The board decided eventually to retain the book "on the advice of legal counsel." Source: Nov. 2007, p. 239; Jan. 2008, p. 7; Mar. 2008, p. 77.

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy.* Harper. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) along with several other books because of strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic, or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the Livingston County prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: Mar. 2007, pp. 51-52; May 2007, pp. 117-18.

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