

BANNED BOOKS

BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2016



Working in partnership



ISLINGTON

BANNED BOOKS WEEK

Banned Books Week was launched in 1982 in response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in schools, bookstores and libraries in the US. Since then, according to the American Library Association, more than 11,300 books have been challenged.

For a list of Frequently Challenged Books you can visit

<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks>.

Islington Library and Heritage Services, along with the British Library and Free Word, are celebrating Banned Books week and drawing attention to censorship and free speech working alongside the American Library Association.

The 2016 celebration will be held from Sunday 25 September until Saturday 1 October. On Thursday 22 September the British Library will launch Banned Books Week with the event 'Censorship and the author' -

<http://www.bl.uk/events/banned-books-week-censorship-and-the-author>

There is also an event at Free Word 'Who Is Afraid of Comics?' -

<https://www.freeworldcentre.com/whats-on/afraid-of-comics>

To read more about Banned Books Week please visit

<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/bannedbookswEEK>.

ISLINGTON LIBRARY AND HERITAGE SERVICES

Islington's Library Services have a key role in enabling access to knowledge, skills and information. With a wide range of books, CDs, DVDs, free wi-fi, on-line resources and activities for all ages, the library buildings are accessible community spaces which can contribute to safer, stronger communities and to the Council's vision "to make Islington fairer and create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the same opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life."

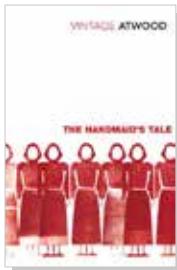
THE BRITISH LIBRARY

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom holding more than 170 million items from many countries, in many languages and formats, both print and digital. The British Library seeks to preserve, store and make available our intellectual heritage to everyone, for research, inspiration and enjoyment.

FREE WORD

Free Word believes that words change lives. It works internationally to bring together communities, organisations and individuals through literature, literacy and free expression. Established in 2009, Free Word hosts public events exploring contemporary politics, literature and culture. It provides a home to its residents and many associates to work and collaborate.

BANNED BOOKS ADULTS

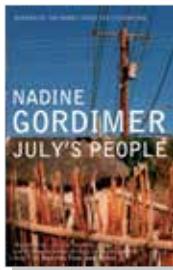


Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale* First published 1985, Vintage Books

Story: Set in a future America that has turned into an anti-feminist fascist state, Kate is a handmaid who lives a life of sexual servitude but falls in love with a man who is not her assigned partner.

Reasons: Profanity, sexually explicit, religious viewpoint

Author comment: "I made a rule for myself: I would not include anything that human beings had not already done in some other place or time, or for which the technology did not already exist."

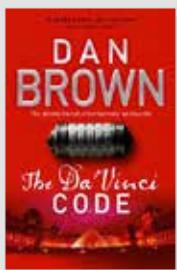


Nadine Gordimer *July's People* First published 1981, Bloomsbury

Story: In an apocalyptic, futuristic South Africa where racial tension has developed into full civil war, a white family is forced to seek sanctuary in the home of their black former servant.

Reasons: Racist

Author comment: "To be called a racist as a white South African and as someone who stayed here through all of the worst time and as someone who identified closely with the struggle - that is just very insulting."

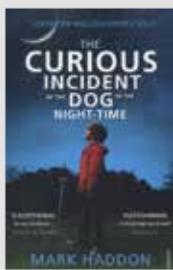


Dan Brown *The Da Vinci Code* First published 2003, Corgi

Story: A mystery-detective novel that explores an alternative religious history.

Reasons: Religious viewpoint

Reviewer comment: 'The most flagrant aspect... is not that Dan Brown disagrees with Christianity but that he utterly warps it in order to disagree with it.'



Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* First published 2003, Vintage Books

Story: Christopher Boone is a 15 year-old with an Autism spectrum condition. When he finds a neighbour's dog murdered, he sets out on a journey which will turn his whole world upside down.

Reasons: Offensive language, profanity, atheism

Author comment: "I'm always entertained when it gets banned somewhere or causes a huge row. But I never really feel that I have to stand up for it. It's like a sturdy 25-year-old who can pick a fight and look after itself."

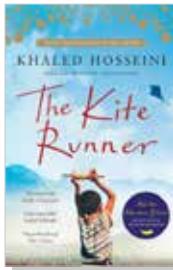


Mikhail Bulgakov *The Master and Margarita* First published 1967, Alma Books

Story: Satan appears at the Patriarch Ponds in Moscow in the guise of "Professor" Woland, a mysterious gentleman "magician" of uncertain origin.

Reasons: Political

Reviewer comment: "...a lovely, hysterical, and amazing story."

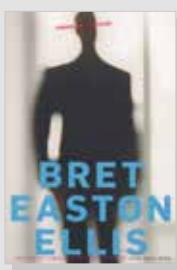


Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner* First published 2003, Bloomsbury

Story: The unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed.

Reasons: Offensive language, violence, sexually explicit

Author comment: "They never say I am speaking about things that are untrue. Their beef is, 'Why do you have to talk about these things and embarrass us? Don't you love your country?'



Bret Easton Ellis *American Psycho* First published 1991, Picador

Story: Set in Manhattan during the Wall Street boom of the late 1980s, American Psycho follows the life of wealthy young investment banker and serial killer Patrick Bateman.

Reasons: Violence

Author comment: "During the years I worked on the book, I did not know how violent it would become."

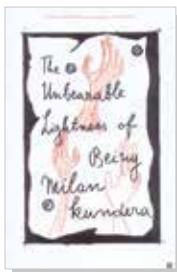


E. L. James *Fifty Shades of Grey* First published 2011, Arrow

Story: The deepening relationship between a college graduate, Anastasia Steele, and a young business magnate, Christian Grey. It is notable for its explicitly erotic scenes.

Reasons: Sexually explicit

Reviewer comment: "poorly written", "concerns that a group of teenagers will want to try it."

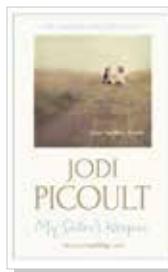


Milan Kundera The Unbearable Lightness of Being
First published 1984, Faber & Faber

Story: Two women, two men, a dog and their lives in the 1968 Prague Spring period of Czechoslovak history.

Reasons: Political

Reviewer comment: "Kundera's novel seems as relevant now as it did when it was first published."

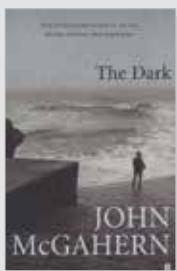


Jodi Picoult My Sister's Keeper
First published 2004, Hodder & Stoughton

Story: 13-year-old Anna sues her parents for medical emancipation when she is expected to donate a kidney to her sister Kate, who is dying from leukaemia.

Reasons: Homosexuality, offensive language, religious viewpoint, sexism, sexually explicit, violence

Reviewer comment: "Picoult has depicted the harrowing decisions and predicaments faced by families like this with great sensitivity."



John McGahern The Dark
First published 1965, Faber & Faber

Story: Set in isolated rural Ireland and dealing with the consequences of parental and clerical child abuse.

Reasons: Obscenity

Author comment: 'I was secretly ashamed. Not because of the book, but because this was our country and we were making bloody fools of ourselves.'

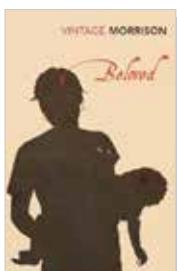


Philip Pullman His Dark Materials (trilogy)
First published 1995, 1997, 2000, Scholastic

Story: The coming of age of two children, Lyra Belacqua and Will Parry, as they wander through a series of parallel universes.

Reasons: Political viewpoint, religious viewpoint, violence

Reviewer comment: "the stuff of nightmares", "worthy of the bonfire".



Toni Morrison Beloved
First published 1987, Vintage Books

Story: Sethe and her daughter Denver attempt to escape from slavery in a Kentucky plantation.

Reasons: Sexual material, violence, bestiality, language, and other "inappropriate topics"

Reviewer comment: "I sometimes wonder if attempts to have books like this banned is as much about not wanting to face the brutal truth as it is about the objections given."

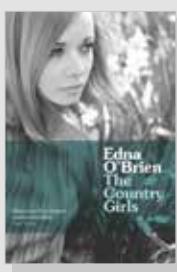


J.K. Rowling Harry Potter (series)
First published 1997 onwards, Bloomsbury

Story: Chronicling the life of a young wizard, Harry Potter, and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, all of whom are students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Reasons: Occult/Satanism, violence

Reviewer comment: "Regardless of how magic is portrayed in the series, we need to remember that witchcraft in real life can and does lead to death—the forever and ever kind."



Edna O'Brien The Country Girls
First published 1960, Phoenix

Story: An exploration of the trials and tribulations of two friends set against the backdrop of 1950s Ireland.

Reasons: Sexual content

Reviewer comment: "As a contraceptive, it was far more effective than stern lectures."



Salman Rushdie The Satanic Verses
First published 1988, Vintage Books

Story: A hijacked aeroplane blows apart high above the English Channel and two figures tumble towards the sea: Gibreel Farishta, India's legendary movie star, and Saladin Chamcha, the man of a thousand voices.

Reasons: Religious viewpoint

Author comment: "Living as we do in a world of many faiths, this experience has served to remind us that we must all be conscious of the sensibilities of others."

BANNED BOOKS CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS



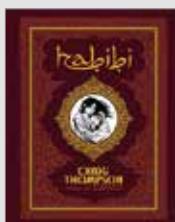
Alice Sebold The Lovely Bones

First published 2002, Picador

Story: A fourteen-year-old girl tells the story of her life and death. The girl, Susie Salmon, is now in heaven as she watches down on her world as everyone copes with her death.

Reasons: Violence, religious viewpoint, dubious morals

Author comment: "I was motivated to write about violence because I believe it's not unusual."



Craig Thompson Habibi

First published 2011, Faber & Faber

Story: Based on a Middle Eastern fable, this is the story of Dodola, who escapes being sold into slavery and rescues an abandoned baby she names Zam.

Reasons: Nudity, sexually explicit

Reviewer comment: "Our heroine spends an awful lot of time being naked, and there is a lot of sex in this book."



Brian K. Vaughan Saga

First published 2012, Image Comics

Story: An epic space opera/fantasy comic book depicting a husband and wife, Alana and Marko, from long-warring extra-terrestrial races, fleeing authorities from both sides of a galactic war.

Reasons: Anti-Family, nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit

Author comment: "I wanted to do something that was way too expensive to be TV and too dirty and grown-up to be a four-quadrant blockbuster."

Nurmuhemmet Yasin Wild Pigeon

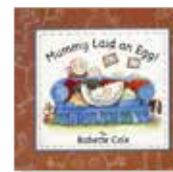
First published 2006, published online

Story: A princely bird is captured by humans and caged. He longs for freedom and, in the end, prefers to die rather than live in captivity.

Reasons: Political

Reviewer comment: "It is time for Uighur authors to be able to enjoy the right to express themselves without having to fear being prosecuted for supposed calls for violence or opposition to Chinese sovereignty."

Pre-Teen Fiction and Non-Fiction



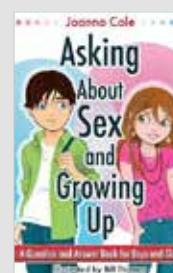
Babette Cole Mummy Laid an Egg

First published 1994, Red Fox

Story: Mum and Dad decide it's time they told the children about the facts of life. But it turns out it's up to the children to put them right on a few things.

Reasons: Images of genitals and explanation of reproduction

Reviewer comment: "I am surprised by how many reviewers here oppose the sex theory in favour of the stork theory. Apparently, they never knew people needed to have sex to have babies. Do these people blindfold their children when it's bath time?"



Joanna Cole Asking About Sex and Growing Up

First published 1988, HarperCollins

Topic: A question-and-answer format offers straightforward information on a wide variety of subjects related to sex and puberty for pre-teens.

Reasons: Sexual themes, homosexuality

Customer review on Amazon: "This book should be burned."



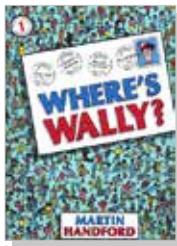
Roald Dahl Matilda

First published 1988, Puffin

Story: Matilda is unloved at home but is bright and an avid reader and comes to the attention of her caring teacher, Ms Honey. But can they survive the terrifying Miss Trunchbull?

Reasons: Child neglect, disrespect for authority, abuse from teacher

Reviewer comment: "I'm not surprised that there is a contingent of folks who would like to see it banned because there are always going to be people who think they know what's best for everyone else."

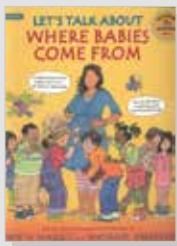


Martin Handford Where's Wally? First published 1987, Walker Books

Story: There isn't one. Just find the character hidden in the crowd.

Reasons: One U.S. school district removed the book from classrooms due to one mother's complaint about a topless sunbather pictured on the beach page. A swimsuit was then added in a later edition

Reviewer comment: "Seriously. Yes. In this hot mess of a book that's supposed to make it difficult for you to find anything, someone managed to pick out an errant side boob in the beach scene. Because, per usual, women's bodies—even the cartoon ones—ruin everything and start wars and stuff. Avert your eyes forever."



Robie H. Harris Let's talk about where babies come from: a book about eggs, sperm, birth, babies and families

First published 1999, Walker Books

Topic: Several of this author's books have been challenged or banned. This title, like many of her others, deal honestly and unambiguously with issues around sex and sexuality.

Reasons: sex, sexuality, images of genitals

Author comment: "So why do I keep on writing even though some of my books have been banned? My answer is that children, even our very young children, do not live in bubbles. They live in the real world. They observe, think, wonder, and question—just as all of us do."



Dav Pilkey The Adventures of Captain Underpants [series] First published 1997, Scholastic

Story: George and Harold create this superhero in their home-made comic book and accidentally bring him to life.

Reasons: Offensive language, characters in underwear, disobeying authority

Author comment: "As grown-ups, we need to respect our children's rights to choose what they want to read. Kids who have fun reading are making a connection in their brains that reading is valuable and rewarding. That very connection is what turns ordinary kids into lifelong readers."



Philip Pullman His Dark Materials [series] First published 1995, Scholastic

Story: A trilogy of fantasy novels follows the coming of age of two children, Lyra Belacqua and Will Parry, as they wander through a series of parallel universes.

Reasons: atheism, anti-Christian, sexual awakening

Author comment: "I am very glad to be back in the top 10 banned books. Of course it's a worry when anybody takes it upon themselves to dictate what people should or should not read. The power of organised religion is very strong in the US, and getting stronger because of the internet."



Justin Richardson And Tango Makes Three First published 2005, Simon & Schuster

Story: The true story of two gay penguins in the Central Park zoo in New York who raise a chick, Tango.

Reasons: Promotes same-sex relationships and non-standard family structures

Author comment: "We wrote the book to help parents teach children about same-sex parent families. It's no more an argument in favour of human gay relationships than it is a call for children to swallow their fish whole or sleep on rocks."

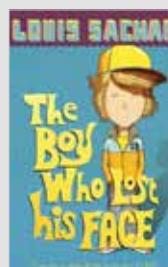


J. K. Rowling Harry Potter [series] First published 1997, Bloomsbury

Topic: Young wizard Harry battles against Voldemort to defeat the forces of evil.

Reasons: promotion of witchcraft, anti-Christian

Comment: "A former speechwriter for US President George Bush alleged that he had refused to grant J.K. Rowling the Presidential Medal of Freedom because her writing "encouraged witchcraft."



Louis Sachar The Boy Who Lost His Face First published 1989, Bloomsbury

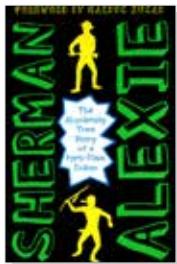
Story: David's gang play a prank on an old lady who places a curse on him... and things start to go wrong.

Reasons: obscene gestures, profanity, bullying, occult

Reviewer comment: "Banning books would make me want to read the book even more!"

BANNED BOOKS CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS

Teen Fiction



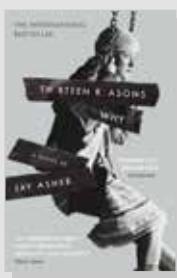
Sherman Alexie **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**

First published 2007, Andersen Press

Story: A native American boy from a dysfunctional family attends an all-white school away from the reservation.

Reasons: anti-family, cultural insensitivity, addiction, gambling, offensive language, sexually explicit, violence, bullying, racism

Reviewer comment: "If Arnold can overcome generations of poverty and bigotry, if he can lose his best friend over his decision to better himself and forgive a drunk driver for the death of his grandmother, then surely we can accept the use of the word 'fuck' every so often."



Jay Asher **Thirteen Reasons Why**

First published 2007, Penguin Books

Story: Clay returns home to find a box containing 13 cassette tapes recorded by his classmate, Hannah, who committed suicide. Hannah explains that there are 13 reasons why she did what she did, and Clay is one of them.

Reasons: Drugs/alcohol/smoking, sexually explicit, suicide

Author comment: "The very day I found out 'Thirteen Reasons Why' was the third most-challenged book, I received an e-mail from a reader claiming my book kept her from committing suicide. I dare any censor to tell that girl it was inappropriate for her to read my book."



Francesca Lia Block **Psyche in a dress**

First published 2006, HarperCollins

Story: A retelling of the classical love story about Psyche and Eros. Modern day Psyche is a teenage girl who stars in the films her father makes. When her love Eros leaves her, she ventures out on an odyssey of self-discovery.

Reasons: Drug use, rape, abuse

Interviewer: "Early on in your career, did you anticipate any challenges would arise against your books in classrooms, schools, and/or libraries?"

Author comment: "I didn't think much about it. I just want to write stories and leave it up to publishers, teachers, parents, librarians and kids to decide if the books are right for them or not."



Melvin Burgess **Junk**

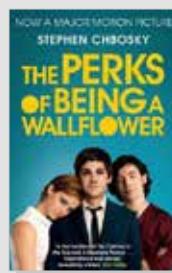
First published 1996, Andersen Press

Story: Two runaway teens in Bristol join a group of squatters, where they fall into heroin addiction and embrace anarchism.

Reasons: Drug use, sex, prostitution, teen pregnancy

Interviewer: "Have you ever seen a book banned for an absurd reason?"

Author comment: "Every single time a book gets banned is absurd. The only dangerous book is one that has a bomb in it, in my opinion. Junk wasn't even the first book to be open minded about drugs, but it perhaps was the first where the characters made such bad choices and left it up to the reader to judge them."



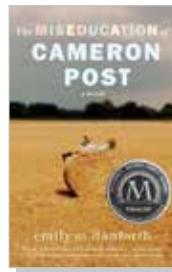
Stephen Chbosky **The Perks of Being a Wallflower**

First published 1999, Simon & Schuster

Story: The story of a teenager, "Charlie" who writes a series of letters to an anonymous friend, going to great lengths to describe his introversion, teenage sexuality, abuse, and his drug use.

Reasons: gay sexual content, drug use, rape

Comment: "Many students do not have the complete support [they] should have. Most importantly, Perks serves as an unparalleled aid for students dealing with depression, mental illness, or suicidal thoughts."



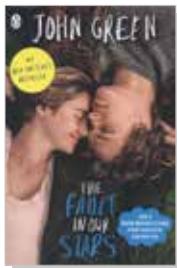
Emily M. Danforth **The Miseducation of Cameron Post**

First published 2012, HarperCollins

Story: Cameron Post is a 12-year-old girl realising she is gay. After her parents die in a car crash, she is sent to live with her conservative aunt. She develops a relationship with her best friend and is sent to a 'de-gaying' camp.

Reasons: offensive language, drug/ alcohol use, gay sex

Author comment: "My experience of researching this conversion therapy was often upsetting and always baffling. There's absolutely zero credible scientific evidence to suggest that such 'therapies' are effective at changing attraction or desire or identity in the least. In fact, there is much evidence that such 'therapies' cause all kinds of harm to those who partake in them."

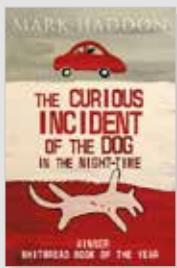


John Green **The Fault in Our Stars** First published 2012, Penguin Books

Story: Two teens, with cancer, Grace and Augustus, meet at a support group. After reading each other's favourite novel, they endeavour to find out the fate of one of the characters in Grace's choice.

Reasons: death due to cancer, offensive language, sex

Reviewer comment: "The thing that bothered me about The Daily Mail piece was that it was a bit condescending to teenagers. I'm tired of adults telling teenagers that they aren't smart, that they can't read critically, that they aren't thoughtful."



Mark Haddon **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** First published 2003, David Fickling Books

Story: Christopher Boone is a 15 year-old with Asperger's syndrome. When he finds a neighbour's dog murdered, he sets out on a journey which will turn his whole world upside down.

Reasons: offensive language, profanity

Author comment: "I'm always entertained when it gets banned somewhere or causes a huge row. But I never really feel that I have to stand up for it. It's like a sturdy 25-year-old who can pick a fight and look after itself."

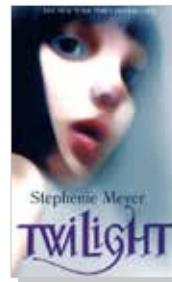


David Levithan **Two Boys Kissing** First published 2013, Electric Monkey

Story: Along with others, Craig and Harry are hoping to set the world record for the longest kiss. They're not a couple, but they used to be. As the marathon progresses, the boys, their friends and families evaluate the changing nature of feelings, behaviour and this crazy thing called love.

Reasons: homosexuality, condoning public displays of affection

Author comment: "Young adult novels that grapple with hard subjects are usually too easily dismissed - partially because, quite frankly, truth-telling makes a lot of people very nervous."



Stephenie Meyer **Twilight [series]** First published 2005, Atom Publishing

Topic: Bella develops a relationship with vampire Edward and is soon involved not just in a conflict with a rival vampire gang but in a conflict between mortality and immortality.

Reasons: Sexually explicit, attitude to religion

Reviewer comment: "Here is a top five list of the reasons that I think people wanting to ban these books are absolutely crazy: nothing naughty happens, they're make-believe characters, the books champion not having sex before marriage, they provide an excellent platform to discuss faith issues and they get kids reading."

