

A Burning Idea: Challenging and Censoring Books

CENSORSHIP SEARCHING

A (Helpful) Guide



Google and Google Scholar

To gain an idea of what general information is available online, start with a Google search or for scholarly articles, try Google Scholar, to narrow your results. Be careful: this could be a rabbit hole of information!



Newspapers

Use your school's newspaper database-- LexisNexis or EBSCOHost, for example--to search out examples in your area. Some papers are not indexed in databases, so searching the internet might yield additional results.



American Library Association

The ALA lists most banned books by year: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10> as well as by content and by initiator. For future educators, the ALA is a ready ally in fighting censorship.



School districts

Once you've found a district which has encountered a challenge to material, particularly the text you plan to explore, request a copy of the materials the district used to review the complaint.



Principal characters

Interviewing the patron who complained about the text and/or a teacher or librarian who is willing to speak about the benefits of the text's usage in school adds perspective.



Potential library sources

- Banned in the USA: A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries
- Literature Suppressed on Social Grounds

Other online sources

- Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom: <https://journals.ala.org/index.php/nif/issue/archive> (titles are case sensitive).
- Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy: <https://journals.ala.org/index.php/jifp>