

Teacher's Guide

BANNED

BOOKS

– Censored in School



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Banned Books - Censored in School **Teacher's Guide**

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Suggested Lesson Plan

These materials may be used in a variety of ways. For maximum benefit, we suggest the following lesson plan:

- As a class, discuss the [Preview Questions](#) and [Key Terms](#).
- Distribute copies of the [Viewing Guide](#) for students to use as a note-taking tool during the video.
- Play the [video](#), pausing if needed to facilitate understanding and note-taking.
- Review and discuss the answers to the Viewing Guide using [Answer Key](#) as a guide.
- Use [Discussion Questions](#) to spark class discussion or assign these questions as homework.
- As a class or in small groups, complete the [Who Chooses](#) Activity.
- Replay the video as preparation for the Quiz.
- Administer and grade the [Quiz](#) using the [Answer Key](#) as a guide.
- Optional: Assign one or more [Enrichment Activities](#) as homework.

For a list of additional resources for use with this video, see www.izzit.org/products.

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Preview Questions

(These are meant to be read aloud by the teacher prior to viewing the video)

1. Why might someone want a book banned?
2. Do you consider banning books an infringement on free speech? Why or why not?
3. What are some considerations that people in power should take prior to banning a book?
4. Do you think banning books is okay in some circumstances, but not others? If so, under what circumstances? Why?
5. Who do you think should decide what types of books, or information, an individual is allowed to consume?

Banned Books - Censored in School

Key Terms

Acquire: to buy or obtain

Activists: a person who campaigns for political or social change

Administrators: people responsible for running a business, organization, etc.

Anti-Semitic: hostile to or prejudiced against Jewish people

Authoritarian: favoring or enforcing strict obedience to authority, especially that of the government, at the expense of personal freedom

Banning: making off-limits to a specific audience or legally prohibiting access to materials

Censorship: the suppression or prohibition of any book, film, news, art, etc., that are considered politically or socially unacceptable or a threat to security

Cornerstone: an important quality on which a particular thing depends or is based

Curriculum: the content (materials) and plan for instruction on a given subject area

Discretion: the freedom to decide what should be done in a particular situation

Disservice: an action harmful to another person or people

Enacted: made into law

Fascist: a person who believes in a system of government led by a dictator who typically rules by forcefully and often violently suppressing opposition and criticism

Freedom of Speech: the right, as protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, to express opinions without censorship or restraint

Free Expression: the right to hold your own opinions and express them freely without interference

Guidance: advice or information aimed at solving a problem or difficulty, especially as given by an authority figure

Indoctrinating: teaching a person or group of people to accept a set of beliefs unquestioningly (without thinking critically about the belief/topic)

Intoxicant: something that causes people to become excited or confused and less able to control what they say or do

Legislation: a collection of laws

License: a permit, from an authority, to own, use, or do something-

Lobby: to seek to influence a politician or public official on an issue

Luxury: the state of great comfort, something that is extravagant or excessive

Multiplicity: a large, wide variety

Objectionable: arousing distaste or opposition; unpleasant or offensive

Obscene: offensive or disgusting by accepted standards of morality and decency

Perspective: a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something, a point of view

Pluralism: a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist

Professional Standards: an expected level of decorum, processes, policies, and procedures in a professional service

Puritans: a member of a group of English Protestants of the late 16th and 17th centuries

Regime: a government, especially an authoritarian one

Skyrocketing: accelerating or increasing at a significant rate

Totalitarian: relating to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state

Vulgarity: something, particularly speech or writing, which has the quality of being inappropriate, unacceptable, or obscene

Banned Books - Censored in School Viewing Guide

Student Name: _____

1. Books were once a hard-to-obtain _____.
2. Libraries provide both _____ and _____ books, free of charge.
3. Freedom of speech allows us to _____ or _____ whatever we want, but do we have a right to hear or read whatever we want?
4. _____ are the foundation of our democracy.
5. I think when we start putting limiters on _____ and we put limiters on _____ and inclusion, that's a slippery slope.
6. The _____ of books has been around as long as books themselves.
7. Throughout most of the history of books, the banning occurred before the book was even _____.
8. At one point, no book could be printed unless it received an official government _____.
9. In 1960, a teacher in Tulsa Oklahoma was fired for assigning _____ to her 11th grade class.
10. The attacks have come, and are continuing to come, from both ends of the _____ spectrum.
11. People seek to ban books because whatever is in there is considered by them to be _____.
12. Trying to protect the _____ becomes a very powerful intoxicant.

13. Today, _____ are a focal point of book bans, which have been skyrocketing in recent years.
14. There were about _____ books pulled off the shelves in the first month of school (at Collierville High School).
15. More than anything, families want to know what their children have access to, and have a little bit of _____ into that process.
16. Students Milana Kumar and Salina Shamsuddin helped form the _____ to lobby against book-banning legislation in their state.
17. _____ is something that's going to be different for everybody.
18. After the students filed their lawsuit against the Island Trees High School and won, the School Board appealed to the _____.
19. Justices in that case stressed that their ruling was confined to the facts, so _____ hasn't always provided specific guidance for future cases.
20. It stands for this key proposition, that you can't remove books based on purely _____ reasons.
21. Librarians have broad _____ regarding books, including the power to decide which books to acquire.

Banned Books - Censored in School

Viewing Guide Answer Key

1. Books were once a hard-to-obtain **luxury**.
2. Libraries provide both **digital** and **physical** books, free of charge.
3. Freedom of speech allows us to **say or write** whatever we want, but do we have a right to hear or read whatever we want?
4. **Books** are the foundation of our democracy.
5. I think when we start putting limiters on **voice** and we put limiters on **perspective** and inclusion, that's a slippery slope.
6. The **banning** of books has been around as long as books themselves.
7. Throughout most of the history of books, the banning occurred before the book was even **published**.
8. At one point, no book could be printed unless it received an official government **license**.
9. In 1960 a teacher in Tulsa Oklahoma was fired for assigning **The Catcher in the Rye** to her 11th grade class.
10. The attacks have come, and are continuing to come, from both ends of the **political** spectrum.
11. People seek to ban books because whatever is in there, is considered by them to be **offensive**.
12. Trying to protect the **children** becomes a very powerful intoxicant.
13. Today, **schools** are a focal point of book bans, which have been skyrocketing in recent years.
14. There were about **300** books pulled off the shelves in the first month of school (at Collierville High School).
15. More than anything, families want to know what their children have access to, and have a little bit of **oversight** into that process.
16. Students Milana Kumar and Salina Shamsuddin helped form the **Tennessee Youth Coalition** to lobby against book-banning legislation in their state.
17. **Obscene** is something that's going to be different for everybody.
18. After the students filed their lawsuit against the Island Trees High School and won, the School Board appealed to the **U.S. Supreme Court**.
19. Justices in that case stressed that their ruling was confined to the facts, so **Pico** hasn't always provided specific guidance for future cases.
20. It stands for this key proposition: that you can't remove books based on purely **political** reasons.
21. Librarians have broad **discretion** regarding books, including the power to decide which books to acquire.

Banned Books - Censored in School

Discussion Questions

1. Who should get to decide what books are available in a school library? Why?
2. Should all books be available to all individuals, regardless of age and situation? Why or why not?
3. Should all the people involved in making an argument about banning a particular book, and all the people involved in making the final decision, have to read the book before taking such a stance/making such a decision? Why or why not?
4. What responsibilities do individuals and society have in promoting intellectual freedom, combating censorship, and fostering a healthy marketplace of ideas?
5. Is there a difference between having a book available on the school library shelf, the town library shelf, and/or having a book that students are forced (compelled) to read as part of the curriculum? If so, what's the difference? Who should decide which books are available/used in each situation? Why?
6. What have been the most common reasons given for the banning of books over time? Why were these justifications accepted by the masses? Have the justifications changed over time? If so, how?
7. Do you believe that people fight as strongly against book banning as they do against infringement upon free speech? Explain your answer. If you do believe it, why do you think people are less resistant to the banning of books than infringements on free speech?
8. What was the premise of the *Island Trees School District v. Pico* case? Do you think the court made the correct decision in this case? Why or why not?
9. Does music face the same level of scrutiny as books? Why or why not? What are some of the differences between music and books that might explain the differences?
10. What impact did the Tennessee Youth Coalition have at Collierville High School in Tennessee? Do you think that students being involved in the lobbying made a difference? Why or why not? Do you think that students should have a say in what books are in their school, or do you believe adults should make those decisions? Why?
11. Why do you think schools have become "battlegrounds" for book banning? Do you think the expectations in a school should be different than a public library or bookstore? Why do you feel that way?

12. Who are the stakeholders in education? Which stakeholders do you believe should have the most say in what books are on school library shelves? Ultimately, who do you think should be responsible for accepting or denying what books are available to children?
13. While the topic of banned books can stir emotions, are there any types of books that you believe should be banned, at least in school or public libraries? Why? Does believing that some books should not be in these libraries mean that a person favors the banning of any books? Why or why not?
14. Who are some people who have spoken out against book banning, and how have they been received? What risks does one take when voicing an opinion contrary to that of decision makers in situations like this?
15. How can people better educate themselves on the risks or rewards of book banning? In a topic where opinions are so varied, what type of information should those who are undecided on the subject seek out? What would you personally tell somebody who is in favor of banning books? What about somebody who is opposed?
16. What are some books that have been banned and what were the motivations behind those bans?
17. Much of the rationale for fighting against book bans is that in a free society, people should have unrestricted access to books and the information contained in them. With social media and the internet now providing much of the access to information, are there discussions we should be having about the banning (or censorship) of some information online? Who should control what information the public can access online? Why? What happens when we ban information because we disagree with it?

Banned Books - Censored in School

Activity: Who Chooses? Who Benefits? Who Pays? What's Fair?

The four questions above can be a useful tool for evaluating any policy or system. Posing the questions is a great way to stimulate critical thinking. As a class, or in small groups, discuss the following:

(For each question, think broadly about all the possible people or groups of people who may be affected, and remember there may be non-monetary costs and benefits.)

1. Who decides which books are banned and why they should be banned? What gives one group of people the right to decide what books others can read? What happens when one group bans a book, or books, but then another group takes power?
2. Who benefits from the banning of books? Book banning is often presented as “for their own good” by others, but does it make sense for decision makers to act in the best interest of others without consulting with those for whom they are deciding? If book banning is a form of censorship, why is considering the decision makers’ motives important?
3. What are the potential costs of banning books? Consider the financial costs, but also the costs to people’s knowledge, freedoms, and other losses when books are banned.
4. Are there situations where groups or individuals should have the right to control what books – or other information – people take in? What are situations where that would be acceptable? Are there any? Is the idea of protecting children from certain content/ideas valid? Why or why not? What about if you feel information in a book, art, etc. endangers the security of the country?

Banned Books - Censored in School Comprehension Quiz

Name _____

1. What are some of the reasons that books have been banned over the years?
 - a. Obscenity
 - b. Vulgarity
 - c. Anti-Christian views
 - d. All of the above

2. Who are 3 potential stakeholders who might decide what books are allowed in a school library?
 - a. Librarians, school boards, parents
 - b. Authors, students, publishers
 - c. Readers, principals, teachers
 - d. Editors, custodians, mayors

3. In *Pico v. Island Trees School District*, there was not a _____ set, because the Supreme Court suggested the case be sent back to trial.
 - a. Jury
 - b. Conviction
 - c. Precedent
 - d. Mistrial

4. Which political party has championed the banning of some books?
 - a. Republican
 - b. Democratic
 - c. Both parties

5. Books are important because they are a primary way of spreading _____.
 - a. Rumors
 - b. Information
 - c. Political views
 - d. Disease

6. One place where book bans are most common is in _____.
 - a. Book stores
 - b. Libraries
 - c. People's homes
 - d. Schools

7. Book banning is often thought of as something that only happens in _____ governments, but it has become more common in _____.
 - a. Totalitarian, the United States
 - b. Democratic, Russia
 - c. Monarchy, Cambodia
 - d. Parliamentary, Mexico

8. How did the Supreme Court ruling in the Island Trees case impact book banning?
 - a. It upheld the school board's authority to ban books.
 - b. It deemed all book bans unconstitutional.
 - c. It called for a review of the motive behind book bans.
 - d. It established a standard list of banned books for schools.

9. When a _____ of people support the banning of a book, it becomes easier for decision makers to follow through with bans.
 - a. Minority
 - b. Majority
 - c. Equal amount
 - d. Small number

10. What is one risk of banning books?
 - a. Not enough time to read them
 - b. Extra space in school and public libraries
 - c. Authors could lose their jobs
 - d. Sacrificing freedom of expression

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Quiz Answer Key

1. D
2. A
3. C
4. C
5. B
6. D
7. A
8. C
9. B
10. D

Banned Books - Censored in School

Enrichment and Integration Activities

Research Projects: Work independently or in small groups. Choose one or more of the topics below to learn more about. Gather information from multiple sources to help answer the questions. Create a report that includes both written and visual elements such as pictures, charts, and graphs. Be sure to cite your sources. Share your findings with the class in a presentation.

A. Research legal challenges to book bans in various places in the United States. What arguments have led to successful challenges of bans, and what arguments have been unsuccessful? Analyze the factors that may have led to the success or failure of a challenge to a book ban.

- If you are working independently, study transcripts of a variety of court hearings on banned books. Then choose one of the hearings and write a newspaper article which could have been written about the hearing.
- If studying this as an entire class, select students to play different roles in a mock trial. Choose a judge, jury members, and a lawyer (or team of lawyers) to represent each side. Once the mock trial has concluded, have every student write a reflection on which side of the issue they agree with, and cite examples from the trial, as well as their own research, to back up their position.

B. Have students explore a list (or lists) of books that have been banned through the years and study the reasonings behind the bans. Then, utilize the school library (or an online or town library if needed) and have students choose one of the books and read it, then formulate two arguments – one for, one against – banning the book. You can access a lot of information about banned books from the [American Library Association](#).

C. Visit the website [Pen America Book Bans](#) and choose one or more articles from the Research and Reports section. Analyze the information and create an oral/visual presentation of that analysis to share with classmates.

D. Choose a book from the following list: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, *The Last Book in the Universe* by Rodman Philbrick, *The Librarian of Burned Books* by Brianna Labuskus, *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, *V for Vendetta* (graphic novel) by Alan Moore. Have students read the book of their choice, and have weekly discussions of the role that censorship plays in each story. Upon conclusion of the readings, have students role-play as the main character of the book they read and have a conversation about how censorship impacted their lives.

E. Have students develop an essay in response to the following prompt: “If books are banned, it

opens the door to ban _____, which will create _____.”

Students should think about the doors that are opened if book bans become common practice. Reflect on the results of past book bans, and project forward towards what the fallout may be if this practice continues to thrive.

F. Book bans go beyond just fiction. Perhaps the most famous banned book was a biology book which explained the theory of evolution. Have students study the [Scopes Trial](#), analyzing the reasons for the trial, as well as the way the trial was covered by media. Then have them choose a more modern legal challenge to a book (try to stay within the past 5 years) and compare the same components.

G. Protest songs: Have students do some research and analyze a variety of songs from different eras which challenge or complement authority – particularly songs in support of and/or against wars throughout history – then have them create a sequence of letters, written from historical leaders in the era of the songs they are analyzing, which debate whether or not the songs should be banned from being played. Students must show an understanding of the historical figure they are playing the role of when they write the letters.

Some other topics of songs/poems that could work for this include slavery, women’s rights, or any other potentially divisive policy.

H. Have students choose an era of United States history, and research book bans and censorship as a whole. Then, as a class, develop and create a timeline which denotes the progression of censorship and book bans from the settlement of the United States through the book bans of 2023.

I. Have students explore the burning of books by Nazis in Germany, then pose these questions for a written response, or Socratic discussion: “If Germany had won the war, would the burning of these books be considered bad now?” “If political leaders whose beliefs we agree with bans (or burns) books that we dislike, is that okay? What if political leaders we dislike, or disagree with initiate a ban?” “Should decisions on whether or not to ban books be made democratically (i.e., majority rules)? Why or why not?”

J. In his book *Books on Fire*, Lucien Polastrong said, “Because as the lawmakers of ancient China and the Nazis in Czechoslovakia decided, an educated people cannot be governed; because the conquered people’s must change the history of their beliefs, like the Aztecs; because only the illiterate can save the world, a common theme of the millenarian preachers of every era; because the nature of a great collection of books is a threat to the new power.” Do you think there are self-serving motivations for book bans? Have students choose one side or the other of this argument and complete a persuasive essay in support of their position.

Banned Books - Censored in School

Lesson Plan

Time to Complete:	1 hour to 90 minutes, depending on depth of discussion
Materials/ Technology/ Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Banned Books - Censored in Schools video (can be streamed from izzit.org) • Presentation method: Projector, Smart Board, etc. • Discussion questions (provided within) • Internet browser • Phone/Video Camera to record • Word processing option (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.)
Standards:	Use our free and easy-to-use Standard Alignment tool to align this lesson with the standards in your school district.
Learning Objectives:	<p>Students will understand the motivations of decision makers banning books.</p> <p>Students will understand the consequences of limiting free expression. Students will relate the banning of books to other forms of censorship and analyze the impact of such censorship.</p>
Topics:	Book Banning, Censorship, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Speech
Absorb: (10:55 minutes)	Watch: video <i>Banned Books - Censored in Schools</i> video streamed from izzit.org
Overall guiding question(s):	How have book bannings set a precedent for the banning of other forms of expression? What are some other forms of expression which may come under fire for political, religious or other reasons? How can censoring something that I disagree with now, open me up to being censored myself later in time?
Lesson Procedures: (50 Minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening group discussion questions: What if I told you that your favorite song and/or musician had been deemed inappropriate by lawmakers and their music was completely wiped from the internet and airwaves? Now what about your favorite TV shows or movies? In an age prior to all of today's technology, books were the only form of entertainment, but more importantly, they were the primary mode of passing information. Do you think, in any of these instances, that having one person or group of people controlling decisions like this is appropriate? Why or why not? 2. Watch Banned Books – Censorship in Schools 3. Activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Play all or part of 3-4 different songs that could be deemed controversial. After each song, have students move to one side of the room or the other based on whether they think each song is

<p>Lesson Procedures Continued</p>	<p>appropriate. Once they have chosen a side ask a follow-up: Should this song be played on public radio, where anyone can hear it? Why or why not?</p> <p>B. Come back together as a group, and define the words “values” and “beliefs” as a group on the whiteboard/chalkboard.</p> <p>C. Split the class into small groups and assign each group one of the songs that you played for them (you may provide the opportunity for groups to pick a controversial song of their own) and have them fill out the graphic organizer (below) identifying stakeholders who might want the songs banned, and Stakeholders who would not want the song banned, and their respective motivations.</p> <p>D. Have each group share their graphic organizers, then ask what would happen if one group of stakeholders was in power, then another took over. Would the songs be magically resurrected? Would more songs be banned? Would different songs be banned?</p> <p>4. Now bring it back around to books. Remind the students that music, in general, is for entertainment, but books are meant to both entertain and inform. As part of a group discussion, ask students to reflect on the motivations of stakeholders in banning books and ask if it is fair to the consumers of information to have the information that is available to them limited in some way?</p>
<p>Summary & Assessment: (20 Minutes)</p>	<p>Have students complete a reflective essay based around the query: “Is it fair to say that if you are for banning one book, you are for banning any book?”</p> <p>Students will be expected to base their answers on prior discussion about stakeholders and their motivations to want, or not want, books banned. Essays should also include an analysis of the risks of banning books (and songs, if that were to happen)</p>
<p>Reflection: (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Have students reflect on the spectrum activity and how thin the line is between finding something inappropriate or objectionable, and actually wanting it banned. What would it take for them to call for the banning of a book, song, television show, etc.? And what might the positive or negative repercussions of that ban be, going forward?</p>

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