

# Banned Books

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Join the 86 FSS Libraries in celebrating the American Library Association's Banned Books Week this September 26th - October 2nd. Beginning in the 1980s as a statement to the challenges made to book choices due to their content, Banned Books Week brings together the reading community to recognize both historic and current efforts to censor books in libraries and schools. This year's theme is "Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us" with a reminder that sharing stories important to us means sharing a part of ourselves. Books reach across boundaries and build connections between readers. Censorship, on the other hand, creates barriers.

The ALA defines a challenge as an effort to remove materials based on their content by an individual or group; a ban is the physical removal of a title. While most removals are unsuccessful, the push to challenge the use of a book in a classroom or library is one of the most common forms of censorship in the United States. In 1982, a successful exhibit by the American Booksellers Association (ABA) showcased hundreds of challenged and suppressed titles, which sparked the idea to celebrate a yearly recognition of contested and removed books. Judith King, the president of the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, implemented the first official Banned Books Week by September of that year. The shared support to learn and discuss difficult or unorthodox topics, along with the effort to fight against the censorship of those ideas, grew.

Now hosted the last week of every September, Banned Books Week is celebrated both in the United States and across the globe through Amnesty International. Coverage of the Week reaches 2.8 billion readers and is one of the most popular annual events hosted by the American Library Association. An important aspect of the Week is to recognize that the attempt to challenge or remove books based on their content remains strong today, including more than 273 titles in 2020.

