

# Banned & Challenged Books Across America

Every year, the American Library Association (ALA) publishes a list of the most frequently banned and/or challenged books. The books often carry over from year to year, and receive more challenges and bans as different social issues fluctuate in the mainstream. A book can receive a challenge or a ban request from any public institution across around the United States. The instances documented in this map are either the most recent occurrence of the ban/challenge of that book, or the instance that received the most news attention. The order of this list reflects the ALA's most recent list of banned books. The top books are those receiving the most ban/challenge requests from 2018, and the list continues to the books banned within the past five years.

As you can see, book bans & challenges happen all around the US, and are not just concentrated in areas deemed more conservative.

**Book:** *This Day in June*  
**Author:** Gayle E. Pitman, illustrated by Kristyna Litten  
**Where Challenged:** West Chicago Public Library, IL  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reason:** Including LGBTQIA+, seen as propaganda for a "Gay Agenda" (Marshall U) Aug 25, 2017

**Book:** *Two Boys Kissing*  
**Author:** David Levithan  
**Where Banned:** Fauquier County Public High School Library, VA.  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reason:** Including LGBTQIA+ content, teenage sexual activity (Marshall U) April 26, 2014

**Book:** *The Kite Runner*  
**Author:** Khaled Hosseini  
**Where Banned:** Williams Field High School in Gilbert, AZ  
**Status:** Unknown  
**Reason:** Use of profanity and references to teenage sexuality. Thought to be promoting Islam (ALA) March 30, 2017

**Book:** *Sex is a Funny Word*  
**Author:** Cory Silverberg  
**Where Challenged:** Athens-Limestone Public Library, AL  
**Status:** Retained but relocated  
**Reasons:** Addresses sex education and is believed to lead children to "want to have sex or ask questions about sex" (ALA) July 17, 2018

**Book:** *I Am Jazz*  
**Where Challenged:** Rocklin Academy, CA  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reasons:** Discusses gender identity and the transgender experience  
**Status:** Unknown (ALA) Aug 22, 2017

**Book:** *Looking for Alaska*  
**Author:** John Green  
**Where Challenged:** Lumberton Middle School, NJ  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reasons:** Sexually explicit content, thought to encourage children to experiment sexually (ALA) Oct 13, 2015

**Book:** *Eleanor & Park*  
**Author:** Rainbow Rowell  
**Where Challenged:** Yamhill-Carlton School District, OR  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reasons:** Use of explicit and offensive language (ALA) Feb 8, 2017

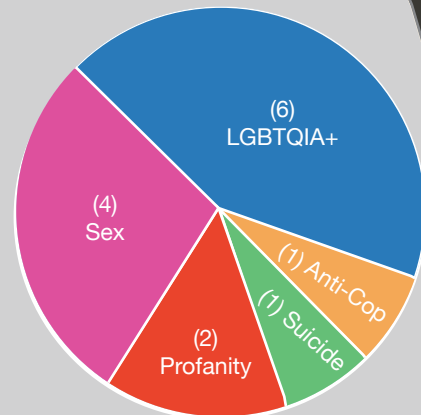
Projection: Lambert Conformal  
 Conic | Scale: 1:12,500,000 | Central Meridian: -96.0 | Standard Parallel 1: 33.0 | Standard Parallel 2: 45.0 | Data from ala.org, marshall.edu/library/bannedbooks, Natural Earth Data | Icons: thenounproject.com | Pie chart reference: <http://nces.ed.gov> | Map by Eliana Wasserman, May 2019

## More Information

- A **BANNED** book has been removed from a library, classroom, etc.
- A **CHALLENGED** book has been requested to be removed from a library, classroom, etc. (Marshall U)

• Students' access to books in public libraries is protected under our First Amendment, and denial of books on the ground of a disagreement would be a violation of the First Amendment. However, parents, community members and others looking to censor what students read can file to challenge a book and have it removed from shelves. There are protocols in place to prevent censorship, but book challenges and quiet removal of books from library spaces take place all the time. Censors impose their will and beliefs on everyone else when they try to prevent others from reading it. (ALA)

## Banned Book Topics



Note: Many books contain multiple, overlapping themes so the most prominent one was chosen for assessment.

**Book:** *George*  
**Author:** Alex Gino  
**Where Challenged:** Eugene City School District. Eugene, OR.  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reasons:** Believed to encourage children to clear browser history and change their bodies using hormones, and for mentioning "dirty magazines," describing male anatomy, "creating confusion," and including a transgender character (ALA) May 8, 2018

**Book:** *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*  
**Author:** Jill Twiss, illustrated by EG Keller  
**Where Banned:** Pinecrest Elementary School. Seminole County, FL.  
**Status:** Unknown  
**Reason:** Including LGBTQIA+ content, and for political and religious viewpoints (ALA) Feb 18, 2018

**Book:** *The Hate U Give*  
**Author:** Angie Thomas  
**Where Banned:** Independent School District. Katy, TX.  
**Status:** Retained (available with parental consent)  
**Reason:** Book was deemed "anti-cop," and profanity, drug use, and sexual references (ALA) Dec 1, 2017

**Book:** *Drama*  
**Author:** Raina Telgemeier  
**Where Banned:** Franklin Middle School. Franklin, TX  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reason:** Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters and theme, politically offensive topics (ALA) - 2014

**Book:** *Thirteen Reasons Why*  
**Author:** Raina Jay Asher  
**Where Banned:** Mesa County Valley School District, CO  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reason:** Discussion of teen suicide (ALA) May 16, 2017

**Book:** *This One Summer*  
**Author:** Mariko Tamaki, illustrated by Jillian Tamaki  
**Where Challenged:** Henning, MN  
**Status:** Unknown  
**Reasons:** Profanity, sexual references, and vulgarity (ALA) - Feb 16, 2016

**Book:** *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*  
**Author:** Sherman Alexie  
**Where Banned:** Sauk Prairie School District, WI.  
**Status:** Retained  
**Reasons:** Book contains excerpts on masturbation, includes: "vulgarity, racism, and anti-Christian content" (Marshall U) - Jul 14, 2017

