

The 10 most challenged titles of 2008 were:

1. ***And Tango Makes Three*, by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell**
Reasons: anti-ethnic, anti-family, homosexuality, religious viewpoint, and unsuited to age group
2. ***His Dark Materials* trilogy, by Philip Pullman**
Reasons: political viewpoint, religious viewpoint, and violence
3. ***TTYL; TTFN; L8R, G8R (series)*, by Lauren Myracle**
Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited to age group
4. ***Scary Stories (series)*, by Alvin Schwartz**
Reasons: occult/satanism, religious viewpoint, and violence
5. ***Bless Me, Ultima*, by Rudolfo Anaya**
Reasons: occult/satanism, offensive language, religious viewpoint, sexually explicit, and violence
6. ***The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky**
Reasons: drugs, homosexuality, nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit, suicide, and unsuited to age group
7. ***Gossip Girl (series)*, by Cecily von Ziegesar**
Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited to age group
8. ***Uncle Bobby's Wedding*, by Sarah S. Brannen**
Reasons: homosexuality and unsuited to age group
9. ***The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini**
Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited to age group
10. ***Flashcards of My Life*, by Charise Mericle Harper**
Reasons: sexually explicit and unsuited to age group

50 Banned Books That Everyone Should Read

<http://onlinecollegedegree.org/2009/05/20/50-banned-books-that-everyone-should-read/>
by Britney Wilkins

As long as there have been books, there have been people opposed to what is said in some of those books. Authors who challenge the accepted norms in their literature are often the target of angry people who do not understand or appreciate their literature. The following books are excellent examples of great literature that has become banned or challenged in an attempt to shield the public from what some see as inappropriate.

Protect the Children

These books have all been at the heart of controversy over their appropriateness for children and youth to read.

1. ***Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger.** Frequently a target of censorship, this classic coming-of-age story of a teenage boy in New York is often banned due to the language and sexuality—particularly a scene with a prostitute.
2. ***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain.** Offensive language, in particular, one very racially-charged word, is the usual reason given for banning this book, which has been controversial since it was published in 1884. Twain's famous story highlights the friendship between a white boy and a black man in a book that attempted to challenge the racism Twain saw around him.
3. ***Forever* by Judy Blume.** Blume is frequently the target of censorship as many of her books deal with teen issues revolving around becoming a sexual being. *Forever* documents a high school girl's loss of virginity and delves into the emotional aspects of her choice.
4. ***The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman.** This fantasy novel says much about friendship and loyalty, but it also says plenty about not following a religion blindly. Many have seen the book as anti-religion and have banned the book.
5. ***Lord of the Flies* by William Golding.** Most who oppose this book claim the violence, language, and the implication that man is little more than an animal as the reasons. The book depicts a microcosm of society played out on an island populated by young boys stranded there and trying to survive. The struggle between good and evil and the exploration of human nature can force readers to examine themselves in ways that may not feel comfortable.

6. ***The Harry Potter series* by JK Rowling.** Some parents object to the magic and wizardry that is at the heart of the Harry Potter books. Because of their objections, many schools and libraries have banned these books.
7. ***Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson.** A powerful book that explores friendship, life, and death, this book is often banned due to what some feel is offensive language and scenes of witchcraft which some believe promotes disobeying authority as well as anti-religious sentiments. Oddly, the theme of death, which is a major element in the novel, is also used as a reason to ban this book.
8. ***James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl.** This book depicts a child who lives under the oppression of mean caretakers and relies on his creativity and an alternate world in order to survive. Those opposed to the book dislike the violence, language, and disobedience towards adults.
9. ***And Tango Makes Three* by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson.** This children's story tells of two male penguins at a zoo who care for an egg together. Despite the reality that male penguins bond together to care for their eggs in nature and that the two characters in the book are based on actual penguins from the Central Park Zoo, the idea of two males creating a family has forced many to ban the book due to reasons of homosexuality and anti-family issues.
10. ***A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle.** The bonds of family and friendship are at the heart of this novel, but it also highlights the battle of good and evil and brings in supernatural spirits, therefore making it a target for those worried about the religious implications they feel the novel makes.
11. ***The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier.** Selling chocolates as a fundraiser at school not only sets off fictional turmoil in this book, but it also prompts parents to challenge the book. Reasons given include language, violence, resisting authority, and sexuality.
12. ***The Giver* by Lois Lowry.** The award-winning book that depicts a society driven to maintain an amazing amount of control over its members, including euthanasia and suicide. Some parents have reacted strongly to these themes in the book and have taken the book as an endorsement for killing.

Religion and Politics

Banned by governments, taken off shelves at libraries, and removed from schools, these books have been contested because of the way they portray religion or politics.

13. ***The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie.** This book of magical realism describes a battle between God and the devil through the depiction of two men who go through fantastical journeys. This book was so reviled by several governments and religious leaders in Asia and the Middle East

- that a fatwa was issued against Rushdie, who had to live in hiding for many years in order to avoid being killed.
14. ***A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving.** Irving's book is a powerful one that highlights the loyalty and bonds of friendship and family in a poignant and humorous manner. Some feel that the stance Irving takes on religion and opposition to US in Vietnam are reason enough to ban this incredible book.
 15. ***The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck.** When this book was originally banned in California for obscenity. However, there is evidence that shows the censorship was led by wealthy landowners who did not want their treatment of their workers to become highlighted from the very realistic accounts in Steinbeck's novel.
 16. ***Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe.** When this book was published in 1851, it was criticized by slavery supporters and described as a false depiction of slavery. The importance and relevance of this novel has survived the censorship it has experienced to allow current generations to learn from their ancestors' mistakes.
 17. ***The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss.** On the surface this book seems it should be included in the Protect the Children section, but the reason this Dr. Seuss book is banned has more to do with adult issues. The book is an allegorical story describing the effects of poor stewardship on the Earth. Those opposed to the book, specifically some in California, feel it shows an unfair portrayal of those in the logging industry.
 18. ***The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.** This popular thriller is a work of fiction, but that doesn't mean any less to those opposed to it. Catholic leaders have banned *The Da Vinci Code* for what it sees as its anti-Christian sentiment and for the portrayal of Christ in a physical relationship with Mary Magdalene—even having children together.
 19. ***1984* by George Orwell.** Perhaps one of the most famous dystopian novels written, *1984* was published in the early part of the 20th century with a warning to society that has become eerily true. The book has been banned in the past due to pro-communist sentiment and sexuality.
 20. ***Animal Farm* by George Orwell.** This satirical allegory was initially banned in the Soviet Union because of its anti-Stalinism, but has also been challenged in America by parents fearful that their children will be exposed to the communist sentiment expressed in the introduction and the text.
 21. ***Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift.** Underlying themes in this famous work include political corruption, anti-war sentiments, and the injustices of colonization. It's no wonder this book has been banned in several countries and Swift had to publish it anonymously.
 22. ***Candide* by Voltaire.** Politics, war, colonialism, and religion are all sharply skewered with the satire in *Candide*. Since its publication in 1759 through the 20th century, this book was banned by several countries.

Sex

Perhaps the most popular reason a book is banned or challenged, the following books all portray sexuality in a way that has made some uncomfortable.

23. ***Lady Chatterley's Lover* by DH Lawrence.** Lawrence's book tells the story of an adulterous love affair and includes explicit sexual language. It was banned in the UK and Lawrence eventually published in Italy, where the first edition sold out immediately.
24. ***Tropic of Cancer* by Henry Miller.** Miller's novel was banned in Great Britain and the US due to the sexuality described in the book. Miller eventually had his autobiographical account of living in Paris published in France.
25. ***Fanny Hill* by John Cleland.** Considered the first erotic novel published in English, *Fanny Hill* describes the sexual exploits of a woman who begins with selling her virginity and eventually ends up a prostitute by trade. Besides the typical sexuality described in the book, there are also instances of homosexuality (both with men and women), masturbation, and sadomasochism.
26. ***Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman.** Whitman published several versions of this book filled with his poetry that often celebrates sexuality, both homosexual and heterosexual. From the late 1800's to the present day, these poems have faced challenges to be read.
27. ***The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald.** New wealth, old relationships, and a society trying to find itself are at the center of this novel. Opponents of this work cite sexual references and profanity in the book.
28. ***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley.** Huxley's dystopian view of society depicts adults dulling their senses with pacifying drugs and casual sex. What Huxley uses as a tool to illustrate what he felt was wrong with society is exactly what those opposed to the book latch on to when challenging it.
29. ***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.** Hosseini's beautiful book of friendship and loyalty examines the life of two boys in Afghanistan who come from two widely differing classes. Besides the Afghanistan government's upset over the content of the book, others around the world have challenged the book due to claims of offensive language and a sexually explicit scene in which a young boy is raped.
30. ***Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes.** This touching story of Charlie, a mentally challenged young man who participates in a scientific experiment to raise his intelligence, portrays the awakening both intellectually and emotionally of the man. A part of this awakening includes exploration of his sexuality, which has prompted many to want the book banned.
31. ***The Awakening* by Kate Chopin.** Chopin's short novel tells the tale of a married woman who discovers herself and explores her newfound freedom through bucking societal expectations, having an adulterous affair, and eventually opting for suicide as a way to preserve her freedom.

and not become a slave to a life she detested. Opponents object to the sexuality.

32. ***Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert.** Trapped in a loveless and unfulfilling marriage, Madame Bovary engages in adulterous affairs in an attempt to find happiness. The sexuality in the book prompted many countries to ban the book on the basis of its being immoral.
33. ***Rabbit, Run* by John Updike.** The main character, 20-something Rabbit, runs to escape the constraints of family life and becomes involved with a prostitute, an ex-girlfriend, and others as he deals with the issues surrounding his marriage. A direct result of the oppressive social atmosphere of the 1950's, *Rabbit, Run* includes many sexual depictions that offended quite a few people.
34. ***Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.** This classic autobiography is taught in almost every school in America, but that doesn't mean it hasn't faced its challenges. Parents have protested against this book as being too sexually charged, pornographic, and even claiming it was too depressing to be taught.
35. ***Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov.** First published by a pornographic press in France, Nabokov explores the life of Humbert Humbert, a pedophile who runs away with the 12 year-old daughter of his landlady. The book was banned from many countries and still experiences challenges today.

Race and Gender Issues

Racism or the treatment of women are the driving forces behind having these books removed from the public eye.

36. ***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.** Racism, language, and a rape scene are the usual culprits when banning this book. In reality, Lee was highlighting the rampant racism of her time in this much beloved book in an attempt to change the wrongs she saw in society.
37. ***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck.** Steinbeck's portrayal of an unusual friendship between two men, one of whom is developmentally challenged, has prompted many to oppose the book due to the language, social and racial implications, and violence in the book.
38. ***The Color Purple* by Alice Walker.** Some of the reasons this book is challenged include the violence, profanity, and sexuality in the book, including a rape scene, but most importantly are the race relations that Walker depict. Racism is difficult to face for many and the reaction to ban literature that depicts it is a strong one.
39. ***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou.** Sexual content, racism, offensive language, violence are the most popular reasons this book is challenged and continues to be today. Angelou's autobiographical book is both shocking and beautiful as she recounts the experiences of

- her early life as she endured racism, abuse, and other challenges she eventually overcame.
40. ***Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott.** Perhaps one of the most surprising books on banned book lists, *Little Women* is a very wholesome depiction of a family of four sisters who struggle in poverty but are rich in love and familial ties. The reason the book is challenged may be based on what some view as punishment of the one character who has a strong feminist approach by her marriage to a boring and much older man.
 41. ***Catch-22* by Joseph Heller.** This anti-war satire is surprisingly not challenged due to that theme, but because of the depiction of women in the novel. The word "whore" is used frequently and there have been claims that the book promotes misogyny.

Multiple Reasons

Sometimes a book is so controversial or so powerfully written that it hits people on several different levels. These books have been banned for many different reasons, usually including profanity, violence, and sexuality.

42. ***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.** Perhaps the most ironic banned book situation, *Fahrenheit 451* deals with the issue of censorship in a dystopian society that sends firefighters out to burn down houses discovered to have books inside. Those opposed to this book claim various reasons for banning it including profanity, portrayal of smoking and drinking, and anti-religious and anti-establishment sentiments.
43. ***Native Son* by Richard Wright.** Violence, sex, and profanity are the reasons this book is frequently banned. The hard depiction of life in the novel highlights the hopelessness and racism suffered by one man and illustrates what happens to a man caught in a society that marginalizes him.
44. ***Beloved* by Toni Morrison.** Morrison's book about an escaped slave who rears her children in a world of fright and lack of freedom includes instances of violence and sexual abuse. On the surface, the book may appear to contain gratuitous scenes, Morrison ties everything together in a cautionary reminder for society to heed the mistakes of the past.
45. ***As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner.** This masterpiece of American literature explores the physical and mental journey of those oppressed by a life of poverty. The reasons many feel the need to ban this book include the references Faulkner makes to masturbation, abortion, and questioning the existence of God as well as profanity.
46. ***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey.** Telling the story of a group of mentally ill patients in an oppressive hospital, this story explores what happens when someone stands up to that oppression in order to create a more equanimous situation, moral choice everyone must face, and forming friendships despite hardship. Those opposed to Kesey's

- novel claim it glorifies criminal activity, is "garbage," includes bizarre torture, bad language, bestiality, and promotes secular humanism.
47. ***The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood.** This dystopian story tells of a society run by men that remove all freedom from women and class them according to what purpose they can serve for the men. The story is told from the perspective of a handmaiden, or a woman who is used solely for providing babies to wealthy couples. Those opposed to the book claim it is anti-Christian and pornographic.
 48. ***In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote.** This true story details the violent murder of an entire family by two criminals in search of money that they were wrongly informed existed at the family's farmhouse. This book is considered to be the first true crime book, and upon its publication, many were appalled by the violence depicted in the book for what seemed no good reason.
 49. ***Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut.** Vonnegut's book about a time-traveling prisoner of war who has no control of where he will end up next has faced challenges against what opponents feel is unnecessary sex, violence, language, anti-religion, torture, ethnic spurs, and misogyny.
 50. ***East of Eden* by John Steinbeck.** The battle of good and evil in humanity is the major theme in this powerful novel that parallels the book of Genesis in the Bible. The book has been challenged as an obscenity that is ungodly.