Chapter Seven  

The Freedom to Read

Banned and Challenged Books

Each year the Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association (ALA) publishes a list of challenged and banned books, including those for children and young adults. The following lists include a collection of selected young adult titles from the “100 Most Frequently Challenged Books: 2000–2009” and from the “Top Ten Most Frequently Challenged Books” of 2010–2012. The most frequently challenged books are listed in descending order in the first list.

There are many reasons for books being challenged: personal beliefs, offensive language, graphic descriptions of sex and violence, controversial ideas, unsuited to age group, etc. This list is not intended to be recommendations for not including a particular book in a library collection. It’s a matter of being aware of challenges. If one of these books is in your library collection, you might want to collect favorable reviews of the book and write a justification for including the book in the collection. The list will be of great interest to high school students who may be unaware of how and why books are challenged. ALA’s Banned Books Week held during October is an excellent opportunity to educate students about intellectual freedom and will stir curiosity about banned and challenged books in their school and public libraries.


1. **Harry Potter** series by J. K. Rowing
2. **Alice** series by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
3. **The Chocolate War** by Robert Cormier
4. **His Dark Materials** series by Philip Pullman
5. **ttyl; ttf; 18r. g8r** series by Lauren Myracle
6. **The Perks of Being a Wallflower** by Stephen Chbosky
7. **Fallen Angels** by Walter Dean Myers
8. **It’s Perfectly Normal** by Robie Harris
9. **Forever** by Judy Blume

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10. *Go Ask Alice* by Anonymous
11. *Gossip Girl* series by Cecily von Ziegesar
12. *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
13. *Killing Mr. Griffin* by Lois Duncan
14. *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by James Lincoln Collier
15. *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney
16. *We All Fall Down* by Robert Cormier
17. *What My Mother Doesn’t Know* by Sonia Sones
18. *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya
19. *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* by Carolyn Mackler
20. *Angus, Thongs, and Full Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison
21. *It’s So Amazing* by Robie Harris
22. *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher
23. *Athletic Shorts* by Chris Crutcher
24. *Rainbow Boys* by Alex Sanchez
25. *When Dad Killed Mom* by Julius Lester
26. *Blood and Chocolate* by Annette Curtis Klause
27. *Fat Kid Rules the World* by K. L. Going
28. *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
29. *The Terrorist* by Caroline B. Cooney
30. *Harris and Me* by Gary Paulsen
31. *What’s Happening to My Body* by Lynda Madaras
32. *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck
33. *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* by Chris Crutcher
34. *Cut* by Patricia McCormick
35. *Tiger Eyes* by Judy Blume
36. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L’Engle
37. *Shade’s Children* by Garth Nix
38. *America, A Novel* by E. R. Frank
Most Frequently Challenged Books (written for young adults): 2010–2012
(not included in above list)

*Crank* by Ellen Hopkins (2010)
*Flashcards of My Life* by Cherise Mericle Harper (2009)
*The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins (2011, 2010)
*Looking for Alaska* by John Green (2012)
*Lush* by Natasha Friend (2010)
*Scary Stories* (series) by Alvin Schwartz (2012, 2008)
*Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher (2012)
*Twilight* (series) by Stephenie Myers (2010, 2009)
*What My Mother Doesn’t Know* by Sonya Sones (2011, 2010)

Most recent information about challenged books can be accessed at
http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/21stcenturychallenged

**Young Adult Novels about Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**