

# **Rita and Truett Smith Public Library**

---

## **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Approved by the Library Advisory Board on

September 14, 2015

## I. Introduction

- A. Purpose of the Collection Development Policy
- B. Mission Statement
- C. The Community

## II. General Principles and Selection Policy

- A. Philosophy of Selection
- B. Scope of the Collection
- C. Selection Objectives
- D. Selection Principles
- E. Criteria for Selection
- F. Responsibility for Materials Selection
- G. Selection Tools
- H. Deselection Policies and Procedures
- I. Gifts and Rare and Expensive Books
- J. Purchase Requests
- K. Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials
- L. Library Bill of Rights
- M. Freedom to Read
- N. Freedom to View

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **Mission Statement**

The Rita and Truett Smith Public Library's (SPL) Mission Statement is to Inspire, Inform and Interact. To accomplish its mission, the Library develops its collections with materials that encourage reading for pleasure, life-long learning, and exposure to cultural diversity and to encourage creative thinking.

### **Purpose of Collection Development Policy (CDP)**

This document states the policies and plans governing development of the collections of the Rita and Truett Smith Public Library (SPL). A collection development policy builds public confidence and trust between the library staff and patrons. It is intended to provide guidance for the selection and evaluation of materials which anticipate and meet the needs of the Wylie community.

The policy is intended to provide guidelines for collection selectors and information for library customers about local library service. The policy consists of an overall statement of the library's collecting intentions and guidelines. Second, this document provides direction in collection building practices and ensures a consistent approach through time and staff changes. Additionally, this policy explains the basis upon which materials are selected and maintained and helps answer questions regarding the presence or absence of materials.

As the community changes, the library will reassess and adapt its collections to reflect new and differing areas of interest and concern. This document will be periodically evaluated and revised as necessary to provide guidance for implementing changes in the collection. Since this CDP states policies and plans which enable the Smith Public Library to serve the Wylie community, we will begin with a description of the Library and the community.

### **The Community**

In the 21st Century, Wylie has become one of the fastest-growing communities in Collin County, DFW Metroplex and the state of Texas. With this growth, the city has made a transition from bedroom community to a balanced community combining quality residential living with a healthy business climate. According to the 2010 Census, 93% of adults have a high school diploma and 34% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Wylie has become increasingly diverse, with 71% of the population White, 12.4% Black or African-American and 17.9% Hispanic. Nineteen percent of the population five years and older speak a language other than English in their homes. The Wylie Independent School District collects data on the languages spoken in the homes of the students. The library uses this data to make decisions on materials to purchase in languages other than English. According to the North Texas Council of Governments, the population of Wylie as of January 2015 is 45,190. The population is expected to reach its maximum by 2035 at 51,058. There are 3.09 persons per household with 33.6% under 18 years of age, 5.1% 65 years or older and 61.3% between the ages of 18 and 65. Fifty percent of the households have at least one or more persons under the age of eighteen. Twelve percent have at

least one person over the age of sixty-five. The mean travel time for residents sixteen and over is thirty-two minutes. The median household income is \$80,632 with five percent of the population in poverty.

The Wylie Independent School District serves more than 13,000 students. Students live in Wylie as well as the surrounding communities of Sachse, Murphy, Lucas, Lavon and St. Paul. Wylie ISD has 19 campuses including two 4A high schools, one alternative high school, three junior high schools (grades 7 and 8), three intermediate schools (grades 5 and 6) and ten elementary campuses (grades Pre-K through 4). Library staff works with school personnel, including administrators, teachers and librarians in order to offer the most effective library services to students.

The library communicates with the Wylie Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Wylie Chamber of Commerce to learn about the information needs of business owners. The WEDC contributes to the Small Business Resource Center.

## **II. General Principles and Selection Policy**

### **Philosophy of Selection**

In support of its mission "To Inspire, Inform and Interact @ SPL" and in recognition of the library's role as a community leader, the Rita and Truett Smith Public Library will protect intellectual freedom, promote literacy, encourage lifelong learning and provide library materials, services and programs. The library fully endorses the principles documented in the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read and The Freedom to View statements of the American Library Association. It upholds the right of the individual to secure information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. Materials available in the library present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy.

### **Scope of Collection**

The Rita and Truett Smith Public Library's collections are intended to meet the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of its patrons in a variety of formats. The scope of the collection is sufficiently broad to offer a choice of formats, and treatment and level of difficulty to meet the library needs of most individuals. Materials are selected to aid individuals, groups, and organizations, attain practical solutions to daily problems, and to enrich the quality of life for community members. The collection is not archival; it is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis to meet contemporary needs.

### **Selection Objectives**

The primary objective of selection shall be to collect materials of contemporary significance and of permanent value. The library shall always be guided by a sense of responsibility to both the present and future. To this end, librarians shall add materials which enrich the collections and

maintain an overall balance. Further, the library shall make available materials for enlightenment and recreation, even though such materials may not have enduring interest or value.

### **Criteria for Selection**

Librarians responsible for selection will review each type of material in terms of its own kind of excellence and its intended audience. No single standard can apply to all acquisition decisions. Materials are collected in both print and electronic formats. Materials are collected in a variety of languages. Librarians may select some material primarily for its literary and artistic value or its research value. Other material may be selected to meet the recreational and entertainment needs of the community.

Some materials may be purchased to meet heavy local demand. These high-demand items may or may not meet the general and specific criteria in this policy. In either case, librarians give serious consideration to the volume and nature of requests by the community. Also, community interest and demand may lead librarians to re-evaluate and select materials not originally recommended for purchase.

In considering the relative advantages and disadvantages of ownership versus access to information sources, the library recognizes that, for some materials for which there is little demand, mechanisms such as interlibrary loan and the internet may provide more cost-effective access rather than purchasing.

Changes in technology require the library to constantly evaluate the formats available in the collection. The library may decide to add new formats as they become more cost-effective, readily available, and popular. Decreased popularity, selection, shelf space and availability of a format may require that a format be removed from the library's collection.

To build collections of merit and usefulness to the community, librarians acquire materials according to objective guidelines. All acquisitions do not have to meet all the listed standards but should meet the criteria of suitability of subject and style for the intended audience and present and potential relevance to community needs or interests. All materials, whether purchased or donated, are evaluated by examining professional reviews and checking against the standards listed below.

- Suitability of the format for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the medium to content
- Insight into the human and social condition
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other material on the subject
- Reputation and/or significance of the author or illustrator
- Skill, competence and purpose of the author or illustrator
- Attention of critics, reviewers and the public

- Favorable reviews in professionally recognized review media
- Popular demand
- Availability of similar material within the community and other area libraries
- Durable binding and paper
- Cost relative to value item contributes to collection
- Space required relative to value item contributes to collection
- Receipt of or nominations for major awards
- Inclusion in national book clubs

### **Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Information and Opinion for Nonfiction and Reference**

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Objectivity
- Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation
- Representation of diverse points of view, impartial opinion or clearly stated bias
- Currency of information
- Historical value
- Special features, bibliography and index
- Scarcity of material on the subject

### **Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Imagination (Fiction)**

- Representation of important movement, genre, trend or national culture
- Interest and originality of the plot and development of characters
- Artistic presentation and experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Literary merit
- Inclusion in standard library bibliographies
- Authenticity of historical or social setting
- Title is part of a series currently in the collection
- Local significance of author or setting

### **Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Media**

- Popular demand
- Artistic merit
- Reputation of producer/artist
- Appropriateness to library's users
- Relationship to the existing collection
- Availability of similar material within the community and other area libraries
- Cost relative to value item contributes to collection
- Local significance of setting
- Evaluations in professionally recognized review media
- Receipt of, or nominations for, major awards

### **Additional selection criteria for electronic materials include:**

- Compatibility with available equipment and/or existing operating systems
- Ease of use by library users, including enhanced searching capabilities
- Price of print format versus electronic
- Frequency of updating
- Anticipated demand by library users
- Training requirements for staff and patrons
- Remote access capability
- Licensing fees and usage restrictions

*The Library is not responsible for damage to equipment from electronic media borrowed from the Library.*

The library will attempt to select materials that represent a range of viewpoints and will do its best to exercise impartiality in selection decisions. The collections will represent as many sides of issues as budget, space and availability of materials allow. Selection will be based on criteria given throughout the policy. Content of an item or the endorsement or approval of an individual or group in the community will not automatically cause an item to be included or excluded. Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular passage or illustration.

### ***Adult Collections***

The purpose of the adult collections is to make available books and other materials that will meet educational, informational, cultural and leisure reading interest and needs of the patrons. The library strives to maintain a carefully selected collection of highly recommended titles. Each title is judged individually according to reader interest and the need of the book in the collection. Materials are collected in English, Spanish and other languages as required by the community.

### ***Adult non-fiction***

The library acquires non-fiction works of both permanent and current interest. Titles are also selected in large print, downloadable eBooks and audiobook formats. Materials for learning another language are generally in book/audio packages.

### ***Adult fiction***

Fiction is purchased in regular print, large print, audiobook formats and downloadable audio books and eBooks.

### ***Graphic Novels: Adult, Young Adult and Juvenile collections***

The graphic novel format conveys information or tells stories through the medium of sequential art. They can be collections of short stories, multi-volume series, or stand alone. The material can be fiction or non-fiction.

There are three collections: Juvenile, Young Adult, and Adult. Because pop culture -- such as cartoons, anime, and movies -- and graphic novels are often heavily connected, materials are selected by popular interest. Selection aids and literary merit are also considered.

### ***Juvenile Collections***

#### ***Juvenile & Young Adult non-fiction***

The library acquires non-fiction works of both permanent and current interest.

#### **Selection Criteria—Juvenile**

The Juvenile Collections contain materials appropriate to the needs and interests of children from infancy through sixth grade. The collections also include materials of interest to adults concerned with these age groups. The collections strive to present a variety of points of view to enable children to better understand their world. Materials are selected to reflect the wide spectra of reading, comprehension, and maturity levels present in this population, as well as for cultural diversity. Not every item in these collections is appropriate for every child. However, the Library cannot act “in loco parentis.” It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to guide the selection of materials by their children.

#### ***Priorities for Purchase***

Although the library will not purchase sufficient titles for classroom use, the library has a strong commitment to provide a variety of supplemental materials in support of classroom assignments. While materials are selected that help fulfill the needs of elementary aged students, the library does not interpret curriculum support as a role. Thus, textbooks are not purchased. Additionally, due to current research from the American Academy of Pediatrics concerning the negative effects of television on brain development for infants up to age two, the library does not purchase DVDs targeted for that age group. The Library, however, does continue to purchase instructional DVDs for parents of that age group.

The goal for selecting materials for children is to provide the best new materials and copies of older titles and classics of lasting value. Materials are collected in English and Spanish and other languages as required by the community.

The presence of materials in the Library must not be construed as a personal endorsement of their contents by any member of the staff, the Library Board or the City Council.

The Library subscribes to the principles of the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, Statement on Labeling, and Free Access to Libraries for Minors (See Appendices for full texts).

#### **Selection Criteria—Young Adult**

The Young Adult collection bridges the gap in reading and interest level between the Children and Adult Collections. It includes works of fiction as well as works of nonfiction on topics of interest to the target audience. The Young Adult collection is designed to meet the reading needs of 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders and covers a wide range of reading levels, interests and tastes. The YA

collection features materials in hard bound, paperback and electronic formats. Popular series, core YA authors, issue related fiction and assigned reading titles are included.

Because popular media and social media influence teen opinion, an awareness of “what’s hot” is necessary in making purchasing decisions. Selectors also consult standard review journals. Multiple copies are purchased for school assignments and popular authors. Sequels and prequels and new paperback series should be acquired as they are released.

Selection is made on the basis of positive reviews from standard library reviewing sources, which include sources dedicated to the review of materials for Young Adult users, such as *VOYA* (Voices of Youth Advocates) and *School Library Journal*. Close attention is also paid to Internet resources and sites that report areas of popular interest.

### **Responsibility for Selection of Materials**

The Library Director delegates selection to the professional library staff. All staff members and the general public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration.

All professional library staff that select materials are expected to adhere to the selection objectives and principles expressed in this policy, and to apply their knowledge and expertise in making selection decisions.

### **Selection Tools**

Ideally, all materials added to the library collections would be read and viewed before purchase by a librarian with trained judgment, knowledge of the library’s present resources and acquaintance with the requirements of local users. While circumstances make such previewing impossible or unnecessary, the librarians have access to professional selection aids. While reviews are a major resource of information about new materials, no one publication is relied on exclusively; the critical opinions of reviews are checked against each other when feasible.

Primary selection tools for materials include, but are not limited to, *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *VOYA*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Foreward*, *Horn Book*, *RT Book Reviews* and standard bestseller lists including those appearing in the *New York Times Book Review* and *Publishers Weekly*. The Library will consider materials that are in advance demand prior to review, especially upon recommendation by library users and when such materials fall into the categories of high-interest topics as those heavily promoted through media.

### **Deselection Policies and Procedures**

In order to maintain a collection of useful materials, the collection is continually evaluated in terms of circulation performance, currency, content inclusion, scope, depth of coverage and popularity. All materials are continually analyzed for subject strengths, weaknesses and omissions. Continuous deselection and replacement of damaged/lost material aid in maintaining a collection that reflects changing community needs and library goals. Evaluation will be done

using the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's CREW: a Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries and statistical data from the integrated library system. The library staff will replace deselected materials with more current titles on the same topic. The three basic criteria for deselection are as follows:

*Content*-Items that are outdated, obsolete or inaccurate will be removed.

*Condition*-Items that are worn out, books with torn, soiled or missing pages, torn covers, frayed bindings or broken spines will be removed.

*Use*-Items that have not circulated for three years and unused duplicate copies.

## **Duplication**

The Library gives serious consideration to the number of request for an item as a guide for duplication. Duplication must not be at the expense of important but less demanded materials needed for the permanent collection. Popular demand, importance of the material and budget limitations will be the determining factors. For popular works and bestsellers, the library takes into account the number of reserves as a guideline for purchasing additional copies. **Disposal**

Generally, discarded materials are given to the Friends of the Library. The Friends have permission to sell discarded materials with income to benefit the library. Damaged items paid for by the patron remains the property of the City of Wylie. Damaged items are not given to the Friends to sell.

## **Donations, Gifts and Rare and Expensive Books**

The library accepts gifts of materials for the collection using the same selection criteria that are applied to the purchase of materials. Other money gifts, gifts of stocks, bonds, endowments, estates, land, etc. are welcomed, providing the Friends of the Library approve conditions of such gifts.

## **Monetary Gifts**

The Library encourages unrestricted monetary gifts to allow for the greatest flexibility in supporting the Library.

Donors can recommend a type of material and an area of subject interest.

Recommendations for purchasing specific titles are discouraged and the library reserves the right to decline such monetary donations.

All monetary donations will be acknowledged by the Library.

## **Memorial Gifts**

Monetary donations are accepted for purchase of materials in memory of or to honor friends or loved ones. An acknowledgment containing the name of the person being honored or memorialized, as well as the name of the donor will be attached to the book or other material

purchased. The material will remain in the library's collection as long as its condition, timeliness, and usefulness to the collection permit. Memorial books (gifts?) will be considered for retention or deselection according to the criteria used to evaluate any other material in the collection.

### **Donated Materials**

Not all donations are added to the collection. Donated materials not added to the collection are not returned to the donor.

The Library retains unconditional ownership of the donation.

The Library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing and access to the materials.

Unused donations may be given to the Friends of the Rita and Truett Smith Public Library for public sale or further disposal as deemed suitable, or they may be disposed of through other means determined by the library.

The Library does not place a value on donations, nor provide appraisals for income tax or any other purpose.

Gift subscriptions to periodicals are welcomed and accepted if the periodical falls within the guidelines of the Collection Development Policy.

### **Purchase Requests**

Purchase suggestions from patrons provide librarians with useful information about local interests or needs not met by the collections. The librarians evaluate requests for specific terms in accordance with the established selection objectives and criteria. If the item is not added to the collection, the librarians will offer the patron the opportunity to borrow the item through the Library's Interlibrary Loan Service.

### **Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Because in a diverse society, tastes and opinions differ, some materials the Library acquires may be offensive to some patrons. In a democracy which incorporates the right to free press and speech into its basic system of law, the minority does not have the prerogative to curtail the free access to published materials. If, however, a patron objects to material held by the library, he/she may submit a Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Materials. In no instance will material be removed on demand. All consideration of requests to remove materials will be reviewed using this collection development policy as a guideline.

Library materials shall not be marked or identified to indicate approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

**In order to have his/her request considered, the patron must:**

1. Be a registered borrower of the library.
2. Read, seen or heard this material in its entirety.
3. File a completed Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of material form with the Director of the Library **by mail or in person.**
4. Supply his/her full name and address. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

**Request for Reconsideration of Materials Process**

1. Library staff will listen to the patron's concerns. Library staff will provide access to the Collection Development Policy, if the patron wishes, library staff will explain the library's selection process. If the patron wishes, s/he may also discuss concerns with the Library Director.
2. After discussion with the Library Director, if the patron is still concerned about library materials s/he may submit an official statement using the "Rita and Truett Smith Public Library Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Materials" form.
3. After the completed form is received, the Library Director will review the reasons for the complaint and the materials in question. The Library Director will attempt to answer the complaint to the patron's satisfaction. If the patron is not satisfied with the Library Director's action, he/she may request that the material be reviewed by a Materials Review committee. The committee will be composed of the Library Director and the Library Advisory Board. Decisions of the Materials Review Committee shall be final. Any challenged title may be reconsidered once in a calendar year.

**Rita and Truett Smith Public Library**

**Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Materials**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of  
Media: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent:    Yourself \_\_\_\_\_

   Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a registered borrower of the Rita and Truett Smith Public Library?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_    Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read, seen or heard this material in its entirety?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby affirm that I have read, seen or heard this work in its entirety.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you object?

---

---

---

Please be specific and cite page numbers

---

What do you believe is the main idea of the material?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What do you feel might be the result of reading or using this material and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

In your judgment, is this material of any value? \_\_\_\_\_

What reviews of this material have you read? \_\_\_\_\_

(Please cite the source or attach a copy.)

In its place, what material of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture of and/or perspective of the subject?

---

---

**Name, Signature and Address of Requestor**

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Library Staff:

Received by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## The Freedom to Read Statement

---

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help

them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one; the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read

is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression  
The Association of American University Presses, Inc.  
The Children's Book Council  
Freedom to Read Foundation  
National Association of College Stores  
National Coalition Against Censorship  
National Council of Teachers of English  
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## **Freedom to View Statement**

---

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the **First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States**. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the **Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association)** and was adopted by the **AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.**

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**