



Collection Development Policy

Our Mission

The mission of the Lenox Library is to connect our community to resources and programs that encourage lifelong learning and celebrate our collective history and culture.

The Lenox Library strives to enhance the quality of life in our community by:

- Offering a wide array of engaging, high-quality programs for all ages
- Maintaining collections and resources that support life-long learning in the community
- Improving access to and promotion of the Local History Collection
- Providing a welcoming and comfortable community space where individuals can connect with one another and to the resources they need and enjoy

Responsibility for Selection

The Town Manager of Lenox has final authority of the Library's policy and has delegated the implementation of this policy to the Library Director. The Library Director may choose to delegate decisions regarding selection and acquisition of materials, deselection, and discarding to specific staff members based on their areas of expertise and guidance of this policy.

Selection Criteria

Items will be reviewed for selection based on the following general criteria, however they need not meet all criteria to be selected:

- Library's mission statement
- Attention of critics, reviewers, and subject specialists
- Popularity, based on patron interest and/or contemporary significance
- Prominence, authority, and/or competence of author, creator, or publisher
- Local relevance
- Accuracy of information
- Timeliness of material
- Availability of similar material in existing collection as well as in the Library's resource sharing network
- Statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view
- Cost/benefit analysis

- Availability in alternative formats, including online access, and audio and video recordings

As the needs of our patrons constantly change, so too will the process of assessing their needs change to match them. Library staff monitor patron material holds and usage, as well as keep up with trends and needs in the community so that the Library may best serve its members.

Recommendations for purchase by the public are welcomed by the Library, with the understanding that these materials are evaluated based on the same criteria for selection as other considered materials. In the event that patrons request to borrow an item that the Library has not purchased, they will be referred to network, statewide or national lending resources to meet their needs.

Self-published books or other materials created by local authors or producers who wish to donate a copy are evaluated based on the same criteria for selection as items purchased for the collection.

Acquisitions

The Library aims to meet patron demand as best it can when selecting materials, therefore materials of current significance are generally considered high priority. An effort shall be made to obtain materials representing all sides of controversial issues. Within nonfiction, Library staff will look for authors presenting material accurately, fairly, clearly, and in a readable manner.

Occasionally new titles are released in a variety of media formats, including print, large print, audio book, and eBook editions. Library staff will choose which of these formats the Library will provide based on anticipated shelf life or long-term appeal, anticipated public demand, timeliness of the content, and the necessity of multiple copies.

Due to limited resources and physical space, materials may be passed over if they are considered so similar to current library material that they could be considered duplicates, or if the material is so limited in scope that it would only appeal to a few of our patrons.

Special Collections

Please refer to our Special Collections documentation.

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

Library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet patrons' needs. Materials that are worn, obsolete, or unused; old editions; or unnecessarily duplicated items will be removed. Items that are damaged, destroyed, or lost are not automatically replaced. It is the responsibility of professional library staff to decide on the replacement of these items based on need, demand, and budget. The same criteria used for

selection are considered when removing materials, however lack of use and outdated information are prime considerations.

Donations to the Collection

The Lenox Library is grateful for donations made to benefit the Library's collections. Upon request, a donation receipt may be filled out at the time of donation. Once materials are donated, they become the property of the Lenox Library and will not be returned to the donor. Donated materials will be reviewed by Library staff as time permits, and will be evaluated based on the same criteria for selection as items purchased for the collection, as well as the quality of their physical condition. Please see our Donation Policy for full details about which types of materials the Library accepts for Donations. Due to the volume of donations, materials will be reviewed by our staff to determine the accession, location, promotion, and de-accession of items in the collection. Any materials that are not added to the collection will then become the property of the Lenox Library Association, to benefit the Library via the book sale.

Intellectual Freedom

The Lenox Library respects the freedom of information for its patrons and follows the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#) (provided below) when acquiring and managing collections. The Library strives to supply a diverse collection with the intent to reach all members of the community. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents.

Children and adults are equally free to use the entire Library and to borrow all materials in the circulating collections. Anyone, of any age, may use any materials in the Library and is not to have that privilege limited by any staff member. Limitations to be placed upon the reading and viewing materials of young people are left to the discretion of the parents and caregivers.

The Library opposes any attempts by individuals or groups to censor items in its collection. Challenges regarding Library resources are handled in accordance with the Library's Reconsideration Policy.

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

<http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/coredocuments> (Accessed June 11, 2022)

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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 for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
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

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed June 11, 2022)

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