



COL1 - Collection Development Policy
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Policy Statement - To meet the educational, informational and informational needs of its customers, the Camden County Library System's Collection Development and Materials Selection Policy guides staff and informs the public about the principles upon which materials selection are made.

Rationale

A policy, however high its standards, cannot replace the judgment of librarians, but it can provide goals and guidelines that will assist librarians in choosing from the vast array of available materials.

The major goals of the Camden County Library System in collection development are: the advancement of knowledge, the education and enlightenment of the people of the community, and the provision of educational, informational, recreational and cultural reading, viewing and listening.

In addition, when selecting materials for children and young adults, the library makes every effort to support curriculum needs.

Regulations

The ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the policies determined by the Camden County Library Commission.

Guidelines

1. The Library is aware of the purposes and resources of other libraries in the state and shall not needlessly duplicate functions and materials. The Library cooperates with other libraries in the exchange of materials.
2. Because the library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds and reading skills, it contains materials of varying complexity. Emphasis is placed on popular materials and basic information rather than on scholarly and specialized materials; however, when it is felt that a special or scholarly work is useful it may be considered for selection.

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I. GENERAL SELECTION CRITERIA

The General Selection Criteria listed below applies to the selection of all materials for the Camden County Library System. Materials are evaluated as complete works and not on the basis of a particular passage. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection solely because it represents a particular aspect of life, frankness of expression, or because it is controversial.

- A. Quality of the work as assessed by one or more reliable reviewers. Sources will include but not be limited to Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, Booklist, Kirkus, University presses, and reputable online sources.
- B. Authority and competence of the author and/or reputation and standing of the publisher.
- C. Appropriateness of the work to the level of the collection in which it is to be placed.
- D. Cost/impact on the materials budget.
- E. Relationship of the work to other works in the collection (Will it provide additional information or a new interpretation of events or data?)
- F. Local or community relevance
- G. Predicted demand and interest (The prediction may be based on prevalence of public interest in the work's subject matter or on the extent to which it has been advertised.)
- H. Contribution to diversity, depth, or breadth of collection.
- I. Likelihood of enduring value.
- J. Titles may not be considered for purchase if there is insufficient review or box office information available.
- K. Visual materials acquired by the Library adhere to the same criteria used for the selection of all other materials with the following additions:
 - 1. Titles will always be considered for purchase that have received both critical acclaim, and have shown significant box office activity as defined below.
 - A. Major prize winner and nominees of the Academy Awards, Alma Awards, Berlin Film Festival, British Academy Awards, Cannes Film Festival, Directors Guild of America, Golden Globe Awards, Essence Awards, Hong Kong Film Awards, Image Awards, Sundance Festival Awards and the Screen Actors Guild Award. (This list is open for amendment at the discretion of the collection development manager)
 - B. Established classics defined here as films that are recognized as important and that are judged to have stood the test of time, considered here to be a minimum of 20 years old or older.
 - C. Titles which are included on the lists published by the American Film Institute or are placed on the Library of Congress Film Registry.
 - D. Titles that have grossed \$20 million or more in the box office.

- E. Positive reviews from established critics or positive reviews published in well known media such as Entertainment Weekly, Video Librarian, Box-office, Time, People, the New York Times and online media review sources like Rotten Tomatoes.

II. FORMATS

A. Audiovisual

Audio and visual materials are selected to provide a collection of instructional, educational and recreational materials that will enhance the libraries collections while responding to the interests of both adult and juvenile library users. Purchases are in the latest format with an eye towards technological trends. Currently the audio collection is in Compact Disc format including both abridged and unabridged titles. The music collection is in Compact Disc format. For juvenile users the Library keeps a collection of Audio Kits. Audio Kits are comprised of a book and a CD version of the book so the child can listen.

B. Paperback Books

Paperback books are purchased to satisfy the patrons' preference for the format and for additional copies of best-selling titles. Certain titles are only published in paperback and are purchased for that reason.

C. Board Books

Board books which have pages constructed of thick cardboard are purchased for the enjoyment of our youngest library customers.

D. Large Print

The Library maintains a collection of large-print books to satisfy patron preference for the format. The collection is composed of the most popular fiction materials found in regular print, i.e. fiction, with a focus on mysteries, thrillers and romance. The most active nonfiction areas are the biography and self-help sections.

E. Periodicals (Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers)

The Library maintains a collection of magazines, journals and newspapers to provide diverse customers with a variety of current and historical sources of information in periodical format. The collection includes the following categories of periodicals:

- Popular magazines in a variety of subject areas
- General information/news magazines in a variety of subject areas
- Hobby/recreation/leisure magazines
- Selected scholarly and trade journals in a variety of subject areas
- Archived newspapers, including the Camden Courier Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, and the New York Times

Back issues are kept as space permits. Periodicals that are in significant demand and are not available in full text in major electronic indexing sources are retained for longer periods of time as space and demand permits.

F. Electronic Media

The Library maintains a collection of downloadable eBooks, audio books, and music to increase and enhance the diversity and accessibility of the library collection. Titles will be selected in accordance with the overall guidelines of this policy.

G. Online Databases

The library provides customers with access to subscription databases.

III. ADULT COLLECTION

Dewey Decimal Subject Groups

A. 000s - Generalities

1. Information Sciences - The Library purchases books in this area in order to keep information as current as possible in this rapidly growing field. Material of a highly technical nature is not selected for purchase but books that explain computers in general, especially hardware and software are considered for purchase. 2. Professional literature - Material in the area of library science is selected mainly to assist in the professional development of the library staff.

3. Encyclopedias - New editions of encyclopedias are not purchased for circulation; however the older editions discarded from the reference collections are circulated.

B. 100s - Philosophy and Psychology

1. In the fields of psychology and philosophy, the library selects materials representing the major areas of study. Emphasis is placed on self-help materials, child development and parapsychology.

2. In the area of the pseudo-sciences, public demand plays an important role in influencing the library's choices. Since many books of this nature (i.e., astrology, palmistry, ESP, ghostly phenomena, witchcraft) often are not reviewed in the usual selection tools, other media (i.e. television or popular magazines) are used.

C. 200s - Religion

1. The library maintains an impartial recognition of conflicting points of view in the field of religion. As an educational institution emphasizing goodwill and understanding among

different races and religions, the library has a moral and social obligation to evaluate carefully sectarian propaganda materials, for tendencies to foster hatred or intolerant attitudes toward racial groups, cults, or religious leaders. Such materials are added only if the title in question has convincing historical, research, or documentary values.

2. Inclusion or non-inclusion in the library's collection of any books or other items in the field of religion are based on the considerations described in this policy statement and not on the personal religious conviction of any one staff member or group of staff members. The goal is to maintain a balanced collection which reflects all main points of view. Similarly, no book is removed from the collection solely because it is objectionable to any religious or other group in the community, when it is in harmony with this policy statement.

D. 300s - Social Sciences

1. The library attempts to maintain a balance in the social sciences, representing as many viewpoints as possible. Lengthy original research material is not included.

2. Personal Finance – Materials are purchased to assist patrons in managing their own finances including areas such as investing, purchasing homes, and retirement.

3. Education - The library selects materials on subjects of general interest that include extracurricular information, self-instruction, and enrichment.

4. Test Books - The library purchases the majority of available titles of civil service text books. This policy reflects the heavy demand by library users for these books. The library also buys the various study guides to the GRE, SAT, GED and other educational tests.

E. 400s - Language

1. Materials selected include the history, study, and use of the English language. This includes up-to-date dictionaries and grammar guides. The collection includes books on sign language as well as learning aides for popular foreign languages (in audio visual format as well as book format).

F. 500s - Pure Sciences

1. The library maintains a collection on a variety of basic sciences and mathematics, with an emphasis on self-instruction. Popularizations of complex scientific subjects are acquired.

G. 600s - Applied Sciences

1. Medical books for the layperson are acquired to satisfy the demand for consumer health information. Materials on drugs, diseases, diet and nutrition, preventive medicine and sex are purchased. The Library seeks the most up-to-date material available.

2. The library provides current works on business subjects, such as advertising and salesmanship.

3. Publications on the culinary arts represent a major area of acquisition. In addition, significant purchases are made of publications on home improvement, gardening, pets, and parenting.

H. 700s - The Arts

1. The library, within cost restraints, acquires books on specific types of art work and well-known artists.

2. Aside from books about music and music history, the library limits its purchases of musical score material to popular songbooks. Sheet music is not purchased.

3. The Library maintains a current book collection on a variety of sports and games. Outstanding sport biographies are purchased.

I. 800s - Literature

1. Essays, poetry, drama, short stories and selected works of criticism are included in the collection. Precedence is given to American and British literatures; however, representative works of world literature are included as well. Only English translations of foreign languages are found in this section.

2. Works on techniques of communication such as professional writing or public speaking are also included.

3. Due to the large quantities of modern drama and poetry published each year, the library purchases titles considered to be the best and those of local interest.

J. 900s - History

1. The Library selects works covering all phases of human history from the beginning of civilization to the present, with emphasis on American and local history.

2. The Library acquires standard, up-to-date travel guides for all parts of the globe. Books by well-known travel authors, personal reminiscences, and narratives by early explorers are included.

3. The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local and State history. It therefore takes a broad view of works by and about New Jersey authors as well as general works relating to the State of New Jersey. The Library is not under any obligation to add to its collection everything about New Jersey or produced by authors, printers or publishers with New Jersey connections, if it does not seem in the public interest to do so.

K. Fiction

1. In selecting fiction the existence of a variety of types of novels and the need to satisfy readers of differing tastes, interests, purposes and reading abilities are recognized. The library's collection, therefore, includes representative novels of the past and present, notable for literary quality and cultural value; historical and regional novels; novels related to the fields of art, industry, science, social problems, and the professions; satire, fantasy and humor; mystery and suspense, science fiction, westerns and other adventure stories; urban fiction; romances; graphic novels for adults; and short stories.

2. Novels widely advertised or in continuing demand because of the popularity of the author's other works, their conversion into film, appearance on television, or the timeliness of the themes are purchased if they are useful in answering the requests of readers, or if they will further efforts to serve a larger segment of the reading public. Although no rigid standard of literary quality is adhered to, it may be said that the library's policy is to acquire fiction whether serious or amusing, realistic or imaginative, even though the writing may be sentimental, sensational or erotic. Serious works, which present an honest aspect of life, are not necessarily excluded for frankness of expression.

3. The Library recognizes the importance of the novel in providing insight into the human situation, contributing to education, and affecting individual attitudes. A substantial number of novels of serious purpose are purchased. Attention is paid to maintaining a basic collection of standard novels, the classics, and the semi classics of world literature. Since each novel is ordinarily judged on its individual merits, there is, as a rule, no attempt at completeness in the Library's holding of an author's works.

L. Biography

1. The library acquires biographies and autobiographies of people about whom there is public interest or whose contribution to a field has historical importance. Biographies are accounts of a person's life. Works depicting a person's achievements or accomplishments may be classified according to the subject matter to which a person's life relates.

M. Reference Collection

Reference materials are selected in accordance with the Library's Collection Development Policy. A core reference collection is maintained on standing order for all branches in order to keep the collection current. This collection is updated at least once a year.

Additional criteria for selection:

Materials will be selected based on the strengths and areas of need in the existing reference collections at each branch.

Materials will be authoritative based upon evaluation of the subject content and the author/publisher's credentials. Preference is given to items with favorable reviews in reputable sources.

Reference materials will be as current as possible though some non-current materials may be included in the reference collection due to their long standing reputation, authoritativeness or relevance to local history.

Materials selected for the reference collection vary in degree of coverage from a basic introductory level to a beginning research level.

N. Local History

The library collects some reference materials relating to New Jersey, Camden County and local municipal history. This collection includes access to historical census information, city directories, old telephone directories, and back issues of local newspapers. The branches have some local history collections and works pertaining to their particular towns.

O. Ready Reference

Items designated as Ready Reference are usually kept at a service desk. Items are so designated if staff or customers need to consult the item on a frequent and ongoing basis.

P. Electronic Resources (downloadable collections and subscription databases)

The Library provides customers with access to downloadable collections and electronic reference resources including subscription databases. Downloadable collections acquired by the Library adhere to the same selection criteria used for print reference materials.

The Library uses the following criteria when selecting and purchasing online subscription databases:

- Cost
- Use / demand based on overall customer needs
- Contains information that is unique or more easily accessible and searchable using an electronic format
- Remote access
- User friendly interface / ease of searching and obtaining information

Q. Legal Materials

The Library collects and maintains a basic collection of New Jersey and United States statutes, regulations and case law. These materials are kept in the Reference area of the Voorhees Branch.

R. Job and Career Information

The Library maintains a collection of college and career-related information including scholarship directories and vocational guides.

S. Genealogy

The Library purchases materials that generally describe how to do genealogical research and also those that describe how to research a specific country or ethnic origin. While we do not attempt to have a comprehensive collection of primary resources of use to genealogists, we will collect items with local historical information when they are available.

T. Journals and Magazines

The Library uses the following criteria when evaluating the selection of journals and magazines in paper or microfilm formats:

- Customer demand, either by title or subject area
- Lack of availability of title in full-text Internet sources
- Adequate subject coverage in all major subject areas
- Subscription cost
- Quality of content based on professional reviews or staff evaluation
- Quality of medium, print, images, etc.
- Ease of obtaining a paid subscription directly from the publisher or from the Library's subscription agency
- Currency of issues upon arrival in the Library (i.e., lag time between date of publication and arrival date)
- Shelf space / storage limitations

U. Newspapers

The Library subscribes to primarily local newspapers in paper format based on consistent customer demand for that title in a paper format and on the currency of the paper copy (i.e., minimal lag time between date of publication and arrival date). Access to most current national and international newspapers is provided through the Library's electronic databases or via an individual newspaper's web page.

IV. JUVENILE AND YOUNG ADULT COLLECTION

The Library's objective in selecting materials for children is to make available a well-balanced collection that satisfies the educational, informational, recreational and cultural needs from infancy through age 14.

The children's services librarians at all branches as well as the Collection Development Manager are responsible for the selection of children's materials. Both fiction and non-fiction materials are evaluated by individual titles. Material considered for purchase is reviewed on

the basis of accuracy, literacy and artistic quality, quality of content (including suitability of subject matter and appropriateness of vocabulary), the contribution of the book to the total collection, and quality of format.

Materials for children are selected with the realization that literature for children is an integral part of all literature and is judged by the same general selection criteria that apply to the adult material.

Fiction is selected for a wide range of interests and reading abilities, including picture books, easy-to-read books and novels for children.

Nonfiction must be accurate, informative and current and is selected in as wide a range of reading levels and interests as possible.

Juvenile and Young Adult Reference are non-circulating collections of materials designed to meet the research and informational needs of those library users.

Dewey Decimal Subject Groups

A. 000s - Generalities

1. Materials selected in this section will include use and operation of computers including hardware and software. Also, older edition encyclopedias are provided for circulation. Representative coverage will be given to other subjects in this area as needs are recognized.

B. 100s - Philosophy

1. Meeting need and demand, this section will include material on parapsychology and the pseudo-sciences (astrology, ESP, ghostly phenomena, witchcraft). The library will also maintain a collection of motivational and character-developing materials.

C. 200s - Religion

1. General information on world religions, with an emphasis on Greek and Roman mythology is acquired. The Library, in keeping with local demand, will collect informational and biographical materials on saints.

D. 300s - Social Sciences

1. Works dealing with current, controversial, and social issues (abortion, child abuse, crime, divorce, adoption, etc.) are collected. Special attention will also be given to civil rights of various groups. Issues relating to government, current events, and political science are acquired. Popular and standard materials are purchased on the subjects of vocational and career guides, and world folklore. The Library will also collect materials advising readers on dating etiquette and current values.

E. 400s - Language

1. Materials selected include the history, study, and use of the English language. This includes up-to-date dictionaries and grammar guides. The collection includes books on sign language as well as learning aides for popular foreign languages in audiovisual format as well as book format.

F. 500s - Pure Sciences

1. The Library's collection will be focused on current, up-to-date materials in all of the following branches of the pure sciences—mathematics, astronomy, paleontology (dinosaurs and fossils), and biology (plants and animals). Science fair project and science experiment books are purchased to meet the demands of school assignments.

G. 600s - Applied Sciences and Technology

1. The human body in health and disease including materials on substance abuse, eating disorders, and common ailments will be emphasized in this section. Other areas singled out for special attention include pet care, cooking, transportation, and space exploration.

H. 700s - The Arts

1. Materials on crafts will receive special emphasis, as will materials on drawing and cartoons. Games and sports will also be extensively covered. Materials on music and performing arts will be collected based on local demand, with an emphasis on composers and musical instruments.

I. 800s - Literature

1. The most important works of poetry, plays, and essays are included in this section. American literature receives the most extensive coverage, including major works and their authors. English literature is also heavily collected, with a specific focus on works by Shakespeare. Basic literary criticism is included as it may support curriculum.

J. 900s - History and Geography

1. The Library collects works on history, geography and culture from around the world. American History, including discovery of the New World, Exploration, Native Americans and individual states are highlighted. New Jersey material is a major focus.

K. Fiction

1. The juvenile and young adult fiction collection is comprised of titles meeting recreational, educational, informational, and cultural needs of readers in the third grade through junior high school. Books include contemporary selections in such areas as mystery, sports, science fiction, adventure, humor, historical fiction, and

novels about the problems associated with growing up. Also included in this collection are classics, award winners, series, and summer reading selections.

L. Biography

1. The collection is a basic representation of lives of people whose accomplishments are noteworthy. The people covered in the collection will be based primarily on local demand. Collective biographies are chosen to supplement rather than duplicate individual biographies.

M. Reference

1. The Youth Services collections consist primarily of sets of general encyclopedias and specialized sets of science, biographical, and historical encyclopedias. Indices to children's songs and poetry, bibliographies, and guides to children's literature, biographical sets of children's authors and illustrators are important components of the reference section.

N. Graphic Novels

1. The Graphic novel collection provides additional leisure reading materials. The illustrated format offers a wide range of reading levels and topics. Graphic novels are an important format; the combination of text and illustrations appeals to visually oriented patrons, encourages reluctant readers, and aids in building lifelong readers.

O. Easy Fiction

1. The Easy books and materials include items intended for readers from birth to second grade. These items exist to teach literacy and the love of reading. These materials can either be read by a child, or be read to a child. Easy books can be as simple as no text (all pictures) to a simply written longer tale. Materials can be hardback, paperback, or board books.

P. Easy – Nonfiction

1. This collection exists to meet the needs of young children interested in non-fiction materials. The most popular topics include shapes and colors, animals and community helpers. The Library also collects biographies on the Easy level. Persons depicted in Easy level biographies are based on local demand as well as published availability.

Q. Easy Readers

1. The Library also collects Easy Reader books, which have designated reading "steps." Easy Readers are chapter books in hardback, paperback and audio kit, which

fill the gap between Easy fiction and Juvenile fiction. Easy Readers give new readers confidence in their ability to read “chapters” of a book like a parent or older sibling.

V. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

- A. Weeding and collection review will be performed on a two-year cycle.
- B. All formats falling within a subject area will be reviewed on the same schedule.
- C. The weeding schedule will cover both fiction and nonfiction materials in all collections.
- D. To ensure an equitable service, the library will not reserve or give away library materials to customers after they have been weeded.
- E. Criteria to be considered:
 - 1. Age of the material
 - 2. Number of circulations in a year
 - 3. MUSTIE criteria. (MUSTIE means items should be discarded when they are Misleading, Ugly, Superseded by newer editions or better books, Trivial, Irrelevant to patron interests, easily obtained Elsewhere through interlibrary loan or within the library system.)
- F. Some standard tools to consult when reviewing the collection are:
 - 1. H.W. Wilson’s Public Library Catalog and its supplements for information about core titles in a particular Dewey range.
 - 2. Consult standard indexes (i.e. Short Story index; Granger’s Poetry)
 - 3. Spotlighted subject areas in Library Journal
- G. The weeding chart in Appendix A shows the time frame, subjects and ranges to be reviewed and guidelines based on age of the materials and circulation patterns for evaluating subject area. These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the librarian’s professional acumen and understanding of the needs and demands of their customers.

Weeding – 2 Year Cycle

YEAR 1

<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Dewey Number</u>	<u>Age of Material</u>	<u>Circulations Per Year</u>
Month 1	Computers & Religion	001-299	3-5 years Computers / 3-10 yrs Religion	3
Month 2	Fiction	Authors A - B		2
Month 3	Social Sciences & Law	300-359	3-10 years	3
Month 4	Fiction	Authors C - D		2
Month 5	Social Problems & Education	360-399	5-10 years	5
Month 6	Fiction	Authors E - H		2
Month 7	Language & Science	400-599	5-10 years	3
Month 8	Fiction	Authors I - L		2
Month 9	Technology & Medicine	600-623	5 years	3
Month 10	Fiction	Authors M – Q		2
Month 11	Cars, Pets	624-642	5-10 years	3
Month 12	Fiction	Authors R – Z		2

Weeding – 2 Year Cycle

YEAR 2

<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Dewey Number</u>	<u>Age of Material</u>	<u>Circulations Per Year</u>
Month 1	Remodeling & Business	643-699	5-10 years	3
Month 2	Mystery	Authors A - G		2
Month 3	Art, Crafts & Music	700-792	5-10 years	3
Month 4	Mystery	Authors H - M		2
Month 5	Games & Sports	792-799	5-10 years	3
Month 6	Mystery	Authors N – Z		2
Month 7	Literature	800-899	Condition	2
Month 8	Science Fiction	Authors A – F		2
Month 9	Travel, Biographies & History	900-940	5-15 years	3
Month 10	Science Fiction	Authors G – Z		2
Month 11	History	941-999	5-15 years	3
Month 12	Large Print	All areas		2

VI. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

- A. The Library is committed to the principle that the constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and press are enjoyed by all. To this end, the Library strives to offer a collection that represents the needs of our diverse community. Inclusion of an item in the collection does not mean that the Library endorses any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.
- B. While every customer may not agree with the viewpoints offered in some Library material, the Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria. The balanced nature of the collection is reflected in the diversity of materials, not in an equality of numbers. Customers are free to choose what they like from the collection, to reject what they don't like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to choose.
- C. Materials are not excluded because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation or because they represent a particular aspect of life, frankness of expression or controversial subject matter.
- D. The Library does not use labels on any material in such a way as to show approval or disapproval of the content of that material. Materials are not sequestered to show approval, disapproval or judgment as to suitability of content for a particular audience. The Library does not remove or obliterate ratings attached to material by a publisher, industry group or

distributor. Removing or altering such rating, if they are placed there by or with permission of the copyright holder, denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the material intended to express.

- E. Decisions about what materials are suitable for particular children should be made by the people who know them best – their parents or guardians. Selection of materials for adults is not constrained by possible exposure to children or teenagers.
- F. The following documents are an integral part of the policies of the Camden County Library and are attached hereto:
 - 1. The Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association
 - 2. The Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers' Council
 - 3. The Freedom to View Statement of the American Film and Video Association which is endorsed by the American Library Association Council

1. 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.

- 1. 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.
- 2. 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.
- 3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- 4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- 5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

6. 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.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

2. 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](#)

3. 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:

- A. 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 guarantees of freedom of expression.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

- B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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 by the ALA Council January 10, 1990

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS

A. The words "book", "library materials", or other synonyms as they may occur in this policy, have the widest possible meaning; hence it is implicit in this policy that every form of permanent record is to be included. The collection of the Camden County Library System consists of materials bought by the library and gifts

B. "Selection" refers to the decision that must be made either to add or to retain an item to the collection.

C. "Collection Development" has the primary objective to acquire materials of contemporary significance and of value, taking into account the community, the purpose of the library, the users, the present collection and the available resources. The Camden County Library System therefore selects materials that will provide a balanced collection so that a wide variety of subjects, viewpoints and reading levels is maintained.

D. The "Reference" Collections are non-circulating collections of materials designed to meet the research and information needs of all library users. Reference materials are those that are arranged to facilitate the rapid retrieval of information and are designed for consultation rather than continuous reading.

E. A work of "Fiction" is an invented work, created from the imagination. It is a work not presented as fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation.

F. A work of "Non-Fiction" is a historically accurate narrative. The content is taken strictly from fact.

G. "Circulating Material" means an item can be borrowed or checked out. Some materials, like reference books, may not be taken out of the building and are called "Non-circulating".

H. A "Periodical" is a serial publication that appears at regular intervals. It is a broad term that usually includes magazines and journals.

I. An "Audio book" is a digital version of a book that is available either through the Internet and needs to be downloaded or in CD format. Downloadable Audio books can be played on any desktop or portable device supporting Windows Media Player version 9.0 and above.

J. "Online Databases" are electronic collections of sources, facts, articles, and other types of information. The library provides customers with access to these databases to supply additional information that may not be found in print resources. Such resources provide remote access for customers and greater flexibility in searching.