

NORTHBOROUGH FREE LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The collection development policy of the Northborough Free Library is intended to provide a tool for the development of a collection that meets the needs of the public whom the library serves. The policy also serves to inform the public of what, how and why materials are selected.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Northborough is a suburban community 10 miles to the northeast of Worcester, and 32 miles west of Boston. It is part of Worcester County, and can also be considered part of what is known as the Metrowest area, centered in Framingham. The population of Northborough has remained steady at approximately 14,500 since 2010 (according to the Town Clerk's report in the Town of Northborough Annual Reports).

Though the population of Northborough is not increasing, there is an increasing population of immigrants, providing ethnic diversity. There is also a social diversity in which people can feel engaged and included regardless of age, longevity in town, or other background. It is a safe community with low crime. It has good schools, good citizen participation, and good financial management.

Northborough is centrally located with good highway access to employment centers, and although public transportation is not great, commuter lots for the train into Boston are in neighboring towns. The regional high school has been recently expanded and renovated, and the vocational high school has just started a similar project. There is a beautiful new senior center, and one elementary school is slated for renovations. There are a number of new retail stores. Northborough can also be proud of efforts to preserve open space, and maintains a growing number of recreational trails (at least 10).

Northborough has 4 elementary schools, which serve grades K – 5, 1 middle school for grades 6-8, and 1 high school, which is shared by Southborough. Northborough is also a member of Assabet Valley Regional Vocational High School, located in Marlborough. In addition to the public schools, Northborough has a Catholic school which covers Pre-Kindergarten up to grade 8. There are also small private pre-schools.

There are a number of active organizations in town, including the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Jr. Woman's Club, Woman's Club, Garden Club, Historical Society, Art Guild, and PTOs. Many of these organizations have made donations to the library as well as to other worthwhile town projects.

Northborough's population is aging, with increases in the age categories over 45, and decreases in the age categories below 45, except for an 11% increase in teenagers. The racial composition of town is changing, with the Asian population now 8% of the total.

Census figures are below. (All from the 2010 U.S. Census, which also draws from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, noted with an asterisk).

	2000	2010
Population	14,013	14,155
Median Age:	37.4	42.5
≤ 9 yrs	2,308	1,801
10-19 :	2,022	2,241
20-34:	1,988	1,631
35-44:	2,828	2,022
45-54:	2,284	2,741
55-64:	1,213	1,890
65-74:	833	932
75-84:	400	635
≥85	137	262
Education:		
High school	93.4%	96.7%*
College grad.	51.0%	58.7%*
Race/Ethnicity:		
White	93%	87.6%
Black	.6%	1.0%
Asian	5.1%	8.1%
Hispanic/Latino	1.3%	2.7%
Income:		
Median household	\$79,781	\$103,306*
Mean household	N/A	\$127,438*
Per capita	\$32,889	\$ 46,717*
Employed:	73.14%	68.6%*
Unemployed:	1.4%	4.5%*

Notes:

Northborough's population was 14,523 as reported in the 2014 Annual Report of the Town of Northborough. In 2010 it was 14,530.

Newer census data collect more combinations of races and ethnicities. Nonetheless, figures for the above were listed, which total 99.4% for 2010. The incomes listed in the 2000 column are for 1999.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LIBRARY

The Northborough Free Library was founded in 1868 and was housed in what was then the Town Hall. In 1894 a new library building was built on its present site at 34 Main Street (Route 20), Northborough. The building has undergone renovations over the years. An addition was built in 1975, which was replaced by a significantly larger addition in 2009. The library expansion was designed with anticipation of capping the physical collection of books and other media, in view of the expanding digital options for information and entertainment. Meeting space and a variety of seating options were increased to serve community needs for a place to come together or work independently.

Library Mission Statement

The Northborough Free Library provides materials, space, access and opportunities for members of the community to learn and discover; to enrich their lives and further their personal goals; and to engage with others in a comfortable environment.

THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

The collection is multifaceted, encompassing materials for both information and entertainment for all ages. Library materials are organized into three collection areas. However, there may be titles that are appropriate in more than one collection. Librarians may duplicate titles from one collection to another.

The Children's Collection serves children from infancy through grade 5, parents, caregivers, and teachers. It includes reference, non-fiction, fiction, board books, picture books, magazines, audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, and thematic kits.

The Young Adult Collection serves grades 6 through 12. It is comprised of books, both fiction and non-fiction, graphic novels, manga, magazines, CDs, DVDs, electronic games, and other materials of special interest to the pre-teen and teen population.

The General Collection, which is geared toward adults and some high school students, consists of fiction and non-fiction books, including Large Print; periodicals; audiobooks; music CDs; DVDs, and a reference section with a small collection of print reference materials.

In addition to the physical collection, the library's electronic collection includes databases provided by our state (Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners or MBLC), our library network (C/W MARS), and databases we purchase for our own library. We also have access to downloadable e-books, audiobooks, and video collections through C/W MARS, and will have additional access through state platforms. We may purchase individual electronic titles to mount on portable devices such as e-readers and tablets for circulation; some may be for in-library use only.

The library's in-house collection is greatly enhanced through its membership in the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) and Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (C/W MARS) network. Patrons may request items through C/W MARS to be delivered to Northborough, either through library staff or through an Internet connection. MLS provides the delivery service for items borrowed through C/W MARS and other in-state networks. If an item is not available through the C/W MARS network, patrons may request items from other networks within the state (the Virtual Catalog). Library staff assistance is *required* for loans of materials not available through these sources. Library staff assistance is available to any patron who prefers to use this service rather than placing the requests themselves.

SELECTION OF MATERIALS

Books and other materials are selected in accordance with our mission, for the recreational, independent learning, vocational and educational support of our community. Since the community consists of individuals with diverse interests, needs, values, opinions and backgrounds, the Library attempts to offer a collection that represents a variety of points of view, including positions that may be considered controversial or unpopular. The inclusion of an item in the collection does not constitute an endorsement of its views by the Library. Rather the Library seeks to enable its users to form their own opinions by free access to ideas.

Materials are selected with the general reader/viewer/listener in mind. Therefore, materials are purchased on a basic level, and occasionally on an instructional or intermediate level*, depending on the subject. The library does not collect materials on a research level except for select volumes in the print reference collection. The library does not purchase advanced level materials for professional use, and will rarely purchase college level materials, especially texts. Purchase decisions are based on the potential for widespread or long-term use, rather than the specific needs of one individual. Library staff will offer interlibrary loans for such needs. The library does not attempt to purchase materials to the same depth in all subjects, but is based on the interests of our community.

*The definition of collection levels varies according to the model being used to describe collection size and depth.

Librarians may use standing orders for best-selling fiction authors; or recurring non-fiction series such as travel books, college guides, test books, and select reference titles. Standing orders ensure that popular books arrive automatically. These plans are reviewed annually. Other standing orders may provide an ongoing selection of a particular format, such as large print books or audiobooks. There is often a discounted cost for using these plans. The librarian may also choose a lease program, such as McNaughton, to supplement popular titles on a time-limited basis.

The Northborough Free Library adheres to the principles set forth in *The Freedom To Read Statement* and *The Library Bill Of Rights*, copies of which are attached as Appendix B and Appendix C.

Responsibility for Selection

The Library Director has ultimate responsibility for selection of materials, subject to the policies established by the Board of Trustees. The Director may delegate selection responsibilities to members of the Library staff. At present, the Director and Reference Librarians select adult materials, the Children's Librarian selects children's materials, and the Young Adult Librarian selects young adult (teen) materials.

Method of Selection

The librarians choose library materials on the basis of recommendations in professional journals, reviews, lists, and other selection guides, both in print and on-line. A good review does not guarantee purchase, as the needs of the collection and patrons have to be considered, as well as price and space. Popular consumer guides may also be used, such as Amazon, especially when professional reviews are lacking. Professional judgment determines if such reviews are credible, especially if the title is reviewed by only a handful of reviewers. Requests from patrons are encouraged and seriously considered, though such requests do not guarantee purchase.

Adult Collection

In selecting non-fiction books, the following criteria, among others, are considered: accuracy,

- authoritativeness
- clarity and readability
- comprehensiveness or representation of varying points of view
- quality and helpfulness of photographs and illustrations, when included
- availability of an index when appropriate
- cost
- quality
- present or anticipated need
- importance in comparison with other works, or what's already in the collection
- availability at other libraries or online

In selecting fiction, books of enduring literary merit as well as those of a strictly popular nature are purchased. Considerations include:

- popular demand
- favorable reviews in respected sources
- reputation of author
- writing style
- plot
- character development

Children's Collection

In selecting children's books, the Children's Librarian chooses the best new books, based on professional reviews, standardized lists, and consumer sites when appropriate. Part of the materials budget also is spent to replace and duplicate older titles which are considered important to the collection. Books are chosen that will provide pleasurable reading and information, and which represent a wide range of knowledge that will satisfy children's natural curiosity, stimulate their imaginations, and widen their interests. As children's books are much more visually based than most adult materials, illustrations are considered on par with writing, especially for picture books and those for younger grades.

The library recognizes that in its selection for children the decision about which book is suitable for a particular child cannot be based on age alone. Children often read either below or above grade level, depending on interest. Only a child's own parents can decide the appropriateness of a given book for the particular child. Neither the library nor anyone else has the right to make this decision for other people's children.

Young Adult Collection

Young Adult books are selected for teens in grades 6 through 12, recognizing that there is a wide range in maturity and interest on either side of the spectrum. The Young Adult Librarian (also called the Teen Librarian) selects books using reviews and standardized lists, and from patron demand if the material is deemed suitable. Most items selected for the teen room are for recreational use. For fiction, selection criteria include:

- writing style
- readability
- appeal to the teen audience due to theme or popularity
- plot
- character

For non-fiction, selection criteria include topics of particular interest to teens, such as:

- popular culture, including music and entertainment
- social issues (dating, bullying, friendships, family life)
- health (physical fitness, smoking, drinking, sexual behavior)
- sports and hobbies
- poetry
- biographies of teens and people in media and sports

Books for school assignments may be purchased, but are typically selected for the general (adult) collection instead. The Teen Librarian may advise other librarians on staff of topics under study.

The Librarian will purchase multiple titles to satisfy summer reading lists created by the local schools; however, the library is not responsible for ensuring enough copies for every student.

Non-Print Materials

Audiovisual materials including CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, and other formats are selected on the basis of

- reviews, when available
- content
- technical quality, including sound or videography
- popular demand
- cost

Audiobooks.

Audiobooks may include a number of formats, including CD and MP3. (Downloadable audiobooks are covered below.) In selecting these, the Librarian (which would include the Young Adult and Children's Librarian) will also consider, based on reviews:

- the skill and reputation of the narrator
- whether there are multiple narrators
- music
- sound effects

DVDs

Librarians select DVDs primarily for entertainment, but titles are also purchased for education and instruction. They will include DVDs produced in foreign countries or in foreign languages with English subtitles; DVDs of popular and award-winning television series; or DVDs developed with original material by independent vendors and filmmakers. There is no attempt to create a comprehensive collection of classic films or award-winning films from the past. The emphasis is on current materials. The exception is in the children's collection, where classic children's titles, especially those based on classic children's books, are still purchased. The Young Adult Librarian will typically select those titles of particular interest to teenagers, which may include some adult titles.

Music CDs

Recorded music includes performances in a variety of musical genres. The focus is on contemporary performers and performances, even if the original material is not contemporary, as in the case of classical music, folk music, jazz, and other standards.

Video games

Video games include media for various platforms. These are selected from sources such as metacritic.com and Amazon.com, as well as patron suggestions. The teen collection contains games rated E, E10+, and T.

Electronic Formats

E-Books.

Most of the e-books available at our library are provided through Overdrive, a service provided through C/W MARS. Librarians may make recommendations to C/W MARS for purchase of available titles through Overdrive or another vendor, or may make the selection themselves. The library may also purchase titles to download on library owned e-Readers or other devices for patrons to borrow. Titles are selected with similar criteria to the print format.

The library is unable to purchase individual e-books from commercial vendors such as Amazon or Barnes & Noble to add to the catalog for download to patron devices. See also the section on Local and Self-Published authors, below.

Downloadable Audiobooks and Video

Librarians may also select these for the shared catalog through Overdrive.

Subscription Online Databases.

These resources are provided primarily through C/W MARS, MLS, and the MBLC; though we select databases for our own patrons based on patron demand, ease of use, reputation of the publisher, and cost. The shared databases may include current events, history, biography, art, literature, science, health, business, and general reference. Most databases are available to our patrons from remote locations. Some of our locally purchased databases are for use in the library only.

Other Formats

Periodicals

These are selected for general popular appeal and based on local interest. The library collects all newspapers which cover the Northborough area, and may purchase the Boston papers as well as some of the general national newspapers. Back issues of magazines are kept for one year; back issues of newspapers are kept for one to two months.

Periodical articles may also be accessed through databases purchased locally, or available through the MBLC, C/W MARS, or other agencies.

Reference materials

Maps, atlases, manuals, specialized encyclopedias and business materials are selected based on anticipated need, technical quality, quality of content, reputation of publisher, and cost. An increasing number of these reference sources will be on-line. The library provides access to on-line databases through public computers and wireless Internet access; most databases are also available remotely.

Large Print

A small number of large print books are collected for popular adult and nonfiction titles, many through a standing order plan. The Children's Librarian may also select large print books, either for children with vision problems or for children's titles that a visually impaired caretaker may want to read to a child.

Local History Collection

The library will purchase local history materials that are of themselves historical (but relevant to Northborough and the surrounding area), or which are about a Northborough event, organization, family, or individual. Contemporary materials, including reprints of older titles, may be shelved with the circulating collection, especially if they are readily replaceable. Other titles, because of their age or rarity, will be kept in the Local History Room and made available for use in the library, preferably by appointment. The library may establish policies on the use and handling of these items.

Items that are very fragile and rare are not within the resources of the library to preserve and protect them. If they cannot be handled by the public, then the library will either try to acquire a facsimile or reprint, or note the availability of a digital copy, or consider digitization of the original. The original items are best housed in a special library with the staff and facilities to conserve them.

Books and other items written or produced by local authors may also be collected and either added to the circulating collection, or housed in the Local History Room. However, the library does not try to create a comprehensive collection of these materials (see donations by local authors).

The Northborough Historical Society has a large collection of local history materials, particularly primary source materials such as letters, diaries, photographs, and the like. Reference staff will refer patrons who need such materials to the Society, so that they can make an appointment.

Foreign Language Materials

The library has a basic collection of language learning CDs, language dictionaries and phrase books. In addition, the library subscribes to Mango Languages, a language learning online service. In the children's room, there may be books in dual languages, based on local demand. The library is able to request small deposits of foreign language materials from the Boston Public Library or other collections for patrons who request them.

DONATIONS OF BOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

The library assumes no responsibility to accept gifts; any gift it accepts is with the understanding that the library will be the sole determinant of its use. New and used books donated to the library by individuals or groups will be accepted into the collection under the same criteria as provided elsewhere in this policy. Those items not suitable for the collection will be given to the Friends of the Library to sell, or when necessary, discarded.

The library will NOT accept books in poor condition, including those with mildew, water or smoke damage, insect infestation, defaced or ripped pages or covers, imbedded dust and dirt, or other obvious damage. We will also not accept out of date text books.

Donors should ask prior approval before bringing in more than four boxes of books. The library will issue a receipt if requested, but the donor is responsible for estimating the value of the donated materials for tax purposes.

The library will accept funds to purchase books in honor of an occasion (birth of a child, significant birthday or anniversary) or in memory of a deceased family member. Those who wish to give such a gift should contact the Library Director, who may consult with one of the other librarians. The librarians will select (a) title(s) based on recommendations by the donor, keeping in mind the library's selection policy. Donors should understand that the book may not remain in the library's collection permanently. Donated books that wear out, are lost, or become out of date, will be removed from the library collection.

Other donated media such as music CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, computer games, and the like will be accepted under similar conditions. Those that cannot be used by the library will either be donated to the Friends of the Library for resale or discarded.

Any other physical gifts to the library must be approved by the Library Director. Furnishings, equipment, plants, art or other decorative items may not be needed.

Local and/or Self-Published Authors

With the proliferation of self-publishing, many authors wish to sell or donate their books to the library. The library purchases or accepts these books using the same criteria as for other books. The library's main interest would be for non-fiction about Northborough or the neighboring area, including history, people, institutions, and/or events.

Local authors whose books have been published by a reputable publisher and have been well-reviewed will be evaluated in the same way as other books purchased for the library.

The library is unable to accept books published only in e-book format, until such time that those books are easily and readily cataloged and included in the on-line catalog.

WEEDING

Due to the ever increasing amount of information being published and the space limitation the library faces, materials are regularly removed from the collection to make room for more current materials.

Materials are removed from the collection using the following criteria: age of material, condition, currency of information, availability of more recent material, and frequency and date of last circulation. Another factor when considering whether to remove an item from the collection is its availability within the C/W MARS network.

RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS [COMPLAINTS]

Patrons who request the reconsideration of library materials will be asked to put their request in writing by completing and signing the attached form entitled "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" (Appendix D).

The written request will be considered by the Library Director, who will make a decision regarding the request, and notify the patron. That decision may then be appealed to the Library Board of Trustees who will have the final authority regarding removal of material from the collection.

Policy and Appendices Approved by the Board of Trustees, June 9, 2015

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.

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.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

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](#)



Northborough Free Library

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<http://www.northboroughlibrary.org>

Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

The library tries to select materials and services for a wide audience, recognizing that not every book or program will appeal to every person. The selection of such materials and services does not necessarily reflect the personal opinions or interests of any library employee or Trustee.

If you have a concern about any library materials (books, DVDs, music CDs, and the like) or any library-sponsored programs or displays, we recommend that you talk to the Library Director or the librarian in charge of the children's room, teen room, or adult/reference area. If you want to register your concern formally, please fill out the following information and return it to the Library Director. You will get a response usually within 10 business days. If you are dissatisfied with the response, you may appeal to the Board of Library Trustees.

Your name _____ Phone _____ Date _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

Are you representing yourself? or an organization? (please specify) _____

Type of material: book audiobook magazine newspaper DVD

music CD video game Other (specify) _____

Title: _____ Where in the library is this located? _____

Author (producer, performer, etc. if applicable): _____

Library program, display, or service: _____

What concerns do you have about this item, program, etc.? (Feel free to use the back of this sheet or additional pages)

Would you like to recommend an alternative? _____