

FANDOM FORWARD PRESENTS

BOOK DEFENDERS



A TOOLKIT

fandomforward.org/bookdefenders



In the last few years, we've [seen an uptick in banned books across the United States](#), with censorship particularly targeting LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC stories. When it feels like our reality has crumbled into a dystopian nightmare, what do we do? We form our own team of heroes to fight against censorship and for stories that matter!

Book Defenders, a new take on our beloved Accio Books campaign, is your chance to rally against book bans across the country, and there are many ways to get involved!

Phase 1: Take action *now* by getting underrepresented stories into the hands of everyone who needs them. For over 10 years, we've donated hundreds of thousands of books to schools, libraries, and communities around the world.

Phase 2: Get ready to take action *during the school year* by participating in trainings, workshops, and panels to learn how to effectively fight against book bans in your community! We've hosted events with national organizations, student activists, and celebrated authors so you'll be ready to organize for the start of the school year.

Phase 3: Take action today and for years to come! Visit Book Defender's Action Hub to learn how you can get involved and take actions to defend books: www.fandomforward.org/bookdefenders.

Unfortunately, we don't expect book bans to end anytime soon. That's why we're also thinking long-term and want to remind you that your story *does* matter. Watch [our exciting writing workshop](#) to learn how to #KeepWritingBannedBooks.

We've updated our Accio Books campaign to reflect the changing world around us, and we know that a team of Book Defenders is *exactly* what the world needs right now.

PHASE 1: DONATE (BANNED) BOOKS!

STEP 1: FIND AND CONTACT YOUR RECIPIENT

In the last 10 years, our members have donated over [400,000 books](#) and have helped build and stock libraries around the world. Phase 1 of Book Defenders is all about supporting access to books by getting stories, particularly underrepresented narratives, into the hands of everyone who needs them.

Lots of places in your community should be open to book donations like libraries, shelters, schools, or other nonprofits dedicated to literacy and education. Where you donate the books you collect is up to you, but **it's important that you first confirm if the organization is able to accept the donations**. Even if you have worked with a partner in the past, their need for books and ability to accept them may have changed. Some organizations might also have specific requirements for donations or might be looking for books for certain age groups. Always make sure to ask what they're looking for. When it's appropriate – and when the organization tells you it's okay – donate banned books to increase accessibility to the book!

If you need help finding a place to donate your books, don't hesitate to contact our Book Donation Research Squad by emailing bookhelp@fandomforward.org

STEP 2: COLLECT THE BOOKS

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

If you're collecting books from friends and family, they may be able to drop the books off to you directly or you can pick the books up from them. Collection can be as simple as inviting them over for a cup of tea. Just ask them to bring any books along that they'd like to donate!

COMMUNITY DONATIONS

If you're collecting books from the community, think about where you might be able to leave a donation box. (Remember: **don't** give your home address publicly.) You'll want to consider:

- Does the location have good social distancing and pandemic safety options in place?
- Is the location open at hours easily accessible to the public?

Some good options might be local coffee shops or other businesses. Choosing a local business is especially awesome right now because you might be able to help them get some promotion too!

Once you find a location to leave your donation box, make that box very easy to spot. We're fond of decorating donation boxes with colored paper, markers, paint, or anything else you can think of! You'll probably want to include some basic information about the campaign on the side of the box. If your donation site is asking for only specific books, be sure to also include that information as well.

DONATIONS FROM YOUR BOOKSHELF!

You don't need to collect a lot of books to participate in Book Defenders -- even one book counts! If you've been meaning to do a little bookshelf tidy, now's the perfect time to pass along a few favorites to others who will love them.

DONATIONS FROM THE INTERNET

You can send books online. [Using Fandom Forward's Bookshop.org page](#) is an awesome way to do that! A portion of purchases from our shop benefit Fandom Forward, meaning that you'll be giving back double!

STEP 3: PUBLICIZE, PUBLICIZE, PUBLICIZE!

Make sure you get the word out about your book drive! Post about it on social media (and tag @FandomForward on Facebook or Twitter or @thehpalliance on Instagram so we can share!). You can also ask your school if you can put an ad in the student newsletter, or tell friends and family and ask if they'd be willing to donate. If you're collecting books from the community, make sure you tell folks where your donation box is located and how long it will be there for (see if your donation box host will share with their customers as well!).

If you're planning to ship books to a donation site, you may also want to ask if folks can make a small donation to help you cover that cost. Options like Venmo and Cashapp are great for accepting donations online. For safety, we do not recommend collecting cash donations.

Remember: If you host any events or gatherings for your book drive, make sure all of your guests feel comfortable and safe! (For example, you can provide masks, host outdoors, etc.)

STEP 4: SORT AND DELIVER YOUR BOOKS!

Sort through your donations! Make sure all of the donations are appropriate for the donation site you've chosen. While you're sorting, **make sure you keep count of how many books you're donating.**

MAILING BOOKS

If you're donating your books by mail, ask the postal worker to ship your box as **media mail**, which is often the cheapest shipping method.

You can always put in a nice note from you or your chapter that lets the recipient know a little bit more about you and wishes them well! **You can add special notes in each book to earn extra points in the Book Defenders Competition.**

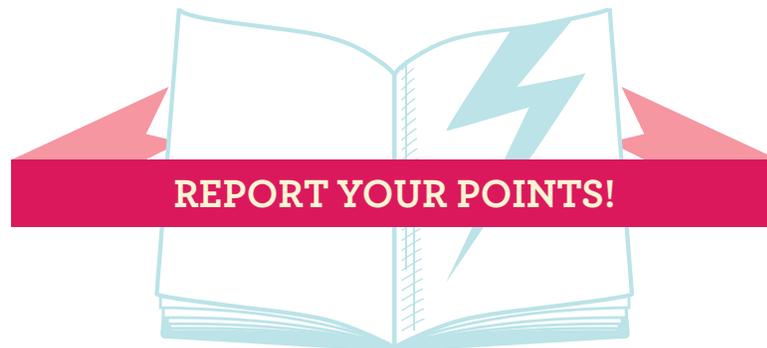
DELIVERING BOOKS

If you're dropping off books in person, you'll want to coordinate a time with your donation site, just in case their staff is not always working in the office.

STEP 5: SHARE YOUR RESULTS AND SAY THANK YOU!

[Report your donation totals!](#) This helps us keep track of how many books were collected across the globe, AND determines which genre is the ultimate winner of the Book Defenders Cup.

You can submit your totals as you go. For example, if you collected 10 books in the first week and another 10 books in the second week, you could submit two different forms reporting 10 books each time. Or, you can wait and count all of your books at the end of your collection time and report them all at once!



Share your donation results with your friends, family and community! If you partnered with a local business to collect donations, be sure to share the results with them and thank them for their support. If anyone financially supported your shipping costs, be sure to thank them as well!

It's always a nice touch to send a personalized thank you to anyone who supported your book drive. If you can, sending a card, email, or even text with some pictures included can go a long way in telling someone how much their support meant to you.

Post your results online and tag @FandomForward (@thehpalliance on Instagram) so we can celebrate with you, too!

PHASE 2: LEARN HOW TO FIGHT BOOK BANS!

ATTEND A TRAINING

Do you want to *do something* about the book bans impacting your community, but you don't know where to start? **Watching one or more of our training sessions is a great place to begin! We recommend starting from "Why Do Books Get Banned" for a great foundation and then move on to our other training videos from there.**

Why Do Books Get Banned? At this launch event from Phase 2 of our Book Defenders campaign, learn from Fandom Forward staff and guest authors/organizations about the history of book banning and why we're seeing an uptick in bans recently. We'll use what we learn as a foundation for the rest of our summer trainings!

Spotlight on Student Activists: Students all over are doing incredible work to combat censorship in their communities, and we can learn a lot from them. So, that's exactly what we'll do in this session! How are they organizing? What has been effective? And, how can we apply their advice to our own communities?

How to Effectively Fight Against Book Bans: Whether you're a student, librarian, or concerned community member, attend this training to learn what you can do to effectively fight against book bans in your community. We'll hear from expert organizations such as We Need Diverse Books, the National Coalition Against Censorship, PEN America, and more so we're all prepared to be organizers against censorship.

Celebrating Trans & Nonbinary Authors: The unfortunate reality is that queer, BIPOC, and authors of other marginalized identities are the most impacted by book bans all over the world. We know how important their stories are and want to celebrate them! We'll also learn how we can support the authors who are disproportionately impacted by censorship.

PHASE 3: TAKE ACTION TO DEFEND BOOKS!

STEP 1: TAKE ACTION!

We've taken the time to get ourselves trained, and now it's time to put our skills into action! Head over to our Action Hub (www.fandomforward.org/bookdefenders) to learn how you can get involved and take actions to defend books. We will be taking actions leading up to and during the national Banned Books Week.

When you take action, remember to **report your points** and make sure to share with us on social media FandomForward (@thepalliance on Instagram) so we can celebrate your success with you!

STEP 2: SHARE YOUR STORY

Seeing a book you love get banned can be really disheartening and might discourage you from sharing your unique story. But we know that your story, your voice, and your writing matters! One creative way to take action against book censorship is to ***keep writing banned books*** – that is, keep writing stories that reveal the interesting, complicated, sometimes messy truth about the world as you see it.

Watch our **#KeepWritingBannedBooks** workshop to learn how to most effectively and creatively share your story in spite of all the bans.



Craft in the Real World with NaNoWriMo & Matthew Salesses:

Matthew Salesses's book, *Craft in the Real World*, is a groundbreaking resource for fiction writers, teachers, and students. This manifesto and practical guide challenges current models of craft and the writing workshop by showing how they fail marginalized writers, and how cultural expectations inform storytelling. In this workshop, hosted by NaNoWriMo in collaboration with Fandom Forward, Matthew will answer questions about his writing and workshop experience.

After attending the workshop, share your writing with us by tagging @FandomForward (@thepalliance on Instagram). We'll conclude the Book Defenders campaign by celebrating all your unique stories!

BANNED AID: HOW TO PLAN A BANNED BOOKS PARTY!

Historically, hosting an event – whether it be a huge charity concert or a small house party – has been a popular way for someone to advocate for causes they care about, and get other people involved too! During Book Defenders, we're encouraging people to give *aid* to *banned* books (...BANNED AID, get it?) by hosting a party, and we have some instructions to get you started!

PART 1: HOW TO ORGANIZE AN EVENT

First of all, what type of event do you want to plan? The type of event is completely up to you! It is important to consider things like accessibility, budget, your own social capacity, and materials, etc. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you start planning:

- **In addition to reading/discussing banned books, what is the purpose behind planning this?** This doesn't have to be set in stone or super specific, but having a purpose in mind can help you answer a lot of the other questions. (For example, the event you host for a group of close knit friends who want to dig into the weeds of banned books is going to be different from the event you host for a larger group who are just learning about book censorship for the first time.)
- **Who are you inviting?** Friends, family, co-workers? Or are you looking to make new friends and bring them into the cause?
- **What is your capacity?** (Note: Consider capacity both in the physical limitations of space and your own social limitations.) Do you want a small or large gathering? Do you need a co-host to help with planning or executing?
- **When will the event take place?** Is this a one-time event? Monthly? Quarterly? Bi-annually? If you want to poll for people's availability, some helpful apps are When2meet, zCal, or Doodle.
- **How long is the event?** Again, some things to consider are your own social capacity, time needed to set up and clean up (for an in-person event), and the length of the event itself (main event + activities).
- **How are you going to communicate with everyone?** How will you provide answers to FAQs? (When is the event again? Where can I find parking? Do you have to pay for parking?) Some resources you can use are email, a Facebook group/event, Discord, a text group, a WhatsApp chat, and Slack, for example.
- **How are you going to structure your event?** Example: Give people time to arrive, socialize, and grab food/drinks. Then start an activity. Next, launch into a banned books discussion. Finally, end with another fun activity!
- **Will your event be virtual or in person?** Consider who you are inviting. The people you want to gather together may be in different states, regions, or even countries. Even if people live in the same city, some cities are sprawling, so make sure to consider distance and transportation access. Are people comfortable meeting in-person?
 - Considerations for an **in-person event** include:
 - **What kind of event do you want to have?** A picnic, house party, tea party, potluck, etc.?
 - **What is your budget?** Consider the size of the event and number of guests. For an in-person event you will probably need: Food and beverages, plates, napkins, utensils, etc., activities (materials and supplies), decorations, and invitations.
 - **Where do you want to host the event?** How big of a space do you need? Do you need to reserve/rent the space in advance? Is there a time limit on how long you can use the space? If so, make sure to factor in set up and clean up time!

A great resource is public common areas such as parks, rec centers, libraries (most have rooms/spaces you can reserve), or apartment lobby (if you know someone with access). Other

options include: coffee shops, someone's house/apartment, private restaurant rooms, or hotel conference room.

→ **Who will provide the food?** Are you cooking or catering? If cooking or catering, make a point to keep track of allergies/intolerances/aversions. Are you going to do a potluck? If so, set up an Excel spreadsheet or Google Forms where people can sign up for dishes to bring and organize allergen/intolerance-friendly foods in their own spot and label all common allergens in dishes. See the [Banned Books Recipes](#) section and ask everyone to share which recipe they made.

→ **What activities do you have planned for the event?** What materials and supplies do you need? [See the Activities section!](#)

→ **What COVID-19 safety precautions should you follow?** Consider asking attendees to get a rapid test before the event and as much as possible we encourage outdoor events and social distancing.

□ Considerations for a virtual event include:

→ **Which meeting platform/network will you use?** Zoom and GMeet are free and accessible but have time limitations. Do you know anyone with a paid account that can lend you access? FaceTime is another free option, but make sure everyone has access to it (new operating systems have the option to send an invitation to non-apple users to use FaceTime).

→ **Does everyone have access to or know how to log onto the meeting platform?** Make sure to send instructions well in advance!

→ **Is food going to be involved?** If you're planning the event around a mealtime, ask everyone to bring a meal so you can all eat together and discuss your favorite banned books. See the [Banned Books Recipes](#) section and ask everyone to share which recipe they made.

→ **What activities do you want to include and how will you execute them?** Make sure to let guests know ahead of time if they need to prepare any supplies. [See the Activities section!](#)

→ **What meeting tools/features can you use to make the activity more engaging?** Using our [crossword activity](#) as an example: You might share your screen to show the crossword and have people race to hit the "hand raise" button or enter the answer into the chat. Or, if you are using Zoom, consider a variation to playing Banned Books Heads Up! Place the person who is guessing into the waiting room or use the breakout room feature. After sharing what the banned book is, you can let the person back into the main room and let the guessing begin!

→ **If you are inviting people from multiple regions, how can you make the event inclusive of their area as well?** If people are from a different country, ask them for a list of banned books in their country and incorporate them into the event if possible.

HOW DO I INVITE PEOPLE?

Once you've figured out the logistics behind your event, it's time to start inviting people and raise awareness! How you invite your guests is completely up to you, but we have a few ideas that might inspire you. You can invite your guests using a handmade invitation, premade cards, or virtually by using an e-invitation, etc! If you love being artsy, why not create a handmade book-themed invitation (see instructions below)? Or, if you have a Dollar Tree near you, you can get a pack of 8 blank greeting cards for just \$1.25 to send to guests! There are also many options for e-invitations (see instructions below). If you're inviting new people, consider utilizing your local library, coffee/boba/tea/smoothie shops, college residential building, or park or rec center bulletin boards. If you have a bookstore or comic book shop nearby, try talking to the team there to see if they can help you spread the news about your event as well. You might be able to create a new partnership if the alignment is right.

Here are some ideas and resources:

- Create book-themed invitations using printer or construction paper, pens/markers/crayons/colored pencils, tape/glue, a ruler, scissors, envelopes, stickers, stamps, paint, etc.
- Free e-invitations resources include [Evite RSVP Invitation](#), [Punch Bowl](#), and [Canva](#).
- Premium e-invitations include [Paperless Post](#).

- Apps and social media that can be used for invitations include [Facebook Event Pages](#) and [EventBrite](#). You can also use Instagram Stories' link feature to send folks directly to your online event page.
- Do you know anyone who has a book-themed newsletter? Ask them if they can add your event to their next issue.
- If you're sticking to folks you already know, you can reach out to them through a private group chat or individual messages.

While it's great that you're excited about the event, please don't forget to be mindful of the amount of notifications, reminders, and follow-throughs. You don't want someone to think of your message as spam. Have fun, but be strategic with your outreach and engagement plan!

Finally, consider having someone proofread your invitation/event page and give feedback. Incorporate any appropriate suggestions.

After making a plan and sending out invites, you're ready to start preparing the details of the party!

PART 2: HOW TO MAKE IT BANNED BOOKS THEMED

DECORATIONS

- **Display some of your favorite banned books!** You might have some on your shelf already, or your local public library likely has some available to borrow. If you are having an in-person event, you could also encourage guests to bring their favorite banned books and talk about them like a book potluck!
- If you have a favorite banned book, what's your favorite quote from it? **You can make a simple or fancy poster** depending on how crafty you feel! Type it up, draw it, or use a free design software like Canva to make a quick design.
- [Book wanted posters](#): Use this template to **make "wanted" posters** for some of your favorite banned books! Just insert a photo of the book, the title, and the reason it is frequently challenged or banned.
- Print out **infographics or resources** from [ALA](#) and [Banned Books Week](#) about book censorship and frequently challenged books.
- Add final touches by decorating your space with recycled book pages, caution tape, black out poetry, BANNED stickers or graphics, "burned" pages (soaked in tea/spray painted), etc.

ACTIVITIES

- **Play Heads Up!** Write the titles of banned books on index cards. Each person will hold one up to their head (without looking at it!), people will shout out clues about the book based on the title they see, and then, the person will have to guess the book.
- **Write the first page** of your very own banned book.
- Fill out the **banned books trivia crossword puzzle** on the next page!

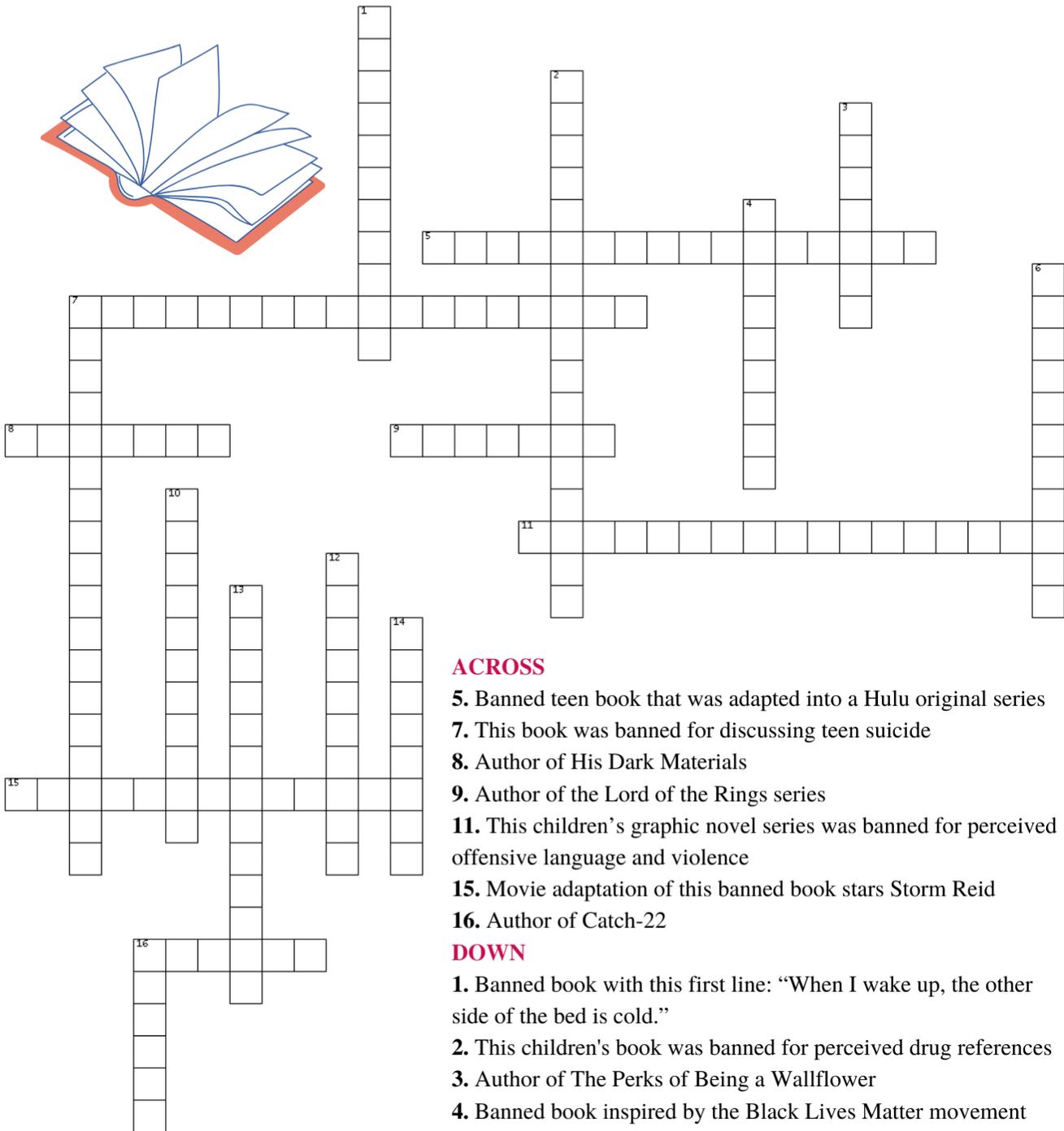
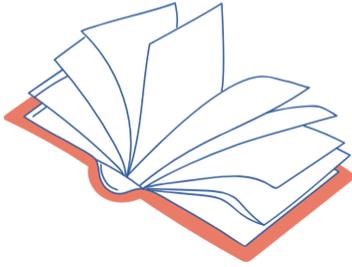
RECIPES

Follow one of these recipes based off of banned books by [Quirk!](#)

- [The Fahrenheit 451: Red Hot Cinnamon Cupcakes](#)
- [The Great Gatsby: Pink Champagne Cupcakes](#)
- [The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Huckleberry Cupcakes](#)
- [Things Fall Apart: Coffee Cake Crumble Muffins](#)
- [Harry Potter: Pumpkin Chess Pie Tart](#)



BANNED Books Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

5. Banned teen book that was adapted into a Hulu original series
7. This book was banned for discussing teen suicide
8. Author of His Dark Materials
9. Author of the Lord of the Rings series
11. This children's graphic novel series was banned for perceived offensive language and violence
15. Movie adaptation of this banned book stars Storm Reid
16. Author of Catch-22

DOWN

1. Banned book with this first line: "When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold."
2. This children's book was banned for perceived drug references
3. Author of The Perks of Being a Wallflower
4. Banned book inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement
6. Movie adaptation of this banned book stars Leonardo DiCaprio
7. Banned book with this first line: "When he was nearly thirteen my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow."
10. Movie adaptation of this banned book stars Oprah Winfrey
12. TV adaptation of this banned book series stars Blake Lively
13. Banned book with this first line: "We slept in what had once been the gymnasium."
14. Author of Gone with the Wind
16. Author of The Outsiders

WORD BANK

Alice in Wonderland	Hinton
Captain Underpants	Hunger Games
Chbosky	Looking for Alaska
Color Purple	Mitchell
Gossip Girl	Pullman
Great Gatsby	Thirteen Reasons Why
Handmaids Tale	To Kill a Mockingbird
Hate U Give	Tolkien
Heller	Wrinkle in Time

PART 3: HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST BANNED BOOKS

As part of your Banned Books Party, make sure you also plan time in your event for everyone to take action against the banning of books. Below are suggestions for how to take action *right now* and how to commit to taking action *long-term*!

TAKE ACTION RIGHT NOW!

- At Fandom Forward we have partnered with student activists at Texas's Vandegrift High School. They have formed a banned book club, and they need our support!

→ [Sign the petition](#)

- Write an email to the school's Governance Team (governance.team@leanderisd.org) and ask them to include student representation on their reconsideration committee.

Sample Email:

Good Day Governance Team:

I am writing to you to request an update to Policy EF Local to add student representation to reconsideration committees.

By having students added to the committees, they will be able to have a voice in the discussion around which books are allowed in schools. I think it's important that students are given this opportunity so that everyone on the committee can understand what students gain from these stories and why they want the books back on the shelves

Thank you,
[Your name]

- **Find a school in your area that is suffering from book bans** and send an email similar to the one above to the decision makers at that school district.
- **Purchase a banned book** from an [independent bookstore](#): Show the authors of banned books that we will continue to support them no matter what! Check out our [suggested list on Bookshop](#), a website that supports local, independent bookstores with every online purchase.
- **Post on social media** about a banned book and advocate for why it shouldn't be banned: Whether it's a photo from your camera roll, a poem you were inspired to write, or a piece of art you created, visibility is such an important part of defending banned books. Show (and tell) us why your favorite banned book shouldn't be banned!
- **Report censorship of a banned book**: Our friends at the American Library Association have an excellent resource for reporting censorship of books. Visit their website [here](#) to fill out the information about a book that was banned to raise awareness.

TAKE ACTION LONG-TERM

- Are you inspired by the students at Vandegrift High School? Consider starting your own [Fandom Forward chapter](#) and specifically make your chapter a **banned books club**. Check out our site for how to get started!
- **Volunteer at your local library**: As a library volunteer, you can encourage supervisors and peers to support banned books and make sure they are available for members of your community.
- **Attend one of Fandom Forward's training sessions** and learn more at www.fandomforward.org/bookdefenders

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [ALA Banned Books Week Activities](#)
- [National Coalition Against Censorship's Tools for Activists](#)

Need help? We're here! You can email info@fandomforward.org for any Book Defenders questions or advice.