

Synthesis Essay Assignment: Censorship and Minors

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying 8 sources. This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. You will also need to incorporate **one** credible outside source in your final essay assignment.

Introduction:

Author Ray Bradbury once wrote that “You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”

Censorship is defined by *Miriam Webster’s Concise Encyclopedia* as “the act of changing or suppressing speech or writing that is considered subversive of the common good.” The idea of what should be censored and for whom is a problem that has plagued humans since the age of Plato and Socrates. The debate has often focused primarily on censorship of material intended for young people.

The question arises then of whether censorship necessary for the “common good”? Is censorship of art appropriate? Who determines what should and should not be censored? Do adults have the responsibility to censor the media that minors encounter?

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. Then, doing your own basic research, **find one additional credible source that supports your viewpoint**

In an essay that synthesizes at least two of the below sources and one outside source, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that adults have the right and responsibility to censor media for minors.

Include in-text citations as noted below to cite your information. You must also include an MLA bibliography with the provided sources that you choose and your outside source. The provided sources are already cited for you on the individual articles.

Source A (Coatney)

Source B (Aliprandini)

Source C (Rushdie)

Source D (ALA)

Source E (Koebler)

Source F (Cameron)

Source G (Bacigalupi)

Source H (Zapiro)

Source A:

Coatney, Sharon. "Banned Books: A School Librarian's Perspective." *Time*. Time Inc., 22 Sept. 2000. Web. 19 July 2014.

Many years ago, when I began my teaching career in a small rural high school, the library was in a cage. Literally. The books were all locked inside a large metal cage in the corner of a study hall, and that was the library. At that time the library was staffed only one or two days a week, and I suppose it was considered necessary to lock it up for security. Still, I remember thinking that it was a great shame the students had so little access to the books. For most of the year, all of these books were essentially "banned."

But banning or censoring books is certainly not a new concept in any kind of library. All libraries have specific policies that are followed in selecting books for inclusion in the collection. Many libraries have very narrowly defined purposes, and books are only selected in those particular fields. Selection is also limited by funding and available shelf space, and often is age- and time-sensitive. For public schools, libraries have the very narrow function of having library collections that adequately support the curriculum.

Each year as Banned Books week arrives, I reflect on the ways the collection in my elementary school library has been censored. Every time I chose a book for our shelves it is done according to our school district selection policy, which says books must be age-appropriate and related to our school district curriculum. School librarians are, like all teachers, considered to be "in loco parentis" and are thus responsible for the safety of the children in their care. Over the years, I have developed a very fine collection of materials, but I have often "banned" books. That is my job, but we call what I do "selection," not "censorship." The hardest part of the job is to constantly keep in balance all viewpoints, not push my own agenda and remember that the education and safety of all of the students is my top priority. The exercise of the right to know must be tempered by a child's need for physical and emotional well-being.

Still, there is the very real issue of what to do when an individual parent asks that a book be banned from the library collection because he does not want his child to be exposed to it. Certainly, as patrons of that school district, parents do have that right. All school libraries have specific procedures that must be followed to review a contested book; when these are well crafted and followed meticulously, they usually work well. They allow for the school community's representative group to calmly review the book in light of the school's stated selection criteria and evaluate the book on its own merits.

Sometimes a book is removed. This usually happens because the selection criteria were not fully met or the process for reconsideration of materials was not followed, or if, upon reflection, the book is deemed to be inappropriate for that age level. In most cases, the complainants begin to look at the book in light of the whole process and realize that although they may not want their child to read a book such as "Bridge to Terabithia" by Katherine Paterson because it has several profanities, it is actually a very fine book that other parents might want their own children to read.

Several years ago, the mother of a Muslim child in our school asked that I not allow her son to check out any book about Christmas or other Christian holidays. She was not asking that those books be

banned, only that her child be banned from reading them. But I could not ban her child from checking out Christmas books. She needed to do that with her child. Even small children can learn to evaluate materials and decide what is best for them to read or not. This is where teachers, librarians and parents have the very real responsibility to expose kids to only the very best in literature and the most fair and unbiased nonfiction materials.

In my library we teach very young children to try to read a page in their selected material. If they cannot read and understand five words in the first paragraph, the book is probably too hard for them to read by themselves. In this way, children will grow up to be discriminating adult readers. I remember my own daughter, who at the age of eight had already created several criteria to help her select recreational reading materials. She would not read any book in which the main character was older than she was at the time — actually, not a bad beginning criterion for a young child to have.

It's dangerous to think that the only banned books are the sometimes outrageous examples highlighted during Banned Books Week. All of us ban. Censorship abounds. It's more important for us to think about how we should be educating our students to make good choices, to know what is worthwhile and to be able to think logically and weigh all ideas in order to choose wisely. Books may no longer be kept in cages, but our students are still often being denied access to the materials they need. Educating discriminating readers today is the way to reduce the inappropriate censorship of tomorrow.

Sharon Coatney is the library media specialist at the Oak Hill School in Overland Park, Kans. She is a past president of the American Association of School Librarians (a division of the American Library Association), and has been a librarian in grade schools at all levels.

Source B:

Censorship & Democracy: An Overview. By: Aliprandini, Michael, Wagner, Geraldine, Points of View: Censorship & Democracy, 2014

The following is an excerpt from an online database overview on censorship

The practice of censorship has its origins in the first civilizations, though the term "censor" itself refers to the Roman censor office established in 443 BCE, which was charged with the duty of shaping the character of the Roman people. Examples of censorship in the ancient world are numerous, with the most famous, the ancient censorship of Socrates in 399 BCE for his alleged corrupting of Roman youth and violating the moral code of the empire. Then as now, censorship occurred for the same reason, that a particular work or speech act caused offense and was deemed obscene, blasphemous, or treasonous. Other ancient writers whose works were banned and who were themselves punished included the Greek playwright Aristophanes and the Roman poet Ovid.

Given the belief that certain forms of expression could pose moral danger, it is no surprise that the Greek philosopher Plato advocated the censorship of poets in his ideal republic. At the same time, Plato's teacher, Socrates, advocated intellectual freedom and died in part for his belief that free, rational thought exerted a positive influence on public welfare.

In the Christian era, censorship was widely used to define acceptable religious ideas and to combat heresy. Texts were banned and burned, and authors were persecuted for deviant ideas. In 1231, the first of many inquisitions took place in Europe at the behest of the Catholic Church. Among the many thinkers persecuted for heresy were the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, and the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei. Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600, and Galileo was forced to recant his idea that the sun was the center of the universe in 1632 in order to avoid the same punishment.

With Johannes Gutenberg's invention of moveable type in the fifteenth century and the subsequent spread of printed media, the need for censorship increased. Gutenberg's printing press allowed censors to read works before publication and to make decisions as to whether they were heretical, thereby introducing the notion of prior restraint. In the following century, the Catholic Church began the "Index Librorum Prohibitorum," a list of prohibited books. It eventually included around 5,000 books and was not abolished until 1966.

In 1644, the English poet John Milton published the "Areopagitica." Though written in response to a particular historical situation (the British Parliament's control over publishing) it remains one of the most esteemed statements regarding intellectual freedom, although Milton's concepts are not necessarily modern. His justification is not so much the contemporary notion of individual freedom, but instead, theological, ensuring through freedom of speech, the existence of 'truth' in its ultimate form. Such ideas gained wider currency in the eighteenth century as the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment were disseminated. The US Constitution is one of the most important documents of Enlightenment thinking, yet it did not become fully applied to issues of censorship in the US until the twentieth century.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the trend toward greater societal openness increased in Europe and the US, and popular challenges to censorship were made; major exceptions were in times of war and under dictatorships.

One of the most notorious examples of a society living under strict censorship was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Communist Bloc, over which the USSR exerted power. During a period of seven decades, the population was subjected to harsh censorship laws, and numerous dissenters were imprisoned and murdered. The USSR liberalized in its last years, and the greater freedoms introduced were one major reason for the union's collapse in 1991.

Cultural products, including art, literature, film, music, and pornography, have historically been the most targeted areas for censorship. Seminal twentieth century novels such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) were both banned for a time and subjected to obscenity trials in Europe and the US. The decision to no longer censor these novels hinged on the judgment that they had social value even if some also considered them obscene. Other test cases included the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe, which many viewers considered pornographic and some of which, just as controversially, were funded with public money. Rather than facing censorship, many cultural products were assigned a rating system in order to warn parents about exposing their children to material deemed obscene. Content on television and radio is also controlled in the US by a federal body, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Social issues have traditionally attracted censorship, as well. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was illegal to distribute information about birth control in the US because it was thought to encourage promiscuity; advocates of birth control, in contrast, successfully argued that a woman should have control over her reproductive capabilities. Other major social issues have centered on education and the rights of students in the context of the First Amendment. Attempts to censor books in school libraries across the US remain common. Advocates of censorship argue that children must be protected from obscenity, whereas opponents argue that children need to be given the opportunity to make up their minds for themselves and to exercise critical thinking.

Even governments of open societies at times carry out censorship, arguing that issues of national security are at stake. One major example in twentieth century American history centered on a set of documents about US involvement in the Vietnam War that was leaked to the press. Known as the "Pentagon Papers," they were the subject of high-level attempts by the government to suppress their publication and ultimately led to a court trial against two defendants who were responsible for the leak; they were ultimately acquitted. Another more recent example is the USA Patriot Act, signed into law in October 2001 by President George W. Bush, just after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The law was renewed in 2006, but elements of it were allowed to expire in 2011.

"USA Patriot" is an acronym that stands for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001." It expanded US law enforcement authority's ability to fight terrorism in the United States and abroad. Among other things, the Patriot Act allowed law enforcement agencies to search telephone, e-mail communications, medical, financial, and other records and increased the discretion of law enforcement and immigration authorities who wanted to detain or deport immigrants suspected of terrorism-related acts.

Opponents of censorship, on the other hand, argue that national security is too often invoked in order to cover up controversial actions of the government. For example, under the Patriot Act, the FBI can access medical, school and library records of any US resident without a warrant. The FBI can prevent the subject of an inquiry from discovering that his or her records were searched.

Source C

Rushdie, Salman. "On Censorship - The New Yorker." *The New Yorker*. 11 May 2012. Web. 21 July 2014.

This piece is drawn from the Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture given by Rushdie, on May 6th, as part of the PEN World Voices Festival.

No writer ever really wants to talk about censorship. Writers want to talk about creation, and censorship is anti-creation, negative energy, uncreation, the bringing into being of non-being, or, to use Tom Stoppard's description of death, "the absence of presence." Censorship is the thing that stops you doing what you want to do, and what writers want to talk about is what they do, not what stops them doing it. And writers want to talk about how much they get paid, and they want to gossip about other writers and how much *they* get paid, and they want to complain about critics and publishers, and gripe about politicians, and they want to talk about what they love, the writers they love, the stories and even sentences that have meant something to them, and, finally, they want to talk about their own ideas and their own stories. Their things. The British humorist Paul Jennings, in his brilliant essay on Resistentism, a spoof of Existentialism, proposed that the world was divided into two categories, "Thing" and "No-Thing," and suggested that between these two is waged a never-ending war. If writing is Thing, then censorship is No-Thing, and, as King Lear told Cordelia, "Nothing will come of nothing," or, as Mr. Jennings would have revised Shakespeare, "No-Thing will come of No-Thing. Think again."

Consider, if you will, the air. Here it is, all around us, plentiful, freely available, and broadly breathable. And yes, I know, it's not perfectly clean or perfectly pure, but here it nevertheless is, plenty of it, enough for all of us and lots to spare. When breathable air is available so freely and in such quantity, it would be redundant to demand that breathable air be freely provided to all, in sufficient quantity for the needs of all. What you have, you can easily take for granted, and ignore. There's just no need to make a fuss about it. You breathe the freely available, broadly breathable air, and you get on with your day. The air is not a subject. It is not something that most of us want to discuss.

Imagine, now, that somewhere up there you might find a giant set of faucets, and that the air we breathe flows from those faucets, hot air and cold air and tepid air from some celestial mixer-unit. And imagine that an entity up there, not known to us, or perhaps even known to us, begins on a certain day to turn off the faucets one by one, so that slowly we begin to notice that the available air, still breathable, still free, is thinning. The time comes when we find that we are breathing more heavily, perhaps even gasping for air. By this time, many of us would have begun to protest, to condemn the reduction in the air supply, and to argue loudly for the right to freely available, broadly breathable air. Scarcity, you could say, creates demand.

Liberty is the air we breathe, and we live in a part of the world where, imperfect as the supply is, it is, nevertheless, freely available, at least to those of us who aren't black youngsters wearing hoodies in Miami, and broadly breathable, unless, of course, we're women in red states trying to make free choices about our own bodies. Imperfectly free, imperfectly breathable, but when it is breathable and free we don't need to make a song and dance about it. We take it for granted and get on with our day. And at night, as we fall asleep, we assume we will be free tomorrow, because we were free today.

The creative act requires not only freedom but also this assumption of freedom. If the creative artist worries if he will still be free tomorrow, then he will not be free today. If he is afraid of the

consequences of his choice of subject or of his manner of treatment of it, then his choices will not be determined by his talent, but by fear. If we are not confident of our freedom, then we are not free.

And, even worse than that, when censorship intrudes on art, it becomes the subject; the art becomes “censored art,” and that is how the world sees and understands it. The censor labels the work immoral, or blasphemous, or pornographic, or controversial, and those words are forever hung like albatrosses around the necks of those cursed mariners, the censored works. The attack on the work does more than define the work; in a sense, for the general public, it becomes the work. For every reader of “Lady Chatterley’s Lover” or “Tropic of Capricorn,” every viewer of “Last Tango in Paris” or “A Clockwork Orange,” there will be ten, a hundred, a thousand people who “know” those works as excessively filthy, or excessively violent, or both.

The assumption of guilt replaces the assumption of innocence. Why did that Indian Muslim artist have to paint that Hindu goddess in the nude? Couldn’t he have respected her modesty? Why did that Russian writer have his hero fall in love with a nymphet? Couldn’t he have chosen a legally acceptable age? Why did that British playwright depict a sexual assault in a Sikh temple, a gurdwara? Couldn’t the same assault have been removed from holy ground? Why are artists so troublesome? Can’t they just offer us beauty, morality, and a damn good story? Why do artists think, if they behave in this way, that we should be on their side? “And the people all said sit down, sit down you’re rocking the boat / And the devil will drag you under, with a soul so heavy you’ll never float / Sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down / You’re rocking the boat.”

At its most effective, the censor’s lie actually succeeds in replacing the artist’s truth. That which is censored is thought to have deserved censorship. Boat-rocking is deplored.

Nor is this only so in the world of art. The Ministry of Truth in present-day China has successfully persuaded a very large part of the Chinese public that the heroes of Tiananmen Square were actually villains bent on the destruction of the nation. This is the final victory of the censor: When people, even people who know they are routinely lied to, cease to be able to imagine what is really the case.

Sometimes great, banned works defy the censor’s description and impose themselves on the world—“Ulysses,” “Lolita,” the “Arabian Nights.” Sometimes great and brave artists defy the censors to create marvellous literature underground, as in the case of the samizdat literature of the Soviet Union, or to make subtle films that dodge the edge of the censor’s knife, as in the case of much contemporary Iranian and some Chinese cinema. You will even find people who will give you the argument that censorship is good for artists because it challenges their imagination. This is like arguing that if you cut a man’s arms off you can praise him for learning to write with a pen held between his teeth. Censorship is not good for art, and it is even worse for artists themselves. The work of Ai Weiwei survives; the artist himself has an increasingly difficult life. The poet Ovid was banished to the Black Sea by a displeased Augustus Caesar, and spent the rest of his life in a little hellhole called Tomis, but the poetry of Ovid has outlived the Roman Empire. The poet Mandelstam died in one of Stalin’s labor camps, but the poetry of Mandelstam has outlived the Soviet Union. The poet Lorca was murdered in Spain, by Generalissimo Franco’s goons, but the poetry of Lorca has outlived the fascistic Falange. So perhaps we can argue that art is stronger than the censor, and perhaps it often is. Artists, however, are vulnerable.

In England last week, English PEN protested that the London Book Fair had invited only a bunch of “official,” State-approved writers from China while the voices of at least thirty-five writers jailed by the regime, including Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo and the political dissident and poet Zhu Yufu, remained silent and ignored. In the United States, every year, religious zealots try to ban writers as disparate as Kurt Vonnegut and J. K. Rowling, an obvious advocate of sorcery and the black arts; to say nothing of poor, God-bothered Charles Darwin, against whom the advocates of intelligent design continue to march. I once wrote, and it still feels true, that the attacks on the theory of evolution in parts of the United States themselves go some way to disproving the theory, demonstrating that natural selection doesn’t always work, or at least not in the Kansas area, and that human beings are capable of evolving backward, too, towards the Missing Link.

Even more serious is the growing acceptance of the don’t-rock-the-boat response to those artists who do rock it, the growing agreement that censorship can be justified when certain interest groups, or genders, or faiths declare themselves affronted by a piece of work. Great art, or, let’s just say, more modestly, original art is never created in the safe middle ground, but always at the edge. Originality is dangerous. It challenges, questions, overturns assumptions, unsettles moral codes, disrespects sacred cows or other such entities. It can be shocking, or ugly, or, to use the catch-all term so beloved of the tabloid press, controversial. And if we believe in liberty, if we want the air we breathe to remain plentiful and breathable, this is the art whose right to exist we must not only defend, but celebrate. Art is not entertainment. At its very best, it’s a revolution.

Source D

Office for Intellectual Freedom. "Challenges by Reason, Initiator & Institution for 1990-99 and 2000-09." *American Library Association*. American Library Association, 2014. Web. 21 July 2014.

Challenges by reason, initiator & institution for 1990-99 and 2000-09

These figures are pulled from the American Library Association's Challenge Database by decades 1990-99 and 2000-2009. Challenges refers to challenged or banned books in the respective years.

Chart 1:

Challenges by Reasons

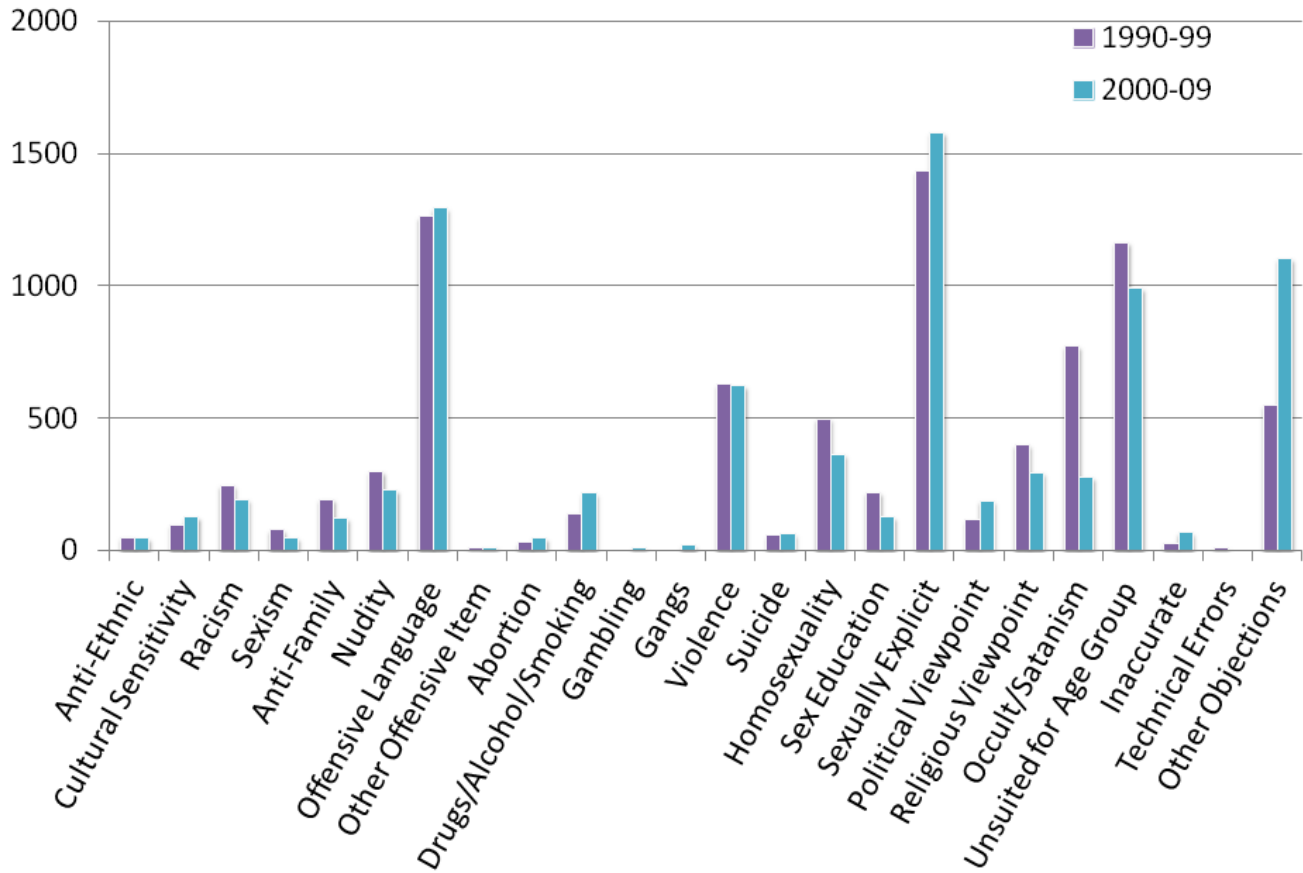


Chart 2

Challenges by Initiator

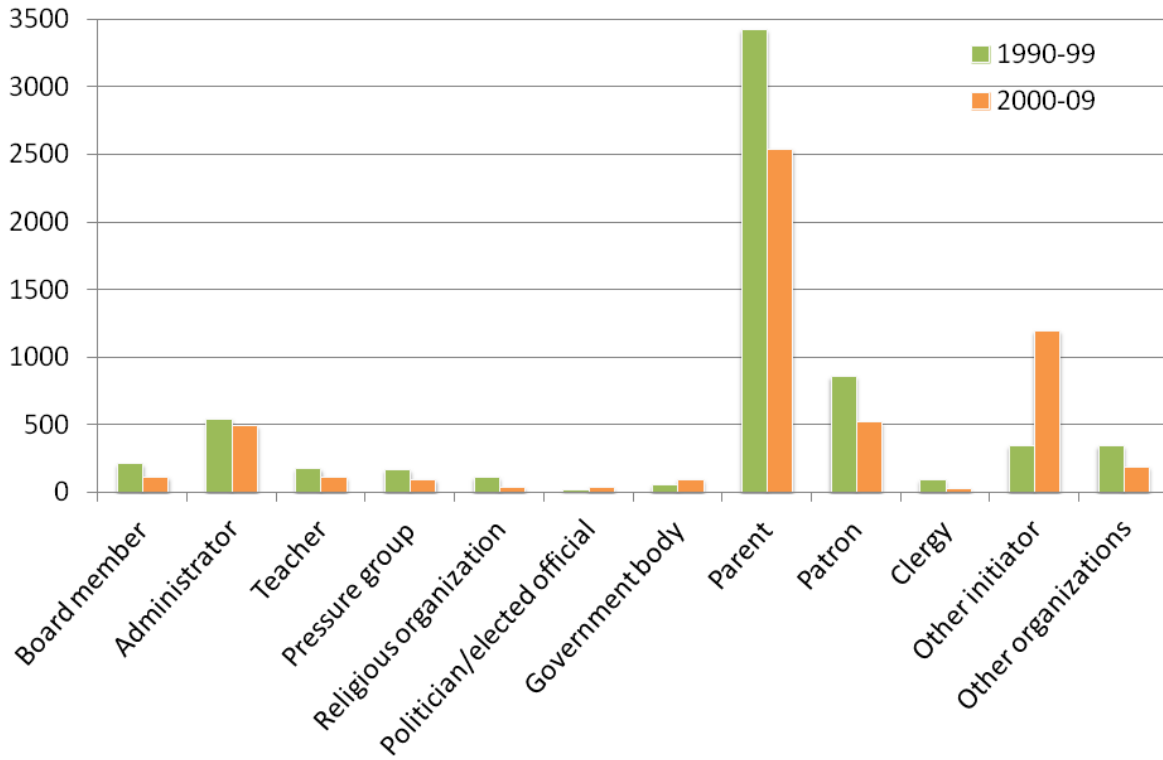
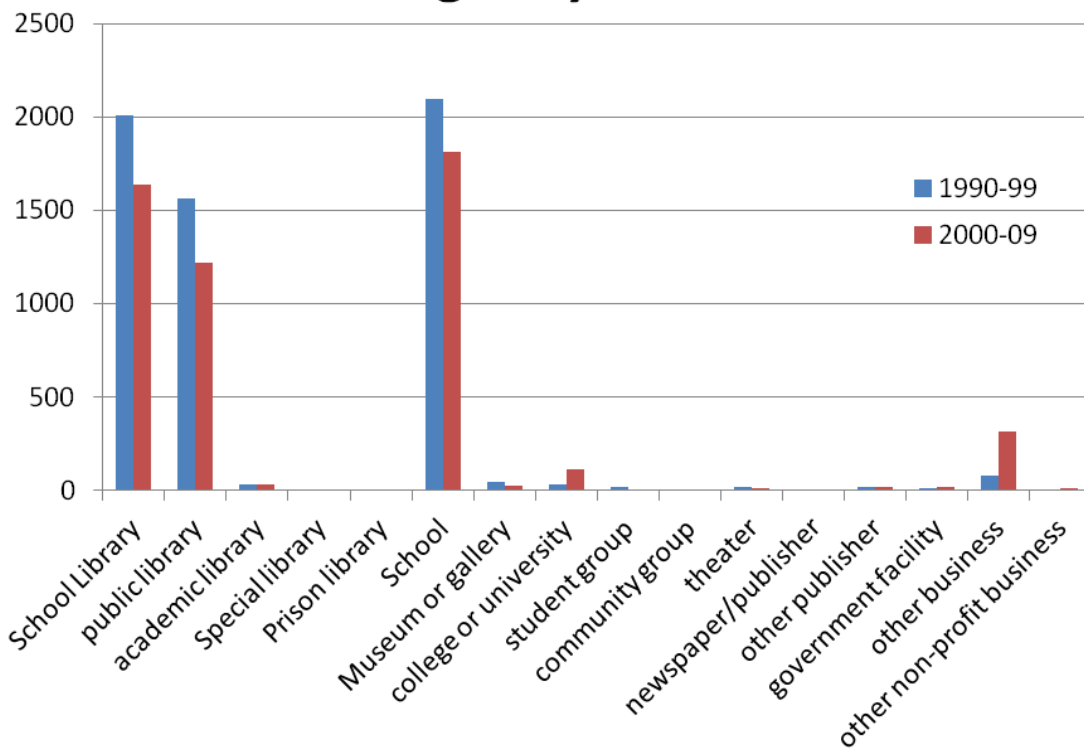


Chart 3

Challenges by Institution



Source E:

Koebler, Jason. "Is It Time To Rate Young Adult Books for Mature Content?" *US News*. U.S. News & World Report, 18 May 2012. Web. 21 July 2014.

Most parents are happy to see their kids nose down in a book, but according to a new report, they might want to check out what they're reading more closely.

Among the top 40 best-selling children's books on the *New York Times* list between June 22 and July 6, 2008, one researcher found more than 1,500 profane words, ranging from *Gossip Girl—The Caryles's* 50 "F-bombs" to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid's* occasional reference of bodily functions. Sarah Coyne, lead researcher of the study and a professor in Brigham Young University's department of family life, checked for profanity in five different categories: George Carlin's "Seven Dirty Words," sexual words, excretory words, 'strong others' (bastard, bitch) and 'mild others' (hell, damn). All but five books, including many targeted to kids as young as 9, had at least one instance of profanity.

Coyne thinks a ratings system on book jackets would help parents decide what's appropriate for their kids to read. It's a subject many are afraid to touch, with the talk of censorship or restricting books conjuring up images of book burnings and infringing on First Amendment Rights.

"I think we put books on a pedestal compared to other forms of media," Coyne says. "I thought long and hard about whether to do the study in the first place—I think banning books is a terrible idea, but a content warning on the back I think would empower parents."

While books like *Gossip Girl* or *Pretty Little Liars* aren't ever going to end up alongside *Catcher in the Rye* or *Huckleberry Finn* in American literary canon, those books' messages are still important, experts argue.

"Books can be a safe way for young people to explore edgier, sensitive, or complicated topics, and they provide parents the opportunity to help their teens grow and understand these kinds of sensitive issues," says Beth Yoke, executive director of the Young Adult Library Services Association, an offshoot of the American Library Association. "ALA's interpretation on any rating system for books is that it's censorship."

There's also the question of who would label the books. Yoke says that the MPAA's film ratings are done in an arbitrary and opaque way.

"Having a big, nebulous organization decide what your kid can or can't read is not really a democratic process," she says. The 2006 documentary *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* argued that an adult NC-17 rating essentially kills a movie's chance of being profitable, and countless filmmakers have had to edit their movies in order to score a lower rating—something that could happen to books if a similar rating process is implemented.

Coyne says some of what she found in young adult novels would put them in the R-rated category in just a couple pages. For instance *Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines*, a cautionary tale about a teenager's battle with addiction, for instance, features nearly 500 instances of profanity, she says.

"If they made that into a movie, it'd be rated R very quickly," Coyne says. But that book is intended to portray an accurate picture of what it's like to be addicted to drugs and to encourage kids to stay away from them.

Some organizations, such as Common Sense Media, already provide an age-coded guide to recent book releases. The nonprofit features age ratings for more than 2,300 books and uses a traffic-light system to let parents know whether

the book is age-appropriate. Coyne says that either way, parents need to pay closer attention to what kids are reading.

"I don't think anyone would argue that books like *Harry Potter* or *Twilight* didn't have a big influence on adolescents," she says. "When you see a TV show like *Gossip Girl*, you get a hint of the [adult content], but I don't think parents are aware of how much worse it is in the books."

Jason Koebler is a science and technology reporter for U.S. News & World Report.

Cameron, David. "Protecting Our Children Online." *Index on Censorship*. Index on Censorship, 22 July 2014. Web. 21 July 2014.

David Cameron is the prime minister of the United Kingdom. The following is excerpted from a speech given on July 22, 2013.

Today I am going to tread into territory that can be hard for our society to confront, that is frankly difficult for politicians to talk about — but that I believe we need to address as a matter of urgency.

I want to talk about the Internet: the impact it is having on the innocence of children, how online pornography is corroding childhood, and how, in the darkest corners of the Internet, there are things going on that are a direct danger to our children, and that must be stamped out.

I'm not making this speech because I want to moralise or scaremonger, but because I feel profoundly as a politician — and as a father — that the time for action has come. This is, quite simply, about how we protect our children and their innocence.

Let me be very clear, right at the start: the Internet has transformed our lives for the better. It helps liberate those who are oppressed, it allows people to tell truth to power, it brings to education to those previously denied it, it adds billions to our economy, it is one of the most profound and era-changing inventions in human history.

But because of this, the Internet can sometimes be given a special status in debate. In fact, it can be seen as beyond debate. To raise concerns about how people should access the Internet or what should be on it is somehow naïve or backward-looking . . .

Against this mindset, people — and most often parents' — very real concerns are dismissed. They're told "the Internet is too big to mess with, too big to change." But to me, the questions around the Internet and the impact it has are too big to ignore. The Internet is not just where we buy, sell and socialise. It is where crimes happen and where people can get hurt, and it is where children and young people learn about the world, each other, and themselves.

The fact is that the growth of the Internet as an unregulated space has thrown up two major challenges when it comes to protecting our children. The first challenge is criminal: and that is the proliferation and accessibility of child abuse images on the Internet. The second challenge is cultural: the fact that many children are viewing online pornography and other damaging material at a young age, and that the nature of that pornography is so extreme it is distorting their view of sex and relationships.

Let me be clear: these challenges are very distinct and very different.

In one we're talking about illegal material. The other legal material is being viewed by those who are underage. But both these challenges have something in common. They are about how our collective lack of action on the Internet has led to harmful — and in some cases truly dreadful — consequences for children.

Of course, a free and open Internet is vital. But in no other market — and with no other industry — do we have such an extraordinarily light touch when it comes to protecting our children. Children can't go into shops or the cinema and buy things meant for adults or have adult experiences — we rightly regulate to protect them. But when it comes to the Internet, in the balance between freedom and responsibility, we have neglected our responsibility to our children.

My argument is that the Internet is not a sideline to 'real life' or an escape from 'real life'; it is real life.

It has an impact: on the children who view things that harm them, on the vile images of abuse that pollute minds and cause crime, on the very values that underpin our society. So we have got to be more active, more aware, more responsible about what happens online. And I mean 'we' collectively: governments, parents, Internet providers and platforms, educators and charities. We've got to work together across both the challenges I have set out . . .

So I have a very clear message for Google, Bing, Yahoo, and the rest: you have a duty to act on this, and it is a moral duty. I simply don't accept the argument that some of these companies have used to say that these searches should be allowed because of freedom of speech . . .

Set your greatest brains to work on this. You are not separate from our society, you are part of our society, and you must play a responsible role in it. This is quite simply about obliterating this disgusting material from the net — and we will do whatever it takes.

So that's how we are going to deal with the criminal challenge. The cultural challenge is the fact that many children are watching online pornography — and finding other damaging material online — at an increasingly young age...

And the effect can be devastating. Our children are growing up too fast. They are getting distorted ideas about sex and being pressured in a way we have never seen before. As a father, I am extremely concerned about this...

But the way I see it, there is a contract between parents and the state. Parents say 'we'll do our best to raise our children right', and the state agrees to stand on their side; to make that job a bit easier, not harder.

Everything I've spoken about today comes back to one thing: the kind of society we want to be. I want Britain to be the best place to raise a family.

A place where your children are safe.

Where there's a sense of right and wrong, and boundaries between them.

Where children are allowed to be children.

All the actions we're taking come back to that.

Protecting the most vulnerable in our society; protecting innocence; protecting childhood itself.
That is what is at stake.

And I will do whatever it takes to keep our children safe.

Source G

Bacigalupi, Paoli. "Children Need to Be Emotionally Ready for Certain Books." *Room for Debate*. New York Times, 27 Dec. 2012. Web. 21 July 2014.

The following is from an opinion pages debate on the *New York Times* on the subject of child maturity and book choice

I was a precocious reader, and regularly read novels for adults. When I was in sixth grade, I ran across *Lord Foul's Bane* by Stephen Donaldson. Within the first 50 pages the ostensible hero rapes a young girl. I was horrified. I never finished the book, and I felt sick and uncomfortable for a long time after.

I often hear the argument that kids will gloss over reading content that they aren't yet ready to process. In my own reading life, I haven't found that to be true. My reading skill led me into numerous stories that I was emotionally unprepared for, and sometimes that was a traumatic experience.

In contrast, many of my friends also read "Lord Foul's Bane," and were unbothered by it. Because of this, I don't think you can make an argument that a book is only appropriate for one age or another, or that there is some ideal age to introduce certain books. We're all individuals. As parents, I think we have to be involved in what our children read, and monitor how they react to being introduced to new material. Looking back, I don't particularly wish that I hadn't read "Lord Foul's Bane," but I do wish that there had been an adult around who had read it first and had been checking in on me, to talk with me and help contextualize what I read.

Interestingly, with my novel *Ship Breaker*, I often see the opposite situation. Young people love the story, but some adults put the book down when they encounter the villain: an abusive father. Adult readers, with their parental experience, have a reading context that leads them to anticipate horrors that their children don't worry about. Young readers just see an adventure story with an excellent villain, whereas the adults are traumatized, and flee.

Go figure.

Source H

Zapiro. "Censoring Michelangelo." *The Cagle Post Inc.* The Cagle Post, 04 June 2012. Web. 21 July 2014

