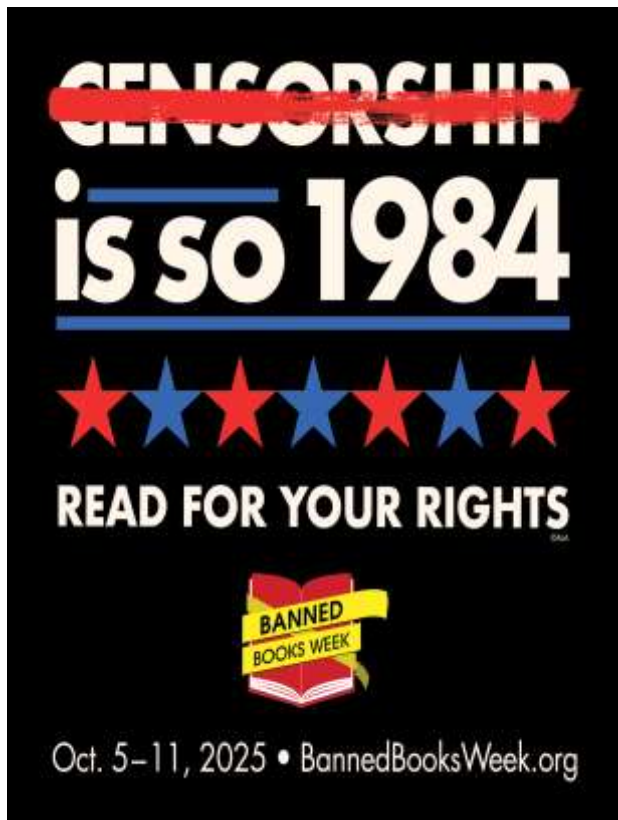




## Promoting and Celebrating the Freedom to Read + Raffle

Tuesday Topics: September 2025

*Welcome to Tuesday Topics, a monthly series covering topics with intellectual freedom implications for libraries of all types. Each message is prepared by a member of OLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) or a guest writer. Questions can be directed to the author of the topic or to the IFC.*



### Banned Books Week + Raffle

Fall brings the intellectual freedom celebration known as [Banned Books Week](#) (BBW), which some library staff now refer to as “Celebrating the Freedom to Read.”

While the observance usually occurs in late September, this year it runs from October 5-11.

However, the [Oregon Intellectual Freedom Committee](#) encourages libraries to participate anytime in September or October.

If your library participates, we’d love to know how you celebrated. Please send a description, links, pictures, and/or stories to [ifc.chair@olaweb.org](mailto:ifc.chair@olaweb.org). Each submission received by the end of October 14th will count as an entry in a raffle to win the top 10 banned books of the year or items from the ALA store via a gift certificate or reimbursement! In the meantime, take a look at what Oregon library staff [shared](#) in our last Banned Books Week Show-and-Tell.

### Easy-to-Prepare Displays and Activities

Here are some ideas for displays and activities that are aimed at specific audiences and that should not take much effort to implement. Some could be easily adapted for other age levels.

- 1) *Older Elementary/Children’s Services*: What Do These Books Have in Common?

a) Activity:

- 1) Choose 3 to 5 elementary-aged books from the [Oregon Title Index to Materials Challenges](#) or [ALA's 100 Most Challenged Books of the Past Decades](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page).
- 2) Make sure the books are all different, such as a “scary” story (ex: a Goosebumps title), one with a main character that represents diversity (ex: *Melissa*, formerly *George*, by Alex Gino), and something silly (ex: a Captain Underpants title).
- 3) Gather the books from your library, or print the covers of each in color and glue each cover to the front of a file folder.
- 4) Locate a blurb or write a very short, high-level summary of each book. (Use the blurb on the book; or print each blurb or summary, and glue each to the inside or back cover of the relevant file folder.)
- 5) During a storytime or lesson, ask the children to listen to the summaries of each book and to think about what they have in common.
- 6) Read the blurbs while showing the book or printed cover image.
- 7) Ask students to guess what all of the books have in common. Entertain all answers for several minutes – yes, all were written by an author, but that’s not what I’m looking for; yes, all were...
- 8) Let students know the answer – that all books were challenged, meaning some people thought the books should not be available to children in the library.
- 9) Ask students what they think about the fact that the books were challenged, discuss a basic definition of the concept of the freedom to read, and ask about other ways that people who may not appreciate a book could handle that (ex: they could ask their own child not to read the book).

b) Display: Modify the activity by creating a bulletin board or similar display.

- 1) Use cut-out letters for the title at the top: What Do These Books Have in Common?
- 2) Purchase the [Censorship is so 1984](#) poster or another Banned Books Week poster, or create something similar to affix in the center of the board or surface.
- 3) Affix the book cover images with their corresponding blurbs, from the activity above.
- 4) Add a folded piece of thick paper, such as part of a file folder, centered near the bottom. On the top, add this: Answer. On the side that shows when the top is flipped up, add what you want the children/students to know about the fact that all of the books were challenged (asked to be removed from a library). Maybe end with this question: What do you think about challenging books?
- 5) Consider adding a translation of all text in the most common language/s spoken in your library. You could print the translations in smaller font on colored paper and affix them below the title and each blurb. Or, print the blurbs in more than one language from the start.

## 2) *Teens/Youth Services: Censorship by the Numbers (STEM connection)*

### a) Activity:

- 1) Digitally display, or download and print, the 5 individual [ALA Censorship by the Numbers posters](#) (not the poster that combines all 5 into 1). (For printed posters, affix them to a flat surface. Or, lightly tape each to a separate page on a flip chart.)
- 2) During a teen time or a lesson, discuss the concepts of intellectual freedom, censorship, and book challenges. Perhaps have basic definitions prepared that participants can refer back to during the activity. (You could use a half-sheet handout with all definitions plus the URL or QR code for the ALA posters, or print individual definitions in large font and post them nearby, or...)
- 3) Then introduce one poster at a time, and “read” the information by reinforcing how to interpret and understand the charts and graphs.
- 4) Ask participants questions, such as these, and discuss as time and attention spans allow:  
What surprised you about this data? (Possibility: It’s surprising to know that sometimes teachers or librarians challenge books.)  
What more do you want to know? (Possibilities: What books have been challenged in my school or library? The data represents 2024; is the 2024 total number of challenges less, about the same, or more than previous years?)
- 5) Extension: Ahead of time, gather a few books about charts and graphs, data, infographics, and related topics, and display them during and after the activity/lesson.
- 6) Middle and high school extension: Collaborate with a math teacher on this lesson. Library staff can cover the intellectual freedom concepts, and the math teacher can teach about interpreting and understanding the charts and graphs. You could follow up with an assignment, such as using the [Oregon Title Index to Materials Challenges](#) spreadsheet to create a graph indicating the number of recorded challenges in Oregon by year or a chart indicating the percentage of total challenged books that were retained, reclassified, or removed.

### b) Display: Modify the activity by creating a bulletin board or decorating a door.

- 1) On the display surface, affix cut-out letters for the title at the top: Censorship by the Numbers.
- 2) Print the word/phrase and definition for each of the 3 concepts listed above, and affix them under the title or along the sides of the surface. You could use the flip-up format as described in the elementary display section above.
- 3) Print each of the 5 posters used above, and affix them to the surface.
- 4) Print any points you may want to make (in lieu of the activity discussion), and affix those where appropriate.
- 5) Alternative, especially for public or academic libraries: Share the 5 posters on social media with a concise message/point plus the hashtag #FreedomToRead or

#BooksForAll – 1 per day and/or per platform.

3) *Adults/College-Age*: IF the First: Intellectual Freedom and the First Amendment

a) Activity:

- 1) Find a guest speaker who is knowledgeable about the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution – lawyer, professor, history teacher, etc. Can't find a speaker or don't want to take the time? Show relevant portions of a video instead, such as [this one](#) with the director of the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom.
- 2) The guest speaker should collaborate with library staff as co-presenter/s to design a presentation and discussion about the intersection of intellectual freedom and the First Amendment.
- 3) The presentation could be an interview in which the librarian asks the guest speaker questions. Format the questions so they tie into the presentation title: If the First Amendment is/says/addressses/etc. X, then...? Example: If the First Amendment protects the freedom of speech, what should a library do about a book that contains references that are now considered racist? If you show video clips instead of co-presenting with a guest speaker, ask an "If" question, show a relevant portion of the video, discuss the information with participants, and repeat.
- 4) Extension for high school and academic librarians: Work with a history teacher or professor, and turn this into a lesson related to [Constitution Day](#). The observance is on September 17, the day the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1787. That day falls on a Wednesday this year, but you could do the lesson before or after that date.

b) Display: Create a slideshow.

- 1) Add a [BBW or ALA graphic](#) and the presentation title on the first slide: IF the First: Intellectual Freedom and the First Amendment.
- 2) Add one of the "If" questions from the activity above to a slide. Follow that with a brief answer or response. Repeat for each question. Repeat in other languages as needed.
- 3) End with a list of online resources and/or related books (cover images and QR codes that lead to catalog links).
- 4) Set the slideshow on a loop to continually advance through the slides. It can be displayed on one or more monitors (such as wall-mounted "announcement" monitors) in the library or institution.

Thanks for promoting and celebrating the freedom to read. Let's flip the narrative!