

**Collection Development Policy
2007**

Voted by the Board of Library Trustees
April 11, 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement	2
Collection Development Goals	2
Selection	2
Requests for reconsideration of library materials	3, 12
Collection Development Responsibility	3
Collection Development Sources	3
Electronic Access	4
Collection Analysis	4
Areas of Service	
Adult Collection	
Book Collection	5
Audio Visual	5
Reference Collection	5
Government Documents	6
Newspapers	6
Paperbacks	6
Periodicals	6
Specialized Adult Collections	
Career Center	8
Travel	8
Russian Language	8
Pregnancy	8
Large Type	8
Basic Education	8
Brookline Room	9
Brookline Photograph Collection	9
Cage	9
Office	9
Stack	9
Fiction Genres and Formats	9
Maps	9
Oversize	9
Libretti	9
Scores	9
Young Adult Services	10
Children's Services	10
Branch Services	11
American Library Association Library Bill of Rights	13
American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement	14
American Library Association Freedom to View Statement	18

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Public Library of Brookline is to provide the Town of Brookline with free, open and cost-effective access to recorded knowledge in print and non-print formats. The Library:

- Provides access to information to meet the ongoing intellectual, cultural and recreational needs of our diverse population.
- Maintains strong collections of fiction, non-fiction, literature, classics and the arts.
- Encourages a love of reading and of libraries in our children.
- Uses technology to improve access, reduce costs, and increase options in both the kind and variety of services offered
- Promotes and supports information literacy for the entire community.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Since the Public Library of Brookline was established in 1857, generations of librarians and patrons have molded a collection that reflects this community's great love for and interest in the humanities. We continue to build on excellent collections in art, fiction and literature, history, biography, and religion. Our children's department maintains strong collections in fairy tales, legends, mythology, natural history, social science and history, publications by small and alternative presses, picture books, a retrospective collection of fiction and materials on ethnic studies.

The Public Library of Brookline recognizes its responsibility to provide library materials in a variety of media that answer the educational, cultural and recreational needs of individuals and groups in the Town. The scope of the collection reflects the broad interests of this particular community, covering many subjects in considerable depth without excessive specialization.

In times of shrinking budgets and expanding knowledge it is imperative that all libraries initiate co-operative collection development strategies. The use of computer technology makes the resources of the Main Library available for patrons at our branches and our membership in the Minuteman Library Network makes the 3.6 million items held by the member libraries available to all our patrons. Items not available through this network can be searched and borrowed from other libraries in Massachusetts through the Virtual Catalog or nationally through Interlibrary Loan. In addition, developing electronic formats will make information available in a timely manner and will free shelf space for information best presented in book form. Duplicate copies of popular titles will be purchased as needed.

The 2000 census shows 26.6% of Brookline's residents to be foreign born. The library is committed to the further development of the already-established Russian and Chinese collections and will develop collections for other language groups as patron demand warrants.

SELECTION

Selection of materials for purchase or receipt as gifts is determined by reviews in established reviewing sources (see list below), anticipated demand, requests by patrons and recommendations from staff. Although criteria may change over time at present criteria include:

accuracy of information
balanced exposition of controversial issues
quality of writing and presentation
relevance to the library's goals

current popularity
permanent value in the material's subject area
reputation of the publisher and the author
high production values
format appropriate to multiple circulations
availability at other libraries

The Trustees of the Public Library of Brookline endorse the American Library Association's ***LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, THE FREEDOM TO READ ,and THE FREEDOM TO VIEW***
Copies of these statements are appended.

REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Public Library of Brookline seeks to provide information on all viewpoints on controversial subjects. It is important that information be made available to facilitate reasoned argument in a democracy. Library materials will not be removed from the collection because they are, in part or whole, objectionable to some patrons. Patrons with considered concerns are urged to fill out a **REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS** form which can be found at the end of this document and at all the libraries. The Town Librarian will review all such requests and will respond to the patron in writing.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Selection and development of the collection is the responsibility of the Town Librarian assisted by the Collection Development Librarian and the library staff in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Library Trustees.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT SOURCES

In determining which materials will be purchased, the assistance of the staff is solicited and requests by borrowers are welcomed. General and specific bibliographic aids, and many leading book reviewing periodicals as well as general magazines, newspapers and publisher's catalogs are consulted. Book reviewing periodicals consulted include but are not limited to:

AAAS-Science books and films
Booklist
Boston Globe
Horn Book
Kirkus Reviews
Kliatt Reviews
Library Journal
New York Times Book Review
Publisher's Weekly
School Library Journal
VOYA-Voice of Youth Advocates

Audio-visual reviews are culled from distributors catalogs and from:

Billboard
Downbeat
Gramophone
Opera News
Stereo Review

We also rely on published bibliographies to aid us in collection development and analysis. The most-often consulted volumes are:

Resources for College Libraries
Books for Public Libraries
Children's Catalog
Fiction Catalog
Magazines for Libraries
Monthly Catalog of Government Publications
Public Library Catalog
Readers Advisor
Specialized subject indices are consulted as appropriate.

ELECTRONIC ACCESS

Since information is increasingly available through electronic media, the library is committed to providing and supporting computers to search the Internet and electronic library resources provided by the state, Metrowest Region, Minuteman Library Network and the Brookline Library. Electronic databases are chosen to meet the interests of our patrons; to complement print resources; and to offer in-library and home access to timely, easy to search online resources. Because electronic formats are continually updated, they may replace quickly-outdated print reference materials. As with all our collections, we entertain patron suggestions for other on-line resources to offer to our patrons.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS

A collection development policy must also address collection analysis. It is important that the collection be kept current, that information be as accurate as can be ascertained and that space for new acquisitions be made available.

Collection analysis is the on-going inspection of materials to determine which items no longer serve the goals of the collection. Professional judgment is needed to determine the past usage, accuracy and importance of an item within the scope of its subject. Thorough collection analysis also requires the thoughtful consultation of general library and specific subject bibliographies (see list under SOURCES). Examination of materials also alerts staff to items that might need replacement or rebinding and subject areas that need updating.

Items that are withdrawn from the collection will be offered to the Friends of the Library for their book sale or offered to other libraries with known interests in a particular subject area. Items from the collection may not be sold directly to individuals.

The library does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn due to loss, damage or wear.

AREAS OF SERVICE

ADULT COLLECTION

Book Collection

The adult non-fiction collection is the largest collection of materials in the library. Materials are chosen to provide information in an accurate, timely and interesting manner on the widest variety of subjects and viewpoints.

The adult fiction collection provides current popular titles as well as titles that have proved to be of lasting value. Titles in popular genres of mystery, science fiction, family saga, romantic suspense, western, fantasy, horror, espionage are also provided. A collection of current popular materials are set aside for one week loan on our Speed Read shelves.

Audio-visual collection

The audio collection contains compact discs covering a wide variety of musical genres, language instruction tapes and CDs on English and many foreign languages and Books-on-Tape and Books-on-Compact Disc. Downloadable audio books supplied by Recorded Books/Netlibrary are also available.

The video and dvd collections contain feature films, television series (dvd only), music, and educational and documentaries titles on many subjects.

Reference Collection

The library maintains a continuously updated reference collection in order to provide current, accurate information on a variety of subjects. This extensive collection is made up of sources which are usually consulted, not read in their entirety, and includes dictionaries, almanacs, encyclopedias, atlases, directories and bibliographies in a variety of formats (print, microform, CD-ROM) . Because reference sources are often quite expensive and need to be available for the staff and public to consult, they do not circulate.

The library places standing orders for those publications which are regularly revised to be sure of providing the most up-to-date information possible. Items on standing order include almanacs, who's who directories, travel guides and materials which provide statistical information.

Reference materials are selected with the aid of the same bibliographic sources as are used to select other non-fiction purchases as well as some more specialized sources, including Reference Services Review, Reference Quarterly and GUIDE TO REFERENCE MATERIALS (Sheehy). Publishers catalogs and recommendations from the public and staff are also used to determine what will be purchased

Maintenance of the reference collection is an ongoing procedure. The materials in this collection are subject to regular review so that outdated and potentially inaccurate items may be removed. Items currently in the collection must meet the same standards as those being considered for purchase.

Government Documents

The Brookline Library participates in the Federal Depository Library Program as a selective depository library providing public access to a wide range of government publications. This material is selected and maintained in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Federal Depository Library Manual. The collection includes a core of titles recommended for all depositories as well as a selection of titles intended to meet the government information needs of individuals and groups in the local area. Several magazine titles are also received as part of this program.

The bibliographic aids used in selecting government documents include the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications, the List of Classes Available for selection by Depository Libraries, and depository shipping lists as well as public and staff requests. Selections are intended to cover many subject areas without excessive specialization and to satisfy the needs of our varied population. Business people, students and teachers, politicians, the elderly, and new citizens are among the groups who use our government document collection. Many titles will have the location code [GOV DOC] preceding the call number.

Newspapers

The library subscribes to Brookline and Boston area daily and weekly newspapers as well as newspapers which provide national coverage including The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and U.S.A. Today. Local Brookline papers, important as historical sources, are acquired in microform as well as paper. The paper editions of Brookline newspapers are also bound and retained. Microform editions of The New York Times, Boston Globe and Wall Street Journal are also purchased because of their importance as reference material.

In addition to microform editions, The New York Times, Boston Globe, Boston Herald, The Republican (Springfield, MA) and the Worcester Telegram and Gazette are available on-line. The library has paper indices to The New York Times (1851-1999) and the Boston Globe (1983-2001). Access is now available on-line through Newsbank.

A number of newspapers intended for particular interest groups are also part of the collection. Banker and Tradesman, Variety, Mass. Lawyers Weekly, the Jewish Advocate and a selection of foreign language newspapers are among the specialized publications which enjoy great popularity.

Paperbacks

The paperback collection provides recreational reading for adult patrons. Approximately 1/3 of the collection duplicates hardcover fiction and nonfiction holdings, with the remaining 2/3 consisting of paperback originals. The collection constantly changes as old copies wear out and are replaced with new titles. Materials are selected using reviews, bestseller lists and patron requests. A significant part of the collection is made up of gifts donated by patrons.

Periodicals

Periodicals are selected on a variety of subjects. Those appealing to a general readership are preferred over those which are very technical or specialized. While this collection includes a wide range of subjects, it cannot include every subject. The periodicals chosen provide current information and are used both for reference work and for popular reading. Most are indexed in READER'S GUIDE, and on-line through InfoTrac II and other magazine indexes.

Selections are made from public and staff requests, from advertisements and from bibliographic aids

such as "Magazines for Libraries" in Library Journal. Sample copies are frequently examined before a decision is made. The magazine collection is reviewed annually. Some subscriptions are dropped, usually because of low interest and/or circulation or because of expense, and others are added. The library attempts to respond to requests for specific titles and to the needs of groups within the town, as our subscriptions to Russian and Chinese periodicals illustrate.

Periodicals are not rejected or dropped from the collection because a single article is considered offensive by some readers. They are judged on overall quality and appeal.

SPECIALIZED COLLECTIONS

In response to patron interest, several special collections have been placed on separate shelves. New collections may be developed as patron interest changes. These collections have a shelf location as part of their call number.

Career Center The Career Center provides materials for independent job searches and career exploration. We provide reference and circulating materials on how to choose a career according to aptitude and interests; on social trends affecting career choice; how to compare salaries and benefits across occupational borders; how to get educational credentials; how to conduct job searches; how to interview and how to negotiate the job offer. Included are materials on test preparation, internship programs, careers in government and non-profit organizations, international careers, and the best companies to work for. We have a large selection of circulating books and pamphlets on individual careers. Look for [CAREER] before the call number.

Travel The library supports a collection of the most up-to-date travel guidebooks available. Travel videos and DVDs are also available for many locales. The shelf location code [TRAVEL] is placed before the call number in the computer.

Russian Language The Russian language collections at Main Library and Coolidge Corner are designed to respond to the lively interests of the Russian speaking community. The collection includes a broad selection of books with an emphasis on fiction, biography and memoirs, and political topics. DVDs and videos in Russian are also available. Popular periodicals in Russian are included.

Coolidge Corner serves a greater proportion of older readers and therefore places slightly greater emphasis on lighter, more popular reading. The collection also includes audio cassettes of popular poets and musicians and videos and DVDs of Russian films. Periodicals allow the Russian community to follow cultural interests and current events. Children's books, videos and DVDS provide new immigrants with material in their own language. The Library also seeks to support the community's expressed interest in maintaining Russian language ability and culture among their children with books, videos and dvds. [RUSSIAN] indicates materials shelved in this collection.

Pregnancy In order to make materials more easily accessible to pregnant women, books and videos dealing with all aspects of pregnancy and infant child care have been placed on the top of low book cases in the east wing at the Main Library. Look for the location code [PREGNANT] .

Large Type The Large Type Collection is designed to provide popular materials in large type to meet the recreational needs of the visually-impaired community. Fiction and nonfiction materials are duplicates of the regular print collection and are selected by review and requests from library users. In addition, the library provides user aids such as magnifiers for use in the library and at home. A small selection of periodicals in large type is provided. Look for the location code [LGTYPE] in the computer.

Basic Education The Basic Education collection includes books and audio-visual materials in three areas; English as a second language, citizenship and adult literacy. The collection contains textbooks, dictionaries, additional materials to improve vocabulary, conversation, reading comprehension and writing, and preparation materials for citizenship and TOEFL examinations. [BAS ED] appears before the call number.

Brookline Room The library recognizes its special responsibility to gather, preserve and make available material related to the history of the town of Brookline. The Library attempts to collect all town publications and material set in Brookline, written in Brookline and published in Brookline as comprehensively as possible. A collection of manuscripts related to town history is available on microfilm. Originals may be examined by appointment.

The Collection also includes books, music and recordings created by Brookline residents while living in Brookline. The Library does not include anthologies or periodical issues containing one or more writings by Brookline authors. Many of these titles are gifts but the library will purchase titles when they are identified. The designation [B.R.] appears before the call numbers.

The Brookline Photograph Collection core collection is based on a donation of historical photographs taken by Edward Wild Baker. Over the years additions have been received from the Brookline Historical Society, gifts from townspeople, town agencies and special projects. The library has been building a collection of inter-negatives of the photographs to preserve the images and to allow for photoduplication. Also, notebooks containing a photocopy and description of each photograph are available for public perusal. Access to original photographs for examination or photoduplication is arranged by appointment. The Library welcomes additions to this collection.

Cage The Cage is a locked staff-only stack area that houses historic Brookline materials in a climate-controlled room. Patrons have access to the collection by special request, but cage books do not leave the library building. [CAGE] precedes the call number.

Office [OFFICE] denotes a collection of books on library information science housed in the Reference Office for use by the staff. Patrons may request to use these titles in the library.

Stack The stack collection houses older, duplicate or little used titles. These items are housed in the basement and must be retrieved by the staff at the Information Desk. [STACK] will appear before the call number.

Fiction Genre and formats. Mystery [MYS], Science Fiction [SF], Fantasy [FAN], Short Story anthologies [SS] and graphic-format novels and nonfiction[GRAPHIC] are shelved in the Fiction Room on labeled shelves and have the genre in brackets before the author's name or the call number in the on-line catalog.

Maps Maps of the town of Brookline and its surroundings are collected by the Library. Historical maps of Brookline are collected as comprehensively as possible. Historical maps of Boston and New England have been collected on a selective basis. Current maps, including USGS quadrangle maps for New England, are also included. The Library does not actively acquire maps but will add gifts and new maps in response to public interest.

[**OVERSIZE**] books are placed on specially sized shelves. Art and music books are shelved in the Art and Music Room. Other subject areas are shelved in the corresponding room on shelves built into the brick wall.

[**LIBRETTO**] A small collection of opera libretti are shelved at the end of the music scores

Scores. A collection of music scores and songbooks are shelved in the Art & Music Room. Their call numbers are prefixed by M.

YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

The Young Adult collection is designed to bridge the gap between children's literature and adult literature by providing recreational and informational reading focusing on the interests and needs of young people in grades seven through high school. The collection includes hardcover and paperback books, graphic novels, feature films and television shows on DVD, audiobooks (books on tape, **CD**, and in digital audio formats) and magazines, all chosen by the Young Adult Librarian to appeal to ages 12 to 18. Nonfiction titles will be selected to address topics of concern to this particular age group. While topics studied in local schools will be supported, due to budget restraints we cannot meet the curricular needs of every student. Due to the wide range of sophistication and maturity levels of this group, varied reading and interest levels will be addressed within the collection. Suggestions for purchase by Young Adults are welcomed and play a significant role in purchasing decisions.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Public Library of Brookline believes that the ability to read for instruction and enjoyment is vital to the development of human potential. Therefore, it is especially important to provide children with all the materials necessary for their intellectual and personal growth. The Library will provide materials of the highest quality available that will appeal to the interests of all the children of Brookline.

The three children's rooms of the Public Library of Brookline serve children from birth through age 12, parents, teachers, day-care and after-school workers, and adult students in library information science, teaching and other children's literature programs.

COLLECTION

The children's collection is composed of board and picture books, beginning readers, fiction and nonfiction titles, paperbacks, and books in foreign languages. Non-book materials include a periodical collection, audio cassettes, videos, DVDs, and books on tape and compact disc. Materials of professional interest, selected adult titles of interest to parents, and an extensive Reference section complete the children's holdings.

A wide variety of periodicals reviewing children's books are consulted during the selection process. Non-fiction titles are selected from published reviews. The children's staff seeks more than one source for a given title in order to achieve a balanced evaluation. Each fiction and picture book is read and review by a member of the staff, or more than one if there is a difference of opinion about the book.

All children's services staff participate in a book selection committee that meets biweekly, at which time new books are evaluated and purchased. Suggestions from patrons are welcomed and are processed immediately.

ELECTRONIC ACCESS

Since information is increasingly available through electronic media, the library is committed to providing and supporting computers to search the Internet and electronic library resources provided by the state, Metrowest Region, Minuteman Library Network and the Brookline Library. Electronic databases are chosen to meet the interests of our patrons; to complement print resources; and to offer in-library and home access to timely, easy to search online resources. Because electronic formats are continually updated, they may replace quickly-outdated print reference materials.

BRANCH SERVICES

The same criteria used to select Main Library materials are used to select materials for the branch libraries. The Coolidge Corner and Putterham branches rely on the Main Library and MLN members for greater scope and depth in subject matter, more scholarly and esoteric sources, and backfiles as well as more extensive duplication of essential and popular titles. The Branch libraries are not limited to material purchased by the Main Library. Each develops its collection in response to the needs and interests of the surrounding community.

Ongoing maintenance of the collection is especially important in a Branch Library. Careful, regular and systematic collection analysis is as important as acquisitions of new materials and periodic evaluation of the collection in relation to changing communities needs as a necessity.

Coolidge Corner

Coolidge Corner seeks to provide materials that meet the needs of an urban neighborhood, characterized by significant populations of elderly, children and readers for whom English is a second language. Russian and Chinese communities require material in these languages as well as resources for learning English.

Responding to this profile, the Coolidge Corner collection emphasizes popular and current fiction, current non-fiction on a wide variety of topics, a selection of popular and local interest periodicals that circulate as well as newspapers for in-house reading. The Reference collection allows librarians and patrons to research concerns such as consumer or medical questions. The Branch acts as a gateway to the larger collection of Main Library and electronically accessible resources. The Branch seeks to develop collections of large print, young adult, children's and audio-visual materials. The Audio-visual collection consists of CDs, Books-on-Tape/CD and feature film and educational videos and DVDs. In addition to Chinese and Russian language materials there is a section of Spanish language books in the Children's Room. The branch is developing a collection of Hebrew fiction books and feature films.

The Chinese Collection is located at the Coolidge Corner Branch Library. Materials are selected by a Chinese speaking staff member. The collection consists of books, periodicals, DVDs, VCDs and CDs of interest to the Chinese community. There is an emphasis on fiction, biography, English as a second language, and "how to" books on subjects like cooking and martial arts. Periodicals cover a wide range including news, literature and popular culture. Recordings reflect the communities cultural interests from popular singers to classical and folk music. DVDs and VCDs are selected for enrichment and entertainment. The Library continues to add material in response to the community's changing interests and to keep the collection current.

Putterham Branch

The selection of Putterham Branch Library's collection is governed by the profile and use patterns of its community, which has been identified as primarily senior citizens and young families. The Putterham Branch collection provides access to circulating materials in a variety of formats, concentrating on popular fiction, non-fiction about subjects of current interest and basic research materials. To meet the more specific needs of our patrons, we offer, in addition to our adult, young adult and children's books: a Speed Read collection, popular magazines, books on cd and tape, dvds videos, cds, travel books and dvds, oversize paperbacks, large print books, children's dvds and video collection, children's books on cd and books on tape, children's cds, and children's magazines.

**PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BROOKLINE
CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL**

AUTHOR

TITLE

FORMAT (book, magazine, recording, other)

What is it about this material that you object to? Please be specific (cite pages, for example) .

What are your concerns about this material?

Do you see anything good about this material?

Have you read the entire book, seen the entire film, listened to the complete recording?

Are you aware of the critical opinion (published reviews, for example) of this material?

What other materials of quality or relevance on this subject would you recommend?

Have you read the library's materials selection policy?

Do you think that the selection of this material is in accordance with this policy?

Do you believe that anyone has the right to tell you and your family what materials you should be able to read/view/listen to? If so, why? If not, why not?

What do you suggest the library do about this matter?

Do you represent a group? If yes, what group?

Your name

Address

Phone number

Email

Voted by the Library Board of Trustees November 10, 1987

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 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think

critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous;

but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004

Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the [First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States](#). In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council