

Oskaloosa Public Library  
Policy:

Collection Development  
& Materials Selection

Adopted: May 24, 1998

Last Revision: January 2006

### Responsibility for Selection

The Board of Trustees has final responsibility for selection of materials for the library. The Board delegates responsibility for selection to the Library Director, and other selectors as designated by the Director, who operate within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees and by the Principles for Selection listed below. Recommendations from staff members and requests from library patrons are welcomed and given serious consideration.

### Principles for Selection

1. The Library's mission statement and chosen roles for service. (The current primary roles are Popular Materials Center and Youth Services. The current secondary roles are Reference Library and Community Activities/Information Center).
2. Contemporary significance or permanent value.
3. Accuracy of information presented.
4. Significance of author, illustrator, publisher or issuing body.
5. Popular demand--this is considered an important factor in materials selection, particularly concerning books on bestseller lists for which there is persistent local demand.
6. Reviews found in professional, literary, specialized and general periodicals are used as a basis for evaluation because it is not possible for the library staff to review personally the large number of materials published.
7. Relationship of the work to the existing collection.
8. Scarcity of information in the subject area.
9. Availability of material elsewhere in the community - selectors may choose not to acquire materials that are available in other local collections in special, academic, or school libraries to which our patrons have access.
10. Textbooks are usually not acquired, except in subject areas where material in another form is not available.
11. Technical characteristics of the format such as binding and paper quality, and suitability of the format for library use.
12. Cost to acquire and/or maintain the material.
13. The basic principles set forth in the American Library Association's publications, *Free to Read Statement* and the *Library's Bill of Rights*, shall be maintained.

## Specific Types of Materials

### Adult Fiction

The collection emphasizes contemporary fiction and includes classical and semi-classical novels of the past. Multiple copies are purchased as needed.

### Nonfiction Materials

The usual criteria of authority, scope, currency, and overall quality shall be applied to most

acquisitions for children's, adult, large print, and reference collections.

#### Young Adult (YA) Fiction

This collection emphasizes contemporary fiction at reading levels ranging from approximately sixth grade to twelfth grade. Due to the short-lived popularity of many titles, and young adults' preference for the format, paperbacks are frequently purchased.

#### Large Print Fiction

This collection offers a wide variety of mystery, romance, western, and drama books in the large print format. Soft cover titles are purchased when possible because of their lighter weight.

#### Paperbacks

A popular format, paperbacks are acquired to provide duplicate copies of highly popular titles, and to provide a greater scope of authors. All paperbacks will be catalogued into the suitable classification and shelved among the hardcover books.

#### Periodicals

Magazines are purchased to keep the library's collection up to date on current topics in various fields, to provide recreational reading, and to provide the staff with selection aids and professional reading.

#### Newspapers

The Library subscribes to a selection of local, state, and national newspapers.

#### Microforms

For reference purposes, back issues of the *Oskaloosa Herald* and selected census records are available on microfilm and/or CD-ROM.

#### Subscription Databases

The Library subscribes to a variety of databases, several of which are available for home use. The OPL@Home manual is available free of charge and explains the use of these databases from home.

#### Audiovisual

The Library purchases kits, videocassettes, DVDs, books on CD and audiocassette, and compact discs for circulation. Professional reviews and bestseller lists are consulted in evaluating new materials for these collections. To further expand the selection, the library may lease collections and/or subscribe to regional library rotating collections.

#### Multimedia

Currently the library purchases multimedia materials primarily for use on in-house computers only. (An exception is the occasional CD-ROM that accompanies a book). Multimedia titles are selected based on reviews in professional or general periodicals or their appearance on "recommended lists." Titles are selected for various age levels, and generally serve an educational or informational purpose.

#### Children's Materials

The library acquires print and audiovisual materials with reading and comprehension levels ranging from infancy through the upper elementary grades. Materials cover all areas of the library's mission statement: education, recreation, information, and personal enrichment.

#### Iowa and Local History Materials

The Library includes a variety of historical books about Iowa history and local history within the nonfiction and reference collections.

### Genealogy Collection

The library maintains a separate Genealogy collection consisting of genealogy methodology, local history, local cemetery records, census records, and family histories for reference use in the library. More general genealogy sources are located in the library's nonfiction section.

## Use of Library Materials

The Library welcomes comments and criticisms of its collections. However, no citizen in a democracy has the right to prevent another from accessing any specific material by demanding its removal from the library and, aside from pornography, there should be no item that is absolutely inappropriate for a public library. This Board declares as a matter of firm principle that no challenged library material shall be removed from this library under any putative legal or extra-legal pressure, save after an independent determination by a judicial officer in a court of competent jurisdiction and only after an adversary hearing, in accordance with well-established principles of law.

The responsibility for library use by children rests with the parents or legal guardian. Selection of materials for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate.

## Gifts

Gifts are accepted by the Oskaloosa Public Library with the understanding that if they are not suitable for inclusion in the Library's collection, they will be disposed of in any way the Library sees fit. (See also the Library's policy "Gifts".)

## Maintaining the Collection

In order to maintain the collection in its most useful and attractive condition, the selectors will use normal professional criteria (listed below in "Withdrawal of Library Materials") in removing materials that are no longer useful, or are in a condition not suitable for circulation. Materials that are deteriorating may be repaired or rebound. Material no longer useful to the Library will be disposed of.

The weeding of the library's collection is actually materials selection in reverse. Weeding is a thorough and conscientious effort to achieve a well-balanced, up-to-date collection suitable to the clientele served. Weeding should be a continuous, consistent process. Items to consider in weeding are:

1. Material in poor condition.
2. Inaccurate or outdated material, and material on subject matter no longer of current interest.
3. Material that has not circulated in a reasonable amount of time. The amount of time will vary with specific material types. The guidelines below are used:

### Reference

Weed by subject, replace encyclopedias at least once every five years (more often if possible), and replace yearbooks, statistical guides, and almanacs annually.

### Religion, Philosophy, & Psychology

Keep basic information on religions and philosophy and the work of major writers. Discard secondary information based on use or which deal with subjects no longer of interest to the community. Keep a basic collection of books on standard psychological theories and the work of major writers. Discard self-help psychology books that are no longer popular.

### Social Sciences, Education, & Folklore

Weed frequently, particularly economics books, which date quickly. Keep historical works but weed contemporary works that have been updated. Weed education materials in areas where techniques and ideas have changed. Keep basic material in folklore.

### Languages

Keep dictionaries and replace old grammars. Weed based on use.

### Pure Science

Replace at least every three to five years except botany and natural history, which have a longer life. Pick up new trends in science by reading reviews in specialized periodicals.

### Applied Science, Health, Medicine, Cooking, Gardening, & Business

Much of this area dates rapidly. Much of the applied science material, health and medicine may be out of date in less than five years. However, older appliance and equipment manuals may be of use to community residents. Weed cookbooks and gardening books, because a fresh new section is much more appealing. Keep current works on business and weed older ones based on use. Be particularly careful in the areas of finance, investment, and taxation.

### Art, Music, & Hobbies

Weed based on use. Older material is valuable in subject areas.

### Literature

Keep plays, poetry, etc. unless written by little-known writers no longer read. Discard literary history that has been updated and works about minor writers.

### History & Travel

Keep the classics on various periods of history; discard memoirs and personal accounts no longer read, discard persona travel accounts if dated and unread and older editions of guidebooks.

### Biographies

Weed biographies of people no longer of interest.

### Fiction

Use standard lists as a basis for weeding. Discard duplicate copies of bestsellers no longer being read.

Items withdrawn may be offered to another library, but most often are sold in the library by the Friends of the Library. Materials in poor condition may be thrown away.

## Requests for Material Reconsideration

Concerns or complaints about library materials should be directed to the Library Director. If the concern is not resolved through discussion with the Director, the complainant will be offered the

"Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form. Upon receipt of the completed reconsideration form, the following procedures will be followed:

Reevaluation requests

If the request is for reevaluation (not removal) of an item, the Library Director will conduct an internal review of the book or item, along with other staff the Director deems appropriate.

Reevaluation will be made in terms of whether the material meets the Library's overall selection criteria.

The Library Board will be informed of the process and decision of the reevaluation.

After the Library Board has been informed of the reevaluation decision, a letter will be sent to the patron informing him/her of the decision.

Removal requests

If the request is to withdraw the material from the collection, a review committee will be appointed by the Library Board President and shall include the Library Director, one other library staff member, and two Library Board members.

The recommendation of this committee shall come before the entire Library Board at the next regular meeting and shall be passed or reversed by a vote of those members present.

A letter will be sent to the patron informing him/her of the Library Board's decision.

The Oskaloosa Library Board adheres to the principles contained in the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Freedom to Read and View* statements, and has appended these documents to relevant library policies. In considering a complaint or request for reevaluation, the Library may seek support from other groups who support intellectual freedom, such as the local media, the Iowa Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee, and the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom.

# 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 that 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.  
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,  
by the ALA Council.

# 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens 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 citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

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 need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

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 or unpopular with 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 with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 the citizen. 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.*

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.

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 citizens 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.

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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; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

## 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 guarantees 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.

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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 by the ALA Council January 10, 1990.