

Queerbrarians Summer Reading Challenge: Banned Books Edition

For this year's challenge we're going to read books that have been banned or challenged in the USA. PEN America began documenting cases of book bans in the school year of 2021/22 and has been publishing the lists of books on their website ever since. All books that are mentioned on one or more of these lists and fit one or more of the categories of our Bingo chart are valid for our reading challenge. The categories may be applied to either the content or the author of the book.

Books that fit more than one category should be counted only once.

PEN-Lists of the school years

2021/22: <https://pen.org/book-bans/banned-book-list-2021-2022/>

2022/23: <https://pen.org/book-bans/2023-banned-book-list/>

2023/24: <https://pen.org/book-bans/pen-america-index-of-school-book-bans-2023-2024/>

Note: At the end of each page you can open and download the list as a Google Spreadsheet by clicking on "Download the Index".

"If you want to know where we are as a country, if you want to know what conversations are bubbling or where our disputes are, where we are at odds, look at the banned books list." (Jason Reynolds)

All categories and a selection of fitting books are listed below. To research potential trigger warnings we recommend <https://app.thestorygraph.com/> or <https://booktriggerwarnings.com>. Only the first title of a banned or challenged series is listed except for one series whose books fall into different categories.

For books that have been translated into English, the original title is given in parentheses.

Aromantic / Asexual

Claire Kann: Let's Talk About Love

Mackenzi Lee: The Lady's Guide to Petticoats and Piracy

Claire Legrand: Sawkill Girls

Alice Oseman: Loveless

Alice Oseman: Radio Silence

(Auto)biography / Diary

Anne Frank: Diaries (Het Achterhuis)

Tegan & Sara Quin: High School

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BIPOC

Elizabeth Acevedo: The Poet X
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Half of a Yellow Sun
Sherman Alexie: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
James Baldwin: Go Tell It on the Mountain
Kalynn Bayron: Cinderella is Dead
Kalynn Bayron: This Poison Heart
Kacen Callender: Hurricane Child
Dhonielle Clayton (Ed.): Blackout
Bernardine Evaristo: Girl, Woman, Other
Yaa Gyasi: Homegoing
Adiba Jaigirdar: Hani and Ishu's Guide to Fake Dating
Claire Kann: Let's Talk About Love
Toni Morrison: Beloved
Toni Morrison: The Bluest Eye
Toni Morrison: Sula
Erika L. Sánchez: I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter
Sapphire: Push (re-issued as Precious)
Angie Thomas: The Hate U Give
Alice Walker: The Color Purple
Colson Whitehead: The Underground Railroad

Bisexual

Greg Baldino: Everything You Need to Know About Bisexuality
Erik J. Brown: All That's Left in the World
Claire Legrand: Sawkill Girls
Casey McQuiston: Red, White, and Royal Blue
Isabel Sterling: The Coldest Touch

Children's Book

Alex Gino: Melissa
Liz Kessler: Emily Windsnap and the Pirate Prince
Justin Richardson et al.: And Tango Makes Three

Classics

English:
Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale
Margaret Atwood: Oryx and Crake
Charles Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities
Charles Dickens: David Copperfield

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Daphne DuMaurier: Rebecca
William Faulkner: As I Lay Dying
William Faulkner: Big Woods: The Hunting Stories
William Golding: Lord of the Flies
Ernest Hemingway: For Whom The Bell Tolls
Ernest Hemingway: In Our Time
Ernest Hemingway: The Sun Also Rises
Aldous Huxley: Brave New World
James Joyce: Ulysses
Harper Lee: To Kill a Mockingbird
Armistead Maupin: Tales of the City
George Orwell: 1984
William Shakespeare: Hamlet
William Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice
William Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew
William Shakespeare: Romeo & Julia
Bram Stoker: Dracula
Oscar Wilde: The Picture of Dorian Gray

French:

Alexandre Dumas: The Three Musketeers (Les trois mousquetaires)
Alexandre Dumas: The Man in the Iron Mask (Le Vicomte de Bragelonne)
Albert Camus: The Stranger (L'Étranger)
Gustave Flaubert: Madame Bovary (Madame Bovary)

German:

Hermann Hesse: Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth (Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend)
Hermann Hesse: Siddhartha (Siddhartha: Eine indische Dichtung)

Latin/Ancient Greek:

Aischylos: Prometheus Bound (Προμηθεύς Δεσμώτης)
Aristophanes: The Frogs (Βάτραχοι)
Aristophanes: Lysistrata (Λυσιστράτη)
Aristophanes: The Birds (Ὀρνίθεις)
Aristophanes: The Clouds (Νεφέλαι)
Ovid: Ars Amatoria or The Art of Love (Ars Amatoria)
Ovid: Metamorphoses (Metamorphoseon)

Crime / Thriller

Patricia Cornwell: Postmortem
Holly Jackson: A Good Girl's Guide to Murder
Rebecca James: Beautiful Malice
Stephen King: the majority of his work
Stieg Larsson: The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (Män som hatar kvinnor)
Claire Legrand: Sawkill Girls

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Disability

Leigh Bardugo: Six of Crows
Kay O'Neill: The Tea Dragon Society
R.J. Palacio: Wonder
Jodi Picoult: Handle With Care
Rick Riordan: The Lost Hero
A.J. Sass: Ellen Outside the Lines

Drama

William Shakespeare: Hamlet
William Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice
William Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew
William Shakespeare: Romeo & Julia

Fantasy

Kalynn Bayron: Cinderella is Dead
Kalynn Bayron: This Poison Heart
Octavia E. Butler: Kindred
Katrina Leno: Summer of Salt
George R.R. Martin: A Game of Thrones
Isabel Sterling: The Coldest Touch
J.R.R. Tolkien: The Fellowship of the Ring
J.R.R. Tolkien: The Hobbit

Friendship

Alice Oseman: Loveless
Maggie Stiefvater: The Raven Boys

Gay

André Aciman: Call Me By Your Name
John Green: Will Grayson, Will Grayson
Mackenzi Lee: The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue
David Levithan: Two Boys Kissing
Armistead Maupin: Tales of the City
Casey McQuiston: Red, White and Royal Blue
Madeline Miller: The Song of Achilles
Benjamin Alire Saenz: Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe

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Graphic Novel

Laurie Halse Anderson: Speak: The Graphic Novel
Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale: The Graphic Novel
Alison Bechdel: Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic
Maia Kobabe: Gender Queer: A Memoir
Alan Moore: V for Vendetta
K. O'Neill: The Tea Dragon Society
Alice Oseman: Heartstopper

Historical Fiction

Octavia E. Butler: Kindred
Thomas Keneally: Schindler's List
Mackenzi Lee: The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue
Malinda Lo: Last Night at the Telegraph Club
Kurt Vonnegut Jr.: Slaughterhouse-Five

Intersex

Jeffrey Eugenides: Middlesex
I. W. Gregorio: None of the Above

Lesbian

Kalynn Bayron: Cinderella is Dead
Kalynn Bayron: This Poison Heart
Kacen Callender: Hurricane Child
Adiba Jaigirdar: Hani and Ishu's Guide to Fake Dating
A.S. King: Ask the Passengers
Katrina Leno: Summer of Salt
Jodi Picoult - Sing you Home

Mental Health

Anonymous: Go Ask Alice
Jay Asher: 13 Reasons Why
Stephen Chbosky: The Perks of Being A Wallflower
John Green: Turtles All The Way Down
Jennifer Niven: All The Bright Places
Mark Oshiro: Anger Is a Gift
Jodi Picoult: Handle with Care

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Nonfiction

Kathy Belge et al: Queer: The Ultimate LGBTQ Guide for Teens

Juno Dawson: This Book Is Gay

Laura Erickson-Schroth: Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource By and for Transgender Communities

Tiffany Jewell: This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work

Novel

Jonathan Safran Foer: Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close

Sara Gruen: Water for the Elephants

Khaled Hosseini: The Kite Runner

Jack Kerouac: On the Road

David Mitchell: Cloud Atlas

Jodi Picoult: Nineteen Minutes

Queer

Bernardine Evaristo: Girl, Woman, Other

Claire Legrand: Sawkill Girls

Isabel Sterling: The Coldest Touch

Queer-Feminism

Pénélope Bagieu: Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World (Culottées - Intégrale: Des femmes qui ne font que ce qu'elles veulent)

Kalynn Bayron: Cinderella is Dead

Bernardine Evaristo: Girl, Woman, Other

Audre Lorde: Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches

Science Fiction / Dystopia

Douglas Adams: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale

Octavia E. Butler: Kindred

Kiera Cass: Selection Reihe

Ernest Cline: Ready Player One

Dave Eggers: The Circle

Aldous Huxley: Brave New World

George Orwell: 1984

Susan Beth Pfeffer: Life As We Knew It

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Veronica Roth: Divergent

Trans / Nonbinary

Kacen Callender: Felix ever After

Laura Erickson-Schroth: Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource By and for Transgender Communities

Alex Gino: Melissa

Jazz Jennings: Being Jazz: My Life as a (transgender) Teen

Susan Kuklin: Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out

Young Adult

Laurie Halse Anderson: Speak

Jessie Burton: Medusa

Kacen Callender: Hurricane Child

Stephen Chbosky: The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Cassandra Clare: City Of Bones

Cassandra Clare: Clockwork Angel

Adiba Jaigirdar: Hani and Ishu's Guide to Fake Dating

A.S. King: Ask the Passengers

Mackenzi Lee: The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue

Katrina Leno: Summer of Salt

David Levithan and Rachel Cohn: Dash & Lily's Book of Dares

Patricia McCormick: Sold

Rainbow Rowell: Eleanor & Park

Angie Thomas: The Hate U Give