

Book Ban – The Rise of Prejudice (C1)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you know of any books that have been censored or banned in your country?
2. If so, do you know why they were censored or banned?
3. Do you think people should be free to read whatever they like? Why (not)?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and choose the correct answer.

1. The censoring, banning or challenging of books is a common practice in
a) authoritarian regimes. b) democratic societies. c) both of these.
2. The article states that nowadays the majority of challenges are made against books
a) on religious subjects. b) expressing racist views. c) by or for minority communities.
3. The American Library Association has seen a sharp increase in the number of
a) requests to censor library books. b) library books censored. c) library books banned.
4. Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada says the protests against certain books are organised by
a) large heterogeneous groups of readers. b) small groups of people with strong opinions.
c) minority communities.
5. A survey by the American Library Association in 2022 found that 71 per cent of voters thought
a) no books should be censored. b) library books should not be challenged.
c) libraries should limit people's access to certain books.
6. At Pelayo-Lozada's library, a person who is displeased with a book, a display or a program
a) can meet with a librarian. b) can fill out a form. c) can do both.
7. Pelayo-Lozada says libraries are being attacked now because they
a) give people access to critical thinking. b) are not trusted. c) are engaged in culture wars.
8. She feels that book bans are especially damaging for
a) authors. b) children c) schools.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What kinds of books were burnt in Germany in the 1930s? Who by?
2. Which classic American novel has been accused of being "racially insensitive"?
3. What examples does the article give of communities whose books are now the most targeted?
4. How do last year's figures for challenges to library books compare to the previous year's?
5. What is the ALA doing to counter this?
6. How do libraries decide whether a complaint against a book is valid?
7. What is the purpose of libraries, according to Pelayo-Lozada?
8. How do book bans limit children's ability to develop empathy?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. Let the children play ball in the garden. They won't do any _____.
2. Julie has strong opinions about animal rights and she's very _____ about them.
3. In order to become a member of the association, I _____ _____ the forms on its website.
4. Tom found going to the gym regularly gave him a feeling of _____.
5. In this news programme, journalists discuss the various _____ _____ of the week.
6. We asked the shop for a refund but our request was refused _____.

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 1)

Read the text and decide which word in brackets best fits each gap.

The burning of books has ¹_____ (*long/since/never/much*) been a tool used by both religious and secular authorities to suppress heretical or dissenting opinions thought to pose a ²_____ (*question/issue/threat/fault*) to the prevailing order. One of the earliest instances occurred in China in 213 BCE, when Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered not only the burning of books ³_____ (*and/besides/despite/but*) also the burying of scholars.

The most notorious book burning in recent history ⁴_____ (*had/took/brought/carried*) place in Germany on 10th May 1933. Over 25,000 books went ⁵_____ (*out/over/up/down*) in flames, watched by students giving the Nazi salute, in university towns all ⁶_____ (*in/over/throughout/along*) Germany. Works by George Orwell, Franz Kafka, Ernest Hemingway and Albert Einstein were among those destroyed, ⁷_____ (*as/also/like/including*) were the writings of German poet Heinrich Heine, who in 1821 had written prophetically: "where they burn books, they will ⁸_____ (*at the end/lastly/ultimately/at last*) burn people as well".

F – Talk about it

In pairs or groups.

1. Can you think of any classic books with content that might today be considered harmful or offensive? If so, what do you think should be done about it? (e.g. Remove or change the content? Add a warning or explanation to readers? Nothing?)
2. Do you think there are any circumstances in which a book should be banned? If so, what are they, in your opinion?

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. c 2. c 3. a 4. b 5. b 6. c 7. a 8. b

C – Read and answer

1. They were books viewed as being subversive or as representing ideologies opposed to Nazism and they were burnt by university students. 2. Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

3. The LGBTQIA+ and the Black or Indigenous communities. 4. Last year's figures are almost double those of the previous year. 5. It is helping to promote the annual Banned Books Week and the national campaign Unite Against Book Bans. 6. They form a committee to review the book.

7. She says they provide access to information for everyone, regardless of an individual's point of view and regardless of their background. 8. They prevent children from seeing themselves in stories and limit their ability to understand the ways that other people live their lives.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. harm 2. vocal 3. filled out 4. wellbeing 5. hot topics 6. outright

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. long 2. threat 3. but 4. took 5. up 6. over 7. as 8. ultimately