



March 15, 2023 Webinar Resource List: “Preparing for Challenges to Comics and Graphic Novels: What to do when you get one”

Thank you for joining us in our continuing three part GNCRT #LibcomixOnline webinar series: “Be Prepared! What to do when a comics challenge comes.” [Our panel on Mar 15th](#) shared their strategies for managing DURING the comics challenge process - including advice on challenge procedures, what they learned, and why this visual format continues to be challenged.

Speakers

- **Ziba Pérez** Public Librarian, zine creator, and L.A. Zine Fest 2023 organizer in the city of Los Angeles
- **Kelly Jensen** Editor at Book Riot
- **Dawn Zimmerer** Adult & Youth Services Director at Madison County Library System in Mississippi
- **Eti Berland** (moderator) Youth Services School Engagement Librarian at the Wilmette Public Library and GNCRT Addressing Comic Book Challenges Committee member

Outline of Resources

- [GNCRT](#) Resources
- [ALA](#) Resources
- Specific Resources Discussed in this webinar:
 - [Collection Development & Visual Literacy](#) - Building (and Defending) your Comics Collections
 - [Comics Censorship](#)
 - [Community Partners](#)
 - [Preparing for Materials Challenges](#)
 - [Responding to Complaints & Challenges](#) - Materials Challenge Talking Points
 - [Safety, Planning, and Policy Resources](#) - including upcoming Trainings
 - [Shadow Bans / Soft Censorship](#)
 - [Zine Resources](#)

Are you experiencing a ban or challenge? Please report all bans or challenges to ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report>

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THE GNCRT GUIDE TO ADDRESSING COMIC BOOK BANS, CENSORSHIP, AND CHALLENGES IN LIBRARIES



GNCRT Resources:

- GNCRT Addressing Comics Challenges Committee Homepage
www.ala.org/rt/gncrt/preparing-and-addressing-challenges-comics-library-committee
- GNCRT Addressing Challenges Webinar #1: What to do BEFORE a challenge:
www.ala.org/rt/gncrt/libcomix-online
- GNCRT Be Prepared! [What to do when a challenges comes checklist & background](#)

ALA Resources:

- Merritt Fund - Supporting Library Workers Defending Intellectual Freedom :
<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/affiliates/relatedgroups/merrittfund/merritthumanitarianapplication>
- Office of Intellectual Freedom Challenge Support:
<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport>
- Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries
<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit>
- Unite Against Book Bans: <https://Uniteagainstbookbans.org>

Collection Development - Building (and Defending) your Comics Collections

- [“But that’s not a real book!” – Why Your Collections Should Include Graphic Novels](#) by Jenna Grodzicki (Knowledge Quest) (January 3, 2017)
- [Comic Book Legal Defense Fund Educator Resources](#)
- [Comics Research & Rationale](#) (Reading with Pictures) - discusses visual literacy
- [Graphic Novels are Real Books \(Capstone\)](#)
- [Let Your Child Read Graphic Novels by Nidhi Chanani](#) *Parenting* (December 22, 2022)
- *Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors* by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop
<https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>
- Rainbow List <https://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks>
- [Raising a Reader! How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!](#) By Dr. Meryl Jaffe (CBLDF)
- [Teaching with Comics and Graphic Novels: Fun and Engaging Strategies to Improve Close Reading and Critical Thinking in Every Classroom](#) by Tim Smyth
- [Why Comics?](#) (Reading with Pictures) - discusses critical visual inquiry and comics

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Comics Censorship

- Examples of how censorship is appearing in reviews of graphic novels:
<https://www.ratedbooks.org/product-page/juliet-takes-a-breath-a-graphic-novel-by-gabby-rivera> / <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nI9KLfDjvAQtmHZZoPpTkYGF2lvXBcDS/view>
- GNCRT "Addressing Challenges to Comics in Libraries" article in Booklist:
<https://www.booklistonline.com/Trade-Secrets-Addressing-Challenges-to-Comics-in-Libraries/pid=9759853>
- "Here are the Comics Moms for Liberty and Other Book Banners Call Inappropriate and Why" by Kelly Jensen (Mar 1, 2023)
<https://bookriot.com/comics-moms-for-liberty-call-inappropriate>
- "Most Challenged Comics and Most Banned Comics Since 2000" by Kelly Jensen (Aug 22, 2022): <https://bookriot.com/most-banned-comics-since-2000>
- Washington Post's Variant Cover with Chris Vazquez Tik Tok on Comics Censorship:
<https://www.tiktok.com/@washingtonpost/video/7200442255088438570>

Community Partners

- ACLU: www.aclu.org/news/topic/defend-your-right-to-learn-join-in-the-fight-against-classroom-censorship
- Advocacy Alliance Brainstorming Tool (make a copy of Google Doc)
<https://tinyurl.com/AdvocacyAllianceBrainstorming>
- Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF) <https://cbldf.org>
- Every Library's Fight for the First <https://www.fightforthefirst.org/>
- National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC)
<https://ncac.org/resource/book-censorship-toolkit>
- Pen America: <https://pen.org/report/banned-usa-growing-movement-to-censor-books-in-schools>

Preparing for Materials Challenges

- As Bills in Multiple States Threaten Librarians with Criminalization, Advocates Are Fighting Back by Kara Yorio (School Library Journal)
<https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/story/As-Bills-in-Multiple-States-Threaten-Librarians-with-Criminalization-Advocates-Are-Fighting-Back>
- Book Censorship Database by Dr. Tasslyn Magnusson
https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/book_censorship_database_magnusson
- Challenge Form Template  Book Challenge Form Template
- Conservatives Are Trying to Ban Books in Your Town. Librarians Are Fighting Back by Melissa Gira Grant *New Republic* (March 16, 2023)
<https://newrepublic.com/article/170920/conservative-book-bans-libraries-fighting-back>

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- Ella Scott's Banned Book Club: How Students Are Fighting Back In The War Over Censorship and Ideas <https://studentcam2023.us.launchpad6.com/fanfavorite/entry/8>
- Get Ready, Stay Ready Toolkit <https://www.getreadystayready.info>
- How to Fight Book Bans and Censorship (ebook) by Book Riot <https://www.amazon.com/How-Fight-Book-Bans-Censorship-ebook/dp/B0BT8L8YL3>
- How to Update Challenge Forms (from Book Riot) <https://bookriot.com/book-censorship-news-may-6-2022/>
- How to Update Your Book Challenge Forms (With Template) by Kelly Jensen (May 6, 2022) <https://bookriot.com/book-censorship-news-may-6-2022/>
- Illinois Heartland Library System Book Challenge guide: <https://www.illinoisheartland.org/issues/book-challenges>
- Joint-Publisher Resources List for Frequently Challenged Books https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?crl_id=173954
- Most Voters Oppose Book Bans: <https://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2022/03/large-majorities-voters-oppose-book-bans-and-have-confidence-libraries>
- School Librarian Martha Hickson's Challenge of Challenges: Get ready: <https://libguides.nhvweb.net/c.php?q=1035323&p=7505168>
- Support Teachers CRT Toolkit: <https://crttoolkit.com>

Responding to Complaints & Challenges - Materials Challenge Talking Points

- [Materials Challenge Talking Points](#) - Madison County Library System (Mississippi)
- Suggested use of this Resource is to keep copies of Talking Points at every public service point including Circulation and Reference Desks
- Our great thanks to the Madison County Library System for sharing this resource

Safety, Planning, & Policy Resources

- A Few Coping Strategies for Challenging Times (Knowledge Quest) (January 30, 2023) <https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/a-few-coping-strategies-for-challenging-times>
- Pride Month at your Library (ALSC Blog) <https://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2022/05/pride-month-at-your-library/>
- Tip Sheet for Librarians Facing Harassment (Pen America) <https://pen.org/librarian-tip-sheet-harassment/>
- Urban Libraries Unite (ULU) Drag Story Hour Planning and Safety Support Guide: <https://urbanlibrariansunite.org/drag-story-hour-planning-and-safety-support-guide/>
- Upcoming Trainings:

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THE GNCRT GUIDE TO ADDRESSING COMIC BOOK BANS, CENSORSHIP, AND CHALLENGES IN LIBRARIES



- [Book Bans: Proactively Addressing Challenges to Your Comics Collection](#) (Library Pass Webinar)
- [De-Escalation: A Crucial Tool in Libraries for Promoting Intellectual Freedom](#) (Webinar)
- [GNCRT: Preparing for Books Bans and Challenges](#): AFTER a challenge with Trung Le Nguyen, *Magic Fish* (May 17, 2023)
- [Under Scrutiny: Helping Staff Feel Safe and Empowered in the Face of Book Challenges](#) w/ Darcy Lipp-Acord (YALSA, AASL, PLA, ALSC Webinar) (April 11, 2023)

Shadow Bans/Soft Censorship

- Censorship Attempts Will Have a Long-lasting Impact on School Library Collections, SLJ Survey Shows
<https://www.slj.com/story/censorship-attempts-will-have-a-long-lasting-impact-on-school-library-collections-slj-survey-shows>

Zine Resources

- Los Angeles Public Library Zine Collection Policy: <https://lapl.org/zines/policy>
- Zines in Libraries: Selecting, Purchasing, and Processing by Lauren DeVoe & Sara Duff
- <https://www.alastore.ala.org/zines>
- Zine Libraries: collection policy primer:
<https://www.zinelibraries.info/running-a-zine-library/collection-policy-primer/>
- Zine Librarians unConferences Aug 4-6, 2023:
<https://www.zinelibraries.info/events/zine-librarian-unconferences/>
- ZLUC 2023 San Francisco <https://www.zinelibraries.info/wiki/zluc-2023-san-francisco/>



A record number of book challenges were recorded in 2021-2022 - including award winning graphic novels *New Kid*, *Gender Queer*, and *Maus*. Historically book challenges have focused on three areas: children's or YA titles, titles with "diverse content," and titles / formats that have previously been challenged. And, year over year, and especially these past few years, comics and graphic novels have been one of the most challenged formats. But why?

- **Accessibility:** A strength of comics and graphic novels is their ability to, in a single panel, share a multitude of information and emotional resonance with their readers. This makes them powerful, accessible, and, when taken out of context, easily misunderstood.
- **Misunderstanding the medium:** For a variety of reasons, misperceptions persist around comic books and graphic novels, two of the largest being that "comics are for kids" and/or that comics are for "reluctant readers."
- **Historical bias:** Many have forgotten that comics were censored, restricted, and, in many countries, banned under the criminal code. And though the research behind this 1950s comics moral panic has been [successfully disproved](#), the stigma around comics remains for many along with decades of normalized gatekeeping and restrictions

To proactively fight these bans and challenges specific to the comics and graphic novel format the [GNCRT Addressing Challenges Toolkit](#) provides strategies to address Comics Challenges BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER they happen including:

Be Prepared! "What to do when a challenge comes" checklist:

BEFORE a challenge:

- ☐ Do you have a SELECTION POLICY? Is it transparent and accessible? Does it include comics?
- ☐ Do you have a separate CHALLENGE POLICY in place? If not, create one
- ☐ IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS in your library system—who are the deciders on book bans?
- ☐ COMPARE POLICY MODELS. Are your policies the best they can be?
- ☐ PAY ATTENTION to those books that are being challenged around the nation; build advocacy

DURING a challenge:

- ☐ What are the REVIEWS of the book?
- ☐ For schools, are there CURRICULUM connections?
- ☐ For both school and public libraries, does this comic book FILL A NEED? Is it an award winner?
- ☐ Is your CHALLENGE PROCESS being followed?
- ☐ What COMMUNITY SUPPORTS are available to you?
- ☐ REPORT the challenge to the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom: <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report>

AFTER a challenge:

- ☐ Win, lose, or draw, make it a point to THANK the people who helped you - you may need them again.
- ☐ UPDATE your policies where needed to strengthen them against future challenges
- ☐ Many challenge policies have a "COOLING OFF" period, where the same book cannot be challenged again for # of years. Is this in place for your library?
- ☐ PREPARE by asking - are there books similar to your challenged comic that may also trigger a challenge?
- ☐ LIVE to library another day. You are not alone.

The GNCRT Guide to Addressing Comic Book Bans, Censorship, and Challenges in Libraries
- GNCRT 2022-2023

Be Prepared, Fight Censorship, and Live to Library Another Day.