

Discussion Questions for Challenged and Banned Books

In honor of Banned Book Week: September, 2022

General Questions

1. Challenged books are books where someone has formally questioned its appropriateness for a particular reason. Banned books are books that have been removed from a library shelf or school curriculum. Do you think it's important to differentiate between these two? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the label we give these books, banned v. challenged, makes a difference in how important the book is? Does it make a difference in how you view the book?
3. Are there valid reasons to ban and challenge books?
4. What harm, if any, is caused by having a book banned?
5. Why do you think the ALA hosts Banned Book Week?
6. Why is it important to talk about banned/challenged books?
7. What are your favorite banned and challenged books? Why are they banned/challenged? Do you agree with these banned/challenged books?
8. Here are some of the words/phrases used in reasons to challenge/ban a book? Are there some of these reasons that seem valid to you?
Homosexuality religious viewpoint political viewpoint sexually explicit drugs...alcohol smoking offensive language unsuited for age group nudity sex profanity cultural insensitivity liberal propaganda racism...glorifies Islam Jihad sex education
9. What are the common elements of banned/challenged books today? Which are the most important to you? Why?
10. One of the most common reasons for banning/challenging a book is due to "age-appropriateness". What does this mean to you? Is it a valid reason?

Discuss Maus and other books read

Extra Credit: What do you think?

- Do you read graphic novels?
- Have you read any of these books before? If so, what do you think of the reasons they were challenged?
- Are you interested in reading any of these now? If so, why?
- Any additional suggestions for challenged graphic novels?