

Materials Selection Policy

The Library Board of Trustees recognizes the varied backgrounds and needs of all of the citizens of the community, regardless of age, race, creed, political persuasion, or sexual orientation.

The Elkader Public Library and the Library Board believes that the right to read is an important part of the intellectual freedom that is basic to democracy. As general guidelines for materials selection, the Elkader Public Library adopts The Library Bill of Rights, (see attached) The Freedom to Read Statement, (see attached) and The Freedom to View (see attached) as adopted by the American Library Association.

Collection Management:

1. The Library Director shall act as agent of the Library Board of Trustees in material selection. The City Code of Elkader bestows the responsibility for purchase upon the Library Board. The By-Laws of the Library Board grant the authority to the Library Director.
2. Selection of library materials shall be made on the basis of their value of interest, information, and enlightenment of all people in the community. No materials shall be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or the political/social view of the author.
3. All materials are shelved on open shelves, freely and easily accessible to the public. There will be no labeling of any item to indicate its point of view or bias.
4. The library assures free access to its holdings for all patrons, who are free to select or reject for themselves, any item in the collection. Children are not limited to the children's collection, although these collections are kept separate from other library collections to facilitate use. Responsibility for a child's reading must rest with the parent or guardian, not with the library.
5. The Library Board defends the principles of the freedom to read/view, and no library material shall be removed without going through the process of reconsideration, which is as follows:
 - Patron may request, from the Director, the reconsideration form. (Citizens Request for Reconsideration Form--see attached).
 - This form is then returned to the Library Director.
 - The material will then be referred to the Reconsideration Committee, who will evaluate the material and report to the Library Board.
 - The Library Board will then make the decision as to whether the material should be removed from the library.
 - The Reconsideration Committee shall consist of the librarian, three members of the Board of Trustees (as appointed by the President), and a Northeast State Library of Iowa Consultant.

Selection Guidelines:

Children's books: Books for children and other material expressly purchased for children are selected to provide reading for reading's sake and to provide information of interest to children in varied fields of knowledge. Selection based on demand or need is practiced in acquiring children's materials.

- a. **Easy/Easy Reader** materials are intended to serve the needs and interests of pre-school age children and beginning readers. These materials are intended to foster enjoyment and appreciation of reading, being read to for young children.
- b. **Juvenile Fiction/Nonfiction** materials are selected for children from the third grade through the sixth grade in elementary school. They should provide ample resources of reading for pleasure and information. They should be suited to a wide variety of interests for this age level. Special attention should be given to these materials in terms of appeal to the intended readers. Illustrations, type, text, binding and paper should combine to produce an integrated and attractive format. The subject and vocabulary should be suited to the appropriate reading and comprehension level.
- c. **Young Adult** materials are intended to serve patrons between the ages of 12 and 18 (i.e. junior high and high school age). These materials should entice and encourage young and often reluctant readers, increasing their sense of enjoyment in reading. Special attention is given to materials of particular interest to this group, including teenage stories of adolescence and growing to maturity, and so forth. Young adults are encouraged to use the adult non-fiction collection.

Adult Book Collection: The general adult book collection is mainly developed through the selection of materials based on demand, need, and information. There are other criteria that affect the selection process, including price, accuracy, and timeliness. The library does not purchase textbooks to support educational curriculums. Textbooks may be added to the collection if they provide the best or only source of information on a subject, or to complement an existing area with another perspective. The library does not generally purchase abridged versions nor out-of-print materials for the collection.

- a. **Fiction** materials are intended to meet the needs and interests of readers with widely differing tastes, interests, and reading levels.
- b. **Nonfiction** materials are intended to serve a diversified clientele with a wide variety of interests. Books of high current interest, which may be of only temporary use in the collection, are purchased if their timeliness gives them relevance and importance. Likewise, books of potential or long-range usefulness, for which current demand is low, may be included. The library seeks to purchase materials appropriate for independent learners in the community.
- c. **Reference Books** tend to be very expensive and quickly out-dated. Nevertheless, within the limitations of budgetary constraints, the library will seek to provide a reference collection

appropriate to the needs of the citizens of Elkader and its environs. At a minimum, the library will seek to secure current editions of encyclopedia and dictionaries for general use. The library will provide access to as many directories as is feasible.

- d. **Items of Local Interest** will be acquired and maintained whenever possible. This includes any item about or written/produced by individuals/groups from the Clayton County area. The collection and preservation of local history material is generally confined to the printed word. The library does not attempt to include artifacts as part of the collection.

Non-Print Materials: Given the aforementioned budgetary constraints, non-print materials will be added to the collection when possible. Selection of these materials will be performed in a manner consistent with the criteria previously set forth in this policy.

- a. **Sound Recordings** are purchased as funds permit, using the same selection criteria as print material.
- b. **Video Recordings** will be purchased as funds permit. Video material is added to the library's collection in manner consistent with patron demand and budget constraints. The library attempts to acquire its material in the dominant or most popular format. Selection of titles for the collection is made by the Library Director with input from the public and staff.

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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 which 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 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual.

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.

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 counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals 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 individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. 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 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

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, unpopular, or considered dangerous by 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 the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

Collection Development Policies

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. 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; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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 Americans 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.

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, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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 guarantee 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.

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 January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Book

If you, as a patron of the Elkader Public Library, wish to recommend the removal of a book from the collection, kindly answer the questions listed below.

Author _____

Title _____

Request initiated by _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Patron represents: Self _____ Organization _____

Name of organization _____

How was the book brought to your attention?

Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics?

Have you read the entire book? Yes _____ No _____

Are you considering the book as a whole? _____ Or in part? _____

What, in your opinion, is the theme of the book?

What is your objection to the book? Be specific, cite pages.

What do you feel might be the result of reading this book?

If the book were to be removed from the library, what book do you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective?

_____ Signature of patron