

Book Battles

Should some books be banned from school libraries?

Are there Harry Potter books in your school library? Many kids all over the world are reading J. K. Rowling's books in school. But some parents think their children shouldn't be able to find those and other books in school libraries.

Should school libraries keep books that some parents don't approve of? Should they take those books off the shelves?

All over the country, schools are wrestling with those questions. Read these arguments. Then decide for yourself.

Yes! Some Books Should Be Banned from School Libraries!

"We need certain limits," said one Denver, Colorado student. He said some books have no place in school libraries.

Many people believe that books that contain violence or bad words shouldn't be in schools. Some people want the Harry Potter books removed because they contain talk about wizards and magic.

Most parents know what's good for kids. They have a right to decide which books should or should not be in school libraries.

Books should meet certain standards before they are put in schools. Is this a good book for kids to read? Is it full of violence? Does it contain bad words or ideas kids shouldn't learn about? If a book is not good for all kids, it should not be in a school library.

Most parents don't have time to find out everything their kids read. They should be able to trust schools to do that for them.

No! Books Should Not Be Banned from School Libraries!

"Parents should decide what their own kids read," said Natalie Nicol, of Denver, Colorado. But other parents shouldn't make that choice for them.

Many experts say that it's the parents' job, not the school's job, to check out what their kids are reading. If they don't like a book they should not let their kids read it.

Why should a few parents stop kids from reading stories like the Harry Potter series? Kids should be able to check out books their parents think are OK to read.

Many schools let kids borrow certain books if they have a signed paper from a parent. That works fine. A parent doesn't sign the paper if he or she doesn't want the child to read the book. Other kids can read the books if they have permission.

Some books are not OK for all kids to read. But if more adults were careful about what their own kids read, they wouldn't have to ban books from the library.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What do some schools do if parents do not want their children to read certain books?
 - A tell the child to take the book out from the public library
 - B require a signed paper from the parent
 - C inform the parent it is their job to check out what their kids are reading
 - D understand that not all kids can read all books

2. Which of the following best describes the organization of this text?
 - A The author points out that some parents don't want their children taking certain books out of school libraries, then proves that parents should make the final decision about what their children read.
 - B The author describes the issue of banning books from school libraries, then sets forth arguments for and against not allowing certain books in schools.
 - C The author asks about the Harry Potter books, then shows how those books should be banned from school libraries.
 - D The author suggests that the Harry Potter books contain talk about wizards and magic, then shows that parents should sign papers allowing their children to take books out of the school library.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that
 - A some school libraries have books for adult readers
 - B many school libraries have books that are interesting
 - C all school libraries have books about wizards and magic
 - D some school libraries do not have the Harry Potter books

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question. "Should school libraries keep books that some parents don't approve of? Should they take those books off the shelves? All over the country, schools are wrestling with those questions."

What does the word **wrestling** mean?

 - A resting
 - B struggling
 - C arguing
 - D saving

5. The primary purpose of this passage is to describe
 - A reasons in favor of and against banning books in school libraries
 - B reasons that Harry Potter books should not be allowed in school libraries
 - C reasons that parents should decide what books are in school libraries
 - D reasons that school principals should say what books are in school libraries

6. What is the author's main argument against banning books in school libraries?

7. Why does the author probably use the Harry Potter series as an example of books about magic?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some parents do not approve of the Harry Potter books because these books are about wizards and magic.

- A but
- B therefore
- C so
- D because

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Some parents want books banned because the books contain violence or bad language.

Who? some parents

(want) What? _____

Why? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: ban (ban): Something cannot be used or done.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **ban**.

1. The parents were happy when the principal decided to ban soda and candy at lunchtime.
2. After driving dangerously, the man was banned from driving for three years.
3. The library has banned cell phones because people were having loud and distracting conversations.
4. The city decided to ban smoking in restaurants, hospitals and government buildings.
5. The town had to ban hunting near the school because it was not safe for the students.

10b. Which of the following pictures shows something that is sometimes banned?



11. Do you think chewing gum should be banned in school? Why or why not?

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 740

Featured Text Structure: Argumentative – the writer presents evidence for both sides of an argument

Passage Summary: In the first part of the article, the author describes the issue of books being banned from some school libraries. In the second part, the author lays out arguments for and against banning books in school libraries.

1. What do some schools do if parents do not want their children to read certain books?
 - A tell the child to take the book out from the public library
 - B require a signed paper from the parent**
 - C inform the parent it is their job to check out what their kids are reading
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What does the word **wrestling** mean?

- A resting
 - B struggling**
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 - A reasons in favor of and against banning books in school libraries**
 - B reasons that Harry Potter books should not be allowed in school libraries
 - C reasons that parents should decide what books are in school libraries
 - D reasons that school principals should say what books are in school libraries

6. What is the author's main argument against banning books in school libraries?

Suggested answer: The author's main argument against banning books in school libraries is that parents, not schools or other parents, should make decisions about what to allow their children to read. [paragraphs #9-13]

7. Why does the author probably use the Harry Potter series as an example of books about magic?

Suggested answer: The author probably uses the Harry Potter series as an example of books about magic because those books are very well-known and readers will probably be familiar with them. [paragraphs #1 and #5]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some parents do not approve of the Harry Potter books because these books are about wizards and magic.

- A but
- B therefore
- C so
- D **because**

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Some parents want books banned because the books contain violence or bad language.

Who? some parents

(want) What? **want books banned**

Why? **because the books contain violence or bad language**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: ban

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (ban)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is ban. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "ban."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Ban means that something cannot be used or done."
- b. Teacher says: "The passage debates whether or not books should be banned from school libraries. If schools ban books it means, the books cannot be used or read."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "ban."]

Step 3: Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1st sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to our students.

- 10a.**
1. The parents were happy when the principal decided to ban soda and candy at lunchtime.
 2. After driving dangerously, the man was banned from driving for three years.
 3. The library has banned cell phones because people were having loud and distracting conversations.
 4. The city decided to ban smoking in restaurants, hospitals and government buildings.
 5. The town had to ban hunting near the school because it was not safe for the students.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which of the following pictures shows something that is sometimes banned?



- 11.** Do you think chewing gum should be banned in school? Why or why not?

Suggested answer: Yes because it is dangerous to walk and/or talk with gum in your mouth. Sometimes students also stick gum on school furniture which is both unsanitary and damaging to the furniture.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: wrestle, standards, violence, permission