



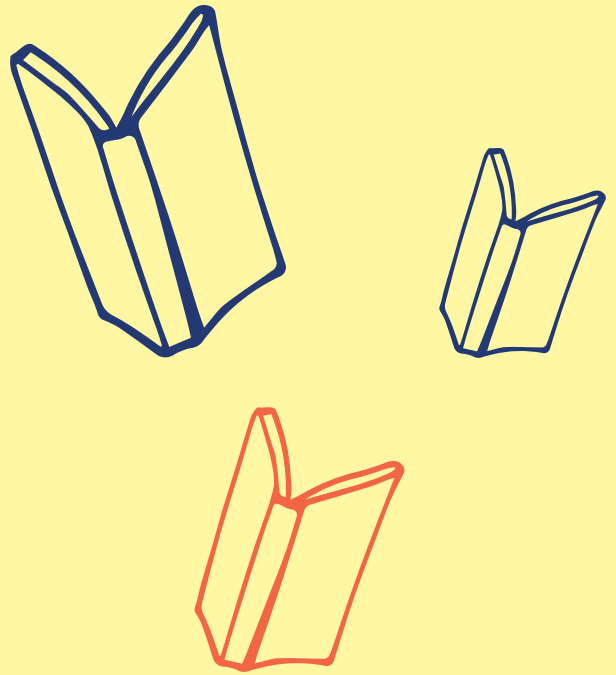
# FREEDOM TO READ

Toolkit for Children and Families

Books Unbanned.

**Bklyn**  
Public Library

# WE ♥ OUR FREEDOM TO READ



## Dear Kids,

At the library, we believe in the **Freedom to Read!** That means that you and your family can choose the books that you like best—funny ones, exciting ones, or ones that show families like yours!

Some people think kids shouldn't read certain books just because they don't like them. At the library, we believe every kid should get to read, imagine, and explore the stories that feel right for you. **This toolkit will help you learn all about your Freedom to Read—and why it matters!**

## Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Why is it important to include children in your advocacy for the **Freedom to Read**? Because it's never too early to help kids understand their rights, celebrate diverse stories, and develop a love of books.

This toolkit is designed for children ages 2–8 and offers ways to engage even the youngest readers in conversations about access, intellectual freedom, and the joy of reading. Throughout these pages, you'll find age-appropriate conversation starters and activities to help you frame big ideas in ways your child can understand. **Our goal is to empower families to stand up for the Freedom to Read—together!**



# WHO ARE YOU?

## Activity

My name is:

.....

.....

If you could write your own book, what would it be about? Who would be in your story?

Draw a picture of your favorite book, or a character you love. Why is it special to you?

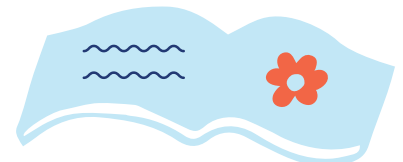
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### Booklist:

#### Freedom to Read About Identity

Booklists feature books that have been banned or challenged around the country. Reading them is one way to support the freedom to read!

Grown-ups: Use these prompts to guide early conversations about the **Freedom to Read**.

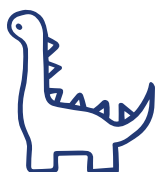


# What kinds of **STORIES** do you like?

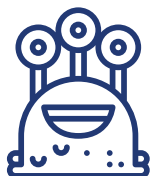


## Activity

I like to read books about...  
(circle or color in)



Dinosaurs



Monsters



Friendship



Play



Families

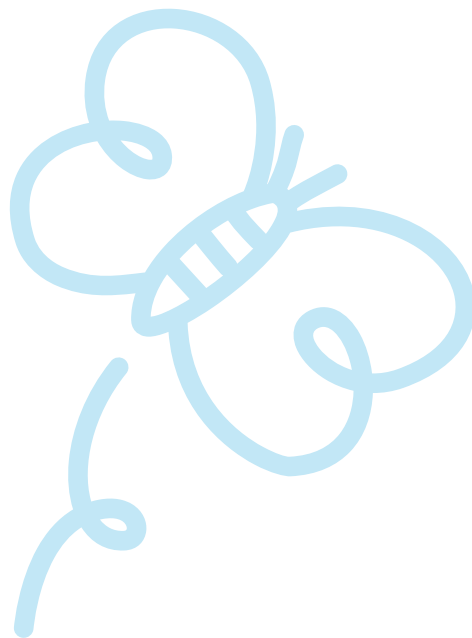


Space



Art

Did you know you can  
choose what books you  
want to read in the library?  
Why do you think  
that's important?



**Booklist:**  
**Freedom to Read**  
About What You Like

.....  
.....

What else do you  
like to read about?



## Activity

# DRAWN TO FREEDOM

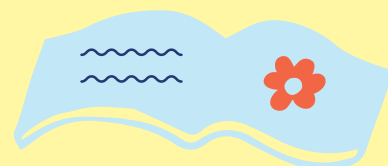
WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT THE LIBRARY?  
DRAW IT HERE!

Artwork by Nate Powell



One thing I love about libraries is that everybody gets to choose the stories they want to read! What do you love about libraries?

**Booklist:**  
**Freedom to Read**  
About Libraries



What is a

# BOOK BAN or CHALLENGE?

A book challenge begins with someone saying, “I don’t want kids to read this book,” and they try to take it off the shelves so no one else can read it either.

A book ban is when they get their way—and the book is actually taken away so kids can’t find it anymore. That means even if you want to read it, you might not be able to. That’s not fair!

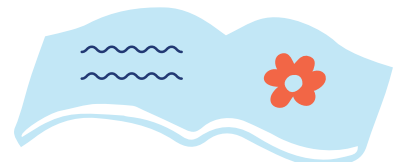
**At the library, we believe everyone should have the Freedom to Read.**

Imagine if someone took away your favorite book **and said you couldn’t read it anymore just because they didn’t like it**—how would that feel?

## Activity

**Draw a picture of how it would make you feel** if someone took away your favorite book and said you couldn’t read it anymore:

**Booklist:**  
**Freedom to Read**  
About Book Bans



# What kinds of **BOOKS** are **BANNED?**

Why do you think some grown-ups want to ban these stories? How does that make you feel?

So many books that were banned or challenged were about or written by:

- ☒ LGBTQ+ people
- ☒ Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color
- ☒ Disabled people
- ☒ Immigrants
- ☒ Activism
- ☒ Social Justice
- ☒ And more!

Source: ALA Book Ban Data 2024

## Activity

What do you want to say about book bans?

**LET  
US  
READ!**

# WHAT KIDS CAN DO!

**The National Coalition Against Censorship is a group of grown-ups who work with and for kids to protect our Freedom to Read.**

Here are some of their ideas for how you can help together with your grown-ups!

Would you like to do something together to protect and celebrate our **Freedom to Read**?

Actions	Write your name next to what you want to do!
Donate banned or challenged books to your school library or classroom	
Organize a banned book display at your school	
Check out banned books from your local public library	
Write your local reps and tell them you support the Freedom to Read	
Organize a banned book drive or read-in	
Invite the author of a banned book to speak at your school	
Talk about why the Freedom to Read matters to you!	
Your ideas here:	

NATIONAL  
COALITION  
AGAINST  
CENSORSHIP

Check out the NCAC Kids  
Right to Read Action Kit



**Booklist:**  
**Freedom to Read**  
About Activism





# ...AND MAKE!

## Make your voices heard!

Write a letter to your local government official, school board, library board, or decision-maker and let them know that you support the **Freedom to Read**.



This book matters  
to me because 

Dear .....

Hi! My name is .....

I am ..... years old, and I live in .....

I love books! My favorite book is

.....

because .....

### Books help me:

☐ Learn new things

☐ See people like me

☐ Use my imagination

☐ Feel happy or brave

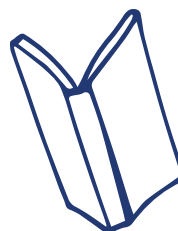
☐ .....

I think all kids and their families should get to choose which books they read. **Please let kids read freely and say NO to book bans.**

Thank you for helping kids and libraries!

Sincerely,

.....



Put your letter in an envelope with a stamp, and use this QR code to find your local leaders.

# ...AND SAY!



This book matters  
to the world  
because



**Bklyn**  
Public Library

Cut out this  
bookmark and  
put it in your  
favorite book.



Use this space to add a picture or more words  
to your letter supporting the **Freedom to Read**.



What does

# FREEDOM TO READ

Mean to You?

We hope you enjoyed learning about the Freedom to Read.

Share what that means to you below through words, drawings, collage, or however you like!



Share your pictures and ideas on social media by tagging  
**@BklynLibrary** and **#FreedomToReadBPL**

**A Note from Pat Scales,  
Author of *Banned Books for Kids*, (American Library  
Association/Sourcebooks, 2023)**

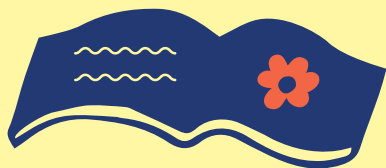
Every child deserves the Freedom to Read. Yet today, attempts to ban books for children are alarmingly high. In 2024, the American Library Association recorded the third-highest number of book challenges since it began tracking in 1990. This growing censorship movement aims to control what children read and learn—disproportionately targeting books by and about people of color, as well as LGBTQ+ families and individuals.

Families play a vital role in guiding their children's reading choices. Parents and guardians know their children best. The public library serves all families and is there to help parents find books that reflect and celebrate their diversity and center their family values. No organized group or individual censor has the right to deny families or children the right to access the books they choose to read.

**Say no to book censorship, and say yes to the  
Freedom to Read!**

**Freedom to Read Storytimes**

Freedom to Read Storytimes are special events at BPL where librarians read banned or challenged picture books, and lead age-appropriate discussions with families about book bans and the Freedom to Read. Find a branch near you!



**Thank you to our collaborators, the National  
Coalition Against Censorship, Books Unbanned,  
and Unite Against Book Bans.**

**National Coalition Against Censorship**

Since its inception in 1974, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) has functioned as a first responder in protecting freedom of expression, a fundamental human right and a keystone of democracy. Representing more than 60 national education, publishing, and arts organizations, NCAC encourages and facilitates dialogue between diverse voices, perspectives, and audiences.

**Unite Against Book Bans**

Unite Against Book Bans is an initiative of the American Library Association, with more than 200 national, state, and local partner organizations and tens of thousands of individual supporters. Unite Against Book Bans connects, equips, and mobilizes the public to advocate in their communities for the right to read and to defeat attempts at every level of government to censor reading material.

**Books Unbanned**

In April 2022, Brooklyn Public Library joined those fighting for the rights of teens nationwide to read what they like, discover themselves, and form their own opinions. Inspired by the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement, Books Unbanned is a response to an increasingly coordinated and effective effort to remove books from library shelves.



**Freedom to Read Booklists**

This is a list of banned or challenged picture books, curated by Brooklyn Public Library librarians. These books reflect diverse experiences and offer opportunities for meaningful conversations at home.



[bklynlib.org/freedomtoread](https://bklynlib.org/freedomtoread)

**WE ♥ OUR  
FREEDOM TO  
READ**