

James S. Rickards High School Summer Reading

Attention: Parents and Students!



WHO: ALL James S. Rickards High School Students.

WHAT: The following information outlines the assignments we have given to our students for the 2022 James S. Rickards School-Wide Summer Reading Program. While specific courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) may have additional summer assignments that will need to be completed before the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, we want to develop a program that encourages a culture of reading and an expectation of academic dedication for all students. Therefore, we are asking you to read the attached information and participate in our summer reading activity. The assignment composed for this year focuses on having students fine-tuning their reading skills by answering text-based questions on grade-level, themed texts. Students are expected to complete each assignment by themselves, only using the power of their brain. If a student is caught plagiarizing, they will receive a 0%.

- Students are to use the active reading skills/strategies they have learned throughout the year to navigate the text.
- Students are to then answer each text-based question based on their reading.

Students can use PDF Candy (found in ClassLink) to annotate, highlight the text and/or correct answers, and insert text boxes to complete responses.

If that option is not viable, students can create a new Word document that includes the answers for each text. Be sure to include the title of the text and then proceed with typing your answers to ensure proper labeling and therefore, grading.

WHEN: While the expectation is that students will select the best choice to each question, write original answers to the short responses and submit them as a course requirement by the end of the first week of school following our return, we also want to encourage parents and groups of students to use the text and suggested novel readings as a point of discussion with each other so that we can all share in the experience of these texts. Activities centered upon the reading skills within these texts will take place within the first few weeks of Language Arts instruction in the fall.

CONTACT INFO: If you have any questions regarding our JSRHS Summer Reading Program, please feel free to contact Mr. Fiallos, English Department Chair (fiallosj@leonschools.net).

Name: _____ Class: _____

Censorship: For the People, or for Controlling the People?

By Jessica McBirney
2016

Censorship has been, and continues to be, a highly debated topic. Some people believe that in order to secure the safety of citizens, information should be closely censored. However, many other people believe that this is a violation of Americans' rights. In this piece, Jessica McBirney identifies different forms of censorship, as well as its benefits and disadvantages. As you read, make note of the details that support the reason behind the different types of censorship.

- [1] Have you ever been told not to say something? It is very common for families to have rules about what can or cannot be said at home, but as it turns out, governments do the very same thing. When a government passes a law restricting what people or organizations can say, it is called censorship.

Governments can censor anything, including spoken words, public or private written communication, communication via the internet, art, movies and entertainment, news media, and even advertising.

Censorship is an extremely controversial issue, and each country usually has its own reasons for passing these laws. However, there are a few core reasons why a government would want to restrict communication.



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Types of Censorship

Moral Censorship

Moral censorship occurs when a government wants to protect its citizens from something it considers morally wrong or deplorable.¹ For example, while the United States cannot censor hate speech because it is protected as "free speech" under the First Amendment, it can censor threatening language that could provoke violence. The government also requires television companies to "bleep" bad words from TV shows so the audience does not hear them.

Military Censorship

This type of censorship occurs when the government eliminates words from letters and newscasts about the military's location or strategy during a war. This is to prevent enemies from intercepting² any information that lets them know what the military is up to.

1. **Deplorable** (*adjective*) deserving strong disapproval or even punishment
2. **Intercept** (*verb*) to stop someone or something that is moving from one place to another before that person or thing

- [5] The United States practiced military censorship frequently in World War I and World War II. When a soldier sent a letter to his family, the government would first look through it and black out any words that might give away where he was, what he was doing, and any future plans he had heard. Similarly, the government monitored journalists and newscasters to make sure they did not give away any important information that might be useful to the enemy.

Political Censorship

Political censorship is when someone in power restricts others from voicing opposing ideas. A political leader or party might do this to maintain their top position and keep the public from learning about ways they might be wrong.

For example, the Communist Party in the Soviet Union³ during the late 1900s enforced severe political censorship. Inspectors from the party monitored journalists, writers, and artists to ensure they said nothing negative about the party or the Soviet Union itself. Weather reporters were not even allowed to predict that it might be raining on a holiday!

Religious Censorship

This type of censorship occurs when the dominant⁴ religion in a country does not allow people from other religions to share their beliefs. Usually when this is the case, the dominant religion is tied to the government in some way, which gives them the power to enforce these rules. They do this to maintain the unity and power of their religion in society, and to keep their own power intact.

One famous example of religious censorship happened right around 1600, when Galileo Galilei⁵ proved that the sun does not revolve around the earth, but that the earth revolves around the sun. This was directly against the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church at the time, and the Church worked hard to prevent him from spreading his discovery. They eventually forced him to lie and say he had been wrong about the whole thing, and he was sentenced to live out the rest of his life confined⁶ to his home.

Corporate Censorship

- [10] Corporate censorship is when a company warns its employees not to say anything that might put the company in a negative light. This kind of censorship is a little different from the others, because it usually does not involve the government or any laws; instead, it might be the company's own policy that employees feel they must follow so they don't lose their job. For example, about 40% of reporters say they sometimes avoid writing a newsworthy story because it might say something bad about the company that owns their newspaper.

gets there

3. The Soviet Union, or the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), was the largest country that ever existed, as well as one of the most powerful countries in the world, and the first country to be founded on the ideals of communism. The country was formed in 1922 and existed until 1991. It was made up of 15 republics, the largest is known as Russia today.
4. **Dominant** (*adjective*) most important, powerful, or influential
5. An Italian astronomer, physicist, engineer, and mathematician responsible for several scientific discoveries throughout the 17th century
6. **Confine** (*verb*) to limit or restrict, often in a place

Pros and Cons

Censorship does have some benefits. It can protect people from slander⁷ or violent threats. It can strengthen national security by keeping information away from enemies. Some people believe it can make a society more unified or moral. Others support it because it can benefit certain groups in a country, such as the main political party or the main religion (although this is often at the expense of others).

However, there are also many downsides to these kinds of restrictions of communication. The government's decision about what to censor can be random or unfair. Censorship also limits individual freedom to speak openly, and protest things that are not right. Suppressing⁸ opposing views can also hold back social progress and restrict people's ability to learn more about the world and other people.

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7. intentionally making a false accusation or claim against someone in order to hurt their reputation

8. **Suppress** (*verb*) to end or stop (something) by force

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central idea of the text?
 - A. Censorship is a complicated topic, since censoring content is neither clearly right nor wrong.
 - B. All forms of censorship identified in the article are violations of human rights and have no benefits.
 - C. The censorship discussed in the article is only employed when necessary and for the benefit of the public.
 - D. It would be great to live in a world where information didn't need to be censored, but that's simply impossible.

2. How does the section "Pros and Cons" contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
 - A. It illustrates the need for government censorship, as well as the disadvantages of life in a world without any form of government censorship.
 - B. It explains how some examples of censorship named in the text are advantages, while also highlighting disadvantages for citizens.
 - C. It condemns all forms of government censorship and explains the truth behind what many think of as its advantages.
 - D. It encourages readers to protest against various forms of government censorship to protect their rights.

3. What does "controversial" mean as it is used in paragraph 2?
 - A. agreeable
 - B. inspiring anger
 - C. certain of something
 - D. likely to cause disagreement

4. Which statement best describes the relationship between moral censorship and power?
 - A. The government is allowed to decide what is considered moral.
 - B. The government is allowed to decide what people watch on television.
 - C. The government is allowed to stop people from promoting hate speech.
 - D. The government is allowed to promote moral censorship under the First Amendment.

5. How does power contribute to the central idea of the text? Use evidence to support your answer.

Name: _____ Class: _____

I Am Very Real

By Kurt Vonnegut
1973

Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) was an American author and humorist. One month after an English teacher at Drake High School in North Dakota decided to teach Kurt Vonnegut's novel Slaughterhouse-Five in his classroom, Charles McCarthy, the head of the school board, decided that the novel's "obscene language" was not appropriate. Every copy of Slaughterhouse-Five at Drake High School was burned in the school's furnace. In response, Vonnegut wrote the following letter to McCarthy. As you read, take notes on the author's main arguments throughout the letter.

[1] Dear Mr. McCarthy:

I am writing to you in your capacity as chairman of the Drake School Board. I am among those American writers whose books have been destroyed in the now famous furnace of your school.

Certain members of your community have suggested that my work is evil. This is extraordinarily insulting to me. The news from Drake indicates to me that books and writers are very unreal to you people. I am writing this letter to let you know how real I am.

I want you to know, too, that my publisher and I have done absolutely nothing to exploit the disgusting news from Drake. We are not clapping each other on the back, crowing about all the books we will sell because of the news. We have declined to go on television, have written no fiery letters to editorial pages, have granted no lengthy interviews. We are angered and sickened and saddened. And no copies of this letter have been sent to anybody else. You now hold the only copy in your hands. It is a strictly private letter from me to the people of Drake, who have done so much to damage my reputation in the eyes of their children and then in the eyes of the world. Do you have the courage and ordinary decency to show this letter to the people, or will it, too, be consigned¹ to the fires of your furnace?



"Burning Books Page1" by Jason Verwey is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

[5] I gather from what I read in the papers and hear on television that you imagine me, and some other writers, too, as being sort of rat-like people who enjoy making money from poisoning the minds of young people. I am in fact a large, strong person, fifty-one years old, who did a lot of farm work as a boy, who is good with tools. I have raised six children, three my own and three adopted. They have all turned out well. Two of them are farmers. I am a combat infantry veteran from World War II, and hold a Purple Heart. I have earned whatever I own by hard work. I have never been arrested or sued for anything. I am so much trusted with young people and by young people that I have served on the faculties of the University of Iowa, Harvard, and the City College of New York. Every year I receive at least a dozen invitations to be commencement speaker at colleges and high schools. My books are probably more widely used in schools than those of any other living American fiction writer.

1. **Consign** (*verb*) to send or give

If you were to bother to read my books, to behave as educated persons would, you would learn that they are not sexy, and do not argue in favor of wildness of any kind. They beg that people be kinder and more responsible than they often are. It is true that some of the characters speak coarsely.² That is because people speak coarsely in real life. Especially soldiers and hardworking men speak coarsely, and even our most sheltered children know that. And we all know, too, that those words really don't damage children much. They didn't damage us when we were young. It was evil deeds and lying that hurt us.

After I have said all this, I am sure you are still ready to respond, in effect, "Yes, yes – but it still remains our right and our responsibility to decide what books our children are going to be made to read in our community." This is surely so. But it is also true that if you exercise that right and fulfill that responsibility in an ignorant, harsh, un-American manner, then people are entitled to call you bad citizens and fools. Even your own children are entitled to call you that.

I read in the newspaper that your community is mystified by the outcry from all over the country about what you have done. Well, you have discovered that Drake is a part of American civilization, and your fellow Americans can't stand it that you have behaved in such an uncivilized way. Perhaps you will learn from this that books are sacred to free men for very good reasons, and that wars have been fought against nations which hate books and burn them. If you are an American, you must allow all ideas to circulate freely in your community, not merely your own.

If you and your board are now determined to show that you in fact have wisdom and maturity when you exercise your powers over the education of your young, then you should acknowledge that it was a rotten lesson you taught young people in a free society when you denounced and then burned books –books you hadn't even read. You should also resolve to expose your children to all sorts of opinions and information, in order that they will be better equipped to make decisions and to survive.

[10] Again: you have insulted me, and I am a good citizen, and I am very real.

Kurt Vonnegut

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2. refers to crude or offensive language

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following statements expresses a central idea of the text?
 - A. School boards should not have the power to ban books from classrooms.
 - B. It is immoral to claim that controversial books may poison students' minds.
 - C. Burning books goes against the freedoms that Americans hold dear.
 - D. Like all good citizens, Kurt Vonnegut has not lied or produced evil work.

2. PART B: Which of the following quotes best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "I am a combat infantry veteran from World War II, and hold a Purple Heart... I am so much trusted with young people and by young people that I have served on the faculties of the University of Iowa, Harvard, and the City College of New York." (Paragraph 5)
 - B. "And we all know, too, that those words really don't damage children much. They didn't damage us when we were young. It was evil deeds and lying that hurt us." (Paragraph 6)
 - C. "books are sacred to free men for very good reasons, and that wars have been fought against nations which hate books and burn them. If you are an American, you must allow all ideas to circulate freely" (Paragraph 8)
 - D. "If you and your board are now determined to show... maturity when you exercise your powers over the education of your young, then you should acknowledge that it was a rotten lesson you taught young people" (Paragraph 9)

3. PART A: What does the word "exploit" most closely mean as it is used in paragraph 4?
 - A. to produce
 - B. to abuse
 - C. to benefit from
 - D. to criticize or disagree with

4. PART B: Which phrase from paragraph 4 best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "the disgusting news from Drake"
 - B. "crowing about all the books we will sell because of the news"
 - C. "to damage my reputation in the eyes of their children and then in the eyes of the world"
 - D. "the courage and ordinary decency"

5. Which statement best describes how the author uses rhetoric in paragraphs 4-5 to advance his argument?
- A. The author presents the contributions he has made to the country in order to prove that he is a real American.
 - B. The author describes his background in order to explain why coarse language is simply part of how he speaks.
 - C. The author portrays himself as a father and a veteran as further proof of his desire to shield the nation's youth from harmful books.
 - D. The author explains that he is a man of integrity in order to show why the school's reactions were excessive and wrong.

6. How does the author expand his argument in paragraphs 7-8?

Discussion Questions

Directions: *Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. What do you think Vonnegut means when he says that he is a “real person”? Why does he work so hard to convey this point? Explain your answer.
2. According to Vonnegut, what does being American mean? Do you agree with Vonnegut when he says the burning of books is un-American? Why or why not?
3. In the context of this letter, which is more important: freedom of speech, or the protection of young people from what some may see as harmful ideas? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
4. In the context of this letter, what makes America unique? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Burning a Book

By William Stafford
1986

William Stafford (1914-1993) was an American poet. In 1970, he was named Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, a position now known as Poet Laureate. In this poem, the speaker describes book burning, a common method of censorship in which people set fire to books they object to on political, cultural, or religious grounds. In a 1991 interview, Stafford once said that he wrote this poem after purposefully burning a book that he found “attractive, shallow, [and] misleading...” “Why should I keep it around?” he thought. As you read, identify the main idea of each stanza.

- [1] Protecting each other, right in the center
a few pages glow a long time.
The cover goes first, then outer leaves
curling away, then spine and a scattering.
- [5] Truth, brittle and faint, burns easily,
its fire as hot as the fire lies make—
flame doesn't care. You can usually find
a few charred¹ words in the ashes.
- [10] And some books ought to burn, trying for character
but just faking it. More disturbing
than book ashes are whole libraries that no one
got around to writing—desolate²
towns, miles of unthought in cities,
and the terrorized countryside where wild dogs
- [15] own anything that moves. If a book
isn't written, no one needs to burn it—
ignorance can dance in the absence of fire.
- So I've burned books. And there are many
I haven't even written, and nobody has.



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1. **Charred** (*adjective*) blackened or discolored from burning
2. **Desolate** (*adjective*) deserted; in a state of dreary emptiness

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best summarizes the theme of this poem?
 - A. Ignorance and a lack of new ideas are greater threats to society than burning books.
 - B. Book burning creates ignorance and chaos in societies; free speech should be encouraged.
 - C. The worst threat of censorship is its ability to erase prominent writers from history.
 - D. We are all guilty of censorship when we reject ideas that do not align with our own.

2. PART B: Which lines from the poem best support the answer to Part A?
 - A. "The cover goes first, then outer leaves / curling away, then spine and a scattering" (Lines 3-4)
 - B. "More disturbing / than book ashes are whole libraries that no one / got around to writing" (Lines 10-12)
 - C. "the terrorized countryside where wild dogs / own anything that moves" (Lines 14-15)
 - D. "So I've burned books. And there are many / I haven't even written, and nobody has." (Lines 18-19)

3. PART A: As used in line 13, what does the word "unthought" mean?
 - A. hostility toward censorship
 - B. an inability to read
 - C. acceptance of book-burning
 - D. lack of ideas

4. PART B: Which of the following phrases from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "trying for character / but just faking it" (Lines 9-10)
 - B. "whole libraries that no one / got around to writing" (Lines 11-12)
 - C. "terrorized countryside" (Line 14)
 - D. "where wild dogs / own anything that moves" (Lines 14-15)

5. Describe the structure of the poem, and explain how this structure supports the development of the theme. Cite evidence from the poem in your response.

Discussion Questions

Directions: *Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. Why does the poet believe that “whole libraries that no one / got around to writing” is “More disturbing than book ashes”? Do you agree with him?
2. During the Nazi occupation of Germany, countless books were burned, including many by Jewish authors. Among those writers whose works were destroyed was Heinrich Heine, whose famous play, "Almansor," includes the following line: “Where they burn books, they will also ultimately burn people.” In the context of this poem and the events of history, what are the dangers of censorship? Are these dangers more or less important than the dangers Stafford writes about?
3. In the context of this poem, what is the goal of education? How does the production of books aim to advance that goal? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
4. In the context of this poem, which is more important: freedom or security? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.

James S. Rickards High School Summer Reading

Attention: Parents and Students!



Summer Reading Recommended Novels

Reading for pleasure is a frequent expectation throughout the school year. In preparation for this, the English department encourages students to read high interest novels throughout the summer. The following is a list of suggested novels. Feel free to choose from this list or to find something else that suits your interests:

WHAT: While there is no specific assignment required as you read, we strongly recommend annotating the text in such a way that you will have quick access to important ideas, evidence, etc. To guide your summer reading, here are some ideas that may help to increase your enjoyment of the novel:

- ✓ Close-read a section of the book and analyze how the author promotes his purpose through strategies;
- ✓ Meditate on how your own life is similar or different than the character(s) in the novel;
- ✓ Think about whether you agree, disagree, or qualify some of the author's thoughts or claims- use your own set of knowledge, personal experience/observations, outside readings or research, etc.

NOVELS

Theme: (Previously) Banned Books

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

The Lord of the Rings Trilogy by J. R. R. Tolkien.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

Hunger Games Trilogy by Suzanne Collins

CONTACT INFO: If you have any questions regarding our JSRHS Summer Reading Program, please feel free to contact Mr. Fiallos, English Department Chair (fiallosj@leonschools.net).