

Censorship Report
Quarter 1 FY2012 Compared to Quarter 1 FY10

By Millie Davis

During Quarter 1 FY2012, NCTE continued its collaboration with other freedom-to-read groups to send letters in favor of keeping the challenged books in the classroom. The groups we work with include the National Coalition Against Censorship ([NCAC](#)), the American Library Association ([ALA](#)), the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression ([ABFFE](#)), the Association of American Publishers ([AAP](#)), the [PEN American Center](#), and the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators ([SCBWI](#)). A fourth of the 12 challenges of the quarter were handled this way.

Challenges to Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* continue with two reports this quarter—one ending happily with the novel being returned to all grades in the high school. *Kite Runner* and *Bless Me, Ultima* were also again on the list.

In addition to fielding challenges, NCTE participated as one of the partners in Banned Books Week (<http://www.bannedbooksweek.org/>). We used INBOX, Facebook, and Twitter to send out messages about the week and NCTE Headquarters Staff joined teachers, students, and writers to participate in the Banned Books Week Virtual Read-Out (<http://www.youtube.com/bannedbooksweek>)

Below is a chart comparing the Quarter 1 FY2011 and the Quarter 1 FY2010 challenges and numbers of challenged texts. A few things to know as you compare the numbers are the following:

- *Number of challenges = number of individuals who reported challenges.*
- *Number of works challenged is usually higher because often challenges involve more than one work.*
- *The bimonthly SLATE Newsletter features Censorship Challenge Reports by quarter. See <http://www.ncte.org/action/slate>.*

July 2011	August 2011	September 2011	Q1 FY2011 Totals
2 challenges /1 request for information from college student doing research	3 challenges- 4 texts	7 challenges – 8 texts /1 request for information on preschool reading	12 challenges – 14 texts / 2 requests for information
July 2010	August 2010	September 2010	Q1 FY2010 Totals
0 Challenges	6 Challenges / 1 request for information on The Students’ Right to Read	3 Challenges	9 Challenges / 1 request for information on The Students’ Right to Read

Listing of 1st Quarter Challenges Reported July-September, 2011

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie (9th grade English, WA). Sensitive materials. Signed letter with five other groups (<http://www.ncac.org/Sherman-Alexie-Novel-in-Missouri>). BOARD REVERSED ITS DECISION AND WILL ALLOW IN ALL GRADES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie (OR). Offered assistance.

And Tango Makes Three, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell (7th grade English unit on families, WA). Homosexuality. Sent resources.

Bad Boys: A Memoir, Walter Dean Myers (6th grade middle school library, TN). Sexual references. Asked librarian to help find age appropriate books.

Bless Me, Ultima, Rudolfo Anaaya (9th, CA). Sexual references. Sent rationales and resources.

Bronx Masquerade, Nikki Grimes, (NY). Department head does not want her to use anything outside of curriculum. Returned call and offered rationale.

Cold Mountain, Charles Frazier (pre AP sophomores, AZ). Violence and sexual content. Sent rationale. Resolved with alternative book.

Kite Runner, The, Khaled Hosseini (9th grade academic level, CA). Sexual references. Sent rationales and resources.

Outsiders, The, S. E. Hinton (Honors & AP, IL). Language. Sent rationale and resources. PARENT HAS WITHDRAWN CHALLENGE.

Slaughterhouse Five, Kurt Vonnegut (MO). Language and violence. Signed letter with eight other groups (see <http://www.ncac.org/Letter-re-Slaughterhouse-Five-Ban-in-Republic-MO>).

Thirteen Reasons Why, Jay Asher (9th grade general English, MI). Obscene language, sexually explicit. Sent rationale and resources. RESOLVED AND BOOK RETURNED TO LIBRARY SHELVES AND CLASSROOMS.

Thirteen Reasons Why, Jay Asher (8th grade classroom teacher has book on display, book is not required reading, PA). Character commits suicide Sent rationale and resources.

Twenty Boy Summer, Sarah Ockler (MO). Language and violence. Signed letter with eight other groups (<http://www.ncac.org/Letter-re-Slaughterhouse-Five-Ban-in-Republic-MO>).

Wicked, Gregory Maguire (6-8 grade summer reading list, MA). Unknown. Sent resources.

Outcome of Previous Challenge

Happy Endings, Margaret Atwood (11 & 12th grade AP Literature). Teacher suspended for eight days with pay for teaching the story. School sent letter home to the parents stating that they were sorry, teacher used poor judgment, and they would monitor future text selections.