

Censorship Report
Quarter 1 FY2013 Compared to Quarter 1 FY2012
By Millie Davis

During Quarter 1 FY2013 NCTE continued its collaboration with other freedom-to-read groups to send letters in favor of keeping 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](#)). We handled two of the eight challenges during this quarter with these groups.

Challenges were varied this quarter from the song “War” used in an AP unit themed around Viet Nam war texts to the often challenged texts *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *The Giver*. This quarter we also had one request for rationales for curriculum writing and the CDs of Rationales were offered (<https://secure.ncte.org/store/rationales-for-challenged-books> and <https://secure.ncte.org/store/rationales-for-challenged-books-volume-2>)

In addition to fielding challenges, NCTE participated as one of the partners in Banned Books Week (<http://www.bannedbooksweek.org/>). This year was the 30th Anniversary of the Event and for the first time Banned Books Week featured an Honorary Chair, Bill Moyers (<http://player.vimeo.com/video/49944167?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0>). We used INBOX, Facebook, and Twitter to send out messages about the week and teachers, students, librarians, and writers participated in the Banned Books Week Virtual Read-Out (<http://www.youtube.com/bannedbooksweek>), including this video from Stephen Chbosky (<http://bannedbooksweek.org/node/322>), author of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* whom NCTE helped get the MPAA “R” rating for the film of the novel changed to “PG-13” last March.

Below is a chart comparing the Quarter 1 FY2013 and the Quarter 1 FY2012 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 2012 | August 2012 | September 2012 | Q1 FY2013 Totals |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 0 challenges | 4 challenges – 3 texts | 4 challenges – 5 texts/1 request for rationales for curriculum writing, 1 inquiry about resources to counteract censorship on college websites | 8 challenges – 9 texts / 1 request for rationales for curriculum writing, 1 inquiry about resources to counteract censorship on college websites |
| July 2011 | August 2011 | September 2011 | Q1 FY2012 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 |

Listing of 1st Quarter Challenges Reported July-September, 2012

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Mark Haddon (9th grade, OH). language, adult themes, atheistic/anti-religious. Sent rationale & resources.

Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, Tom Wolfe (PA). Language, sexual content Signed on letter with NCAC and others. Retained on reading list 9/25/12

The Giver, Lois Lowry (7th grade, FL). Content inappropriate. Sent rationale & resources.

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood (12th grade, NC). Sexual content. Sent rationale & resources. Language Arts Coordinator presented to the board and no challenge at the moment.

House of the Spirits, Isabel Allende (12th grade, NC). Sexual content. Sent rationale & resources. Language Arts Coordinator presented to the board and no challenge at the moment.

The Lovely Bones, Alice Sebold (9th grade). Content inappropriate. Sent rationale & resources.

Sidescrollers, Matt Loux (CT). Content inappropriate. Signed on letter with NCAC and others.

Nineteen Minutes, Jodi Picoult (library, GA). bullying, language, graphic. Sent rationale & resources. Book Retained.

War (song), Edwin Starr (11th grade, FL). words of the song are anti-war. Sent resources.