



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Censorship in Libraries

Against Censorship in Libraries



Clarity and Focus

The essay makes a clear claim ("Public libraries should represent everyone's interests, whether good or bad"). Focus on the topic is maintained throughout. Ideas are introduced as alternatives ("But even in school systems, librarians are there to guide kids to read good books").



Support and Evidence

The claim is supported with specific examples throughout the essay ("Twain wanted the book to change people's attitudes about the treatment of African Americans ...rather than to make this attitude more acceptable"). Attempts are made to address counterclaims ("Reading that someone doesn't believe in God doesn't change how you feel").



Organization

The essay begins with a clear introduction ("Censorship may be appropriate when it comes to certain things, but it doesn't belong in public libraries"). Ideas move logically throughout the essay to a conclusion that supports the claim ("We must prevent censorship and accept new or different ideas").



Language and Style

The essay generally maintains a formal style and a consistent voice. Word choice is precise and specific in support of the claim ("sex, religion, racism, and drugs"). Sentences are varied throughout. The essay demonstrates some command of conventions with some minor errors that don't impede meaning ("effect" instead of "affect").



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see "25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays" by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

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Notes

One of the most powerful ways to educate yourself is through reading books. Censorship may be appropriate when it comes to certain things, but it doesn't belong in public libraries. The public is made up of many different kinds of people with many different interests and belief systems, but without the library, it's likely that some people will never have access to those ideas at all. Books are written to stimulate the imagination and if books that are the slightest bit offensive are censored or banned, then they will never know what it is like to open some of the greatest books ever written. Public libraries should represent everyone's interests, whether good or bad.

People in our country have a freedom of speech, but it should not effect what books belong on the shelf. In order to be good citizen you must be aware of things that could be censored, such as sex, religion, racism, and drugs, because they are things that you will come across in your daily life. The world is not always friendly and definitely can be offensive. Removing materials from the shelves that certain people find offensive when others don't is unfair and presents an unrealistic view of the world. It limits the types of people who will visit the libraries to check out their materials.

Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain is often banned due to the fact that it contains terms and situations which some considered uncomplimentary to African Americans. Although a number of Americans find this novel offensive, Twain wanted the book to change people's attitudes about the treatment of African Americans at the time rather than to make this attitude more acceptable. This is an instance where what was meant as a moral story was taken to be an act of aggression.

Fahrenheit 451 was written by Ray Bradbury in the mid twentieth century,

not to applaud censorship, but to show a terrible time in the future where censorship causes a lot of harm because people would have no actual knowledge from what they read, but know only what they have been told. But even in school systems, librarians are there to guide kids to read good books. If a child wants to read a book that is inappropriate due to language or violence, the librarian will most likely discourage him or her not to read it.

It is our job as Americans to support the freedom of expression, but it's impossible to support it if we are removing unpopular or uncomfortable opinions from our schools and libraries. Not everyone will believe in the same ideas as you. If you read a book about someone who doesn't believe in the same thing it doesn't mean your opinion will change. Reading that someone doesn't believe in God doesn't change how you feel. People just aren't that weak-minded.

Saying something like a book offends you and restricting it is not a good excuse to violate another person's rights. If you don't approve of a book, don't pick it up and read it! People should all be given equal opportunity to learn and improve upon themselves by reading. We must prevent censorship and accept new or different ideas.