

# Selection Policy ~ Old Town Public Library

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Old Town Public Library Selection Policy is to provide guidelines for library personnel and to make known to the public the principles that guide materials selection.

**MISSION:** The Old Town Public Library's mission is to ensure that the people of the City of Old Town have the right and means to free and open access to ideas and information which are fundamental to a democracy. The Library will protect intellectual freedom, promote literacy, encourage lifelong learning, and provide library materials and information services.

**SELECTION:** Library materials shall include all items in any format including print, non-print, and electronically transmitted resources used by and for the patrons of the Old Town Public Library.

It is the purpose of the Library to provide materials for all ages, from pre-school through maturity, making the fullest possible provision for information presenting all points of view on international, national and local issues so that readers may form their own opinions on these questions. To fulfill this purpose the Library endeavors to maintain a carefully selected collection of good, representative books of permanent value and of current interest. The Selection Policy of the Old Town Public Library seeks to conform to the interests and needs of the community which it serves without being restricted by them.

Library personnel responsible for selecting materials cannot be expected to read every book purchased. With few exceptions, it is generally impossible to preview a book before selecting it. For these reasons the selection of books is made largely through reliable sources, such as professional library magazines, book reviewing services and book review sections of magazines and newspapers.

The children's collection is selected to provide pleasurable reading for reading's sake and, insofar as possible, to provide information in all fields of knowledge, which are of interest to children. It is carefully selected for children of all ages and abilities, and emphasis is put upon books that stimulate imagination, mental growth and the development of taste for good literature and beautifully made books.

Young adult's books are selected with the aim of helping teenagers to find self-realization and to live useful, well-adjusted lives in the community and to know and understand the world at large. Books are selected to widen the adolescent's thinking, to enrich his/her life, and help him/her fulfill his recreational and emotional needs.

The aim of the adult book collection is to make available books and other materials that will meet the educational, informational, cultural and recreational interests and needs of the people of Old Town. Each book is judged individually according to its intrinsic merit, the subject treated, the reader interest and the need for the book in an organized collection. Books are judged as a whole, and isolated passages in themselves are not used as criteria.

Gifts are always welcomed but gift books must meet the same criteria as books selected for purchase and should have no conditions attached with their acceptance.

The Old Town Public Library is interested in building a collection to serve the needs of a growing populace. As our resources permit we will allocate funds to three areas of the Library: adult, young adult, and children – in an equitable manner.

**OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION:** It is the policy of the Old Town Public Library that materials selected for use by City residents of all ages be in accordance with the following:

1. Books and other reading material shall be chosen for values of interest and enlightenment of all residents in the community. A book shall not be excluded solely because of race, nationality, political, or religious values of the writer or of its style and language.
2. To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic value, and ethical standards.
3. To provide a variety of information which will enable residents to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that citizens, young and old, may develop the practice of critical analysis.
5. To provide materials representative of many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contribution to our American heritage.
6. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the Old Town Public Library.
7. Censorship of library materials and programs shall be challenged by the City whenever it becomes an issue. However, any resident, parent, or community group may submit a request that books and/or materials be reconsidered for their content and literary value. This would also be applicable to library sponsored programs, Procedures for requesting such a review are available upon request from the Library Director.
8. In addition, the City Council recognizes that the final authority as to what materials a minor will be exposed to rests with the minor's parents or guardians. However, at no time will the wishes of one child's parents to restrict his/her reading, hearing or viewing a particular item infringe on another parent's right to permit his/her child to read and view the same material.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** The City Council is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the Library. The responsibility for selection of materials is delegated to the professional personnel employed by the City.

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:** The needs of the community based on knowledge of community needs and of the existing collection are given first consideration.

Materials for purchase are considered on the following basis:

- Overall purpose
- Scope
- Timeliness or permanence
- Importance of the subject matter
- Quality of writing and/or production
- Readability
- Popular appeal
- Authoritativeness
- Reputation of the publisher/producer
- Reputation and significance of the author/artist/composer/illustrator
- Format and price

Materials in the children's collection are selected to meet the recreation and informational needs of children from infancy through eighth grade. Selection is based on elements of creativeness, clarity, and style of writing, excellence of illustrations, harmony between text and illustrations, outstanding design and format, appropriateness of subject and treatment of various reading levels and acceptance by children.

When purchasing materials the price (discounted), reliability, and speed of delivery are the main criteria used. Materials will be acquired from book jobbers and local bookstores whenever possible. Certain materials may also be purchased directly from the publisher. Periodicals will be purchased from a subscription service whenever possible.

Gift materials are judged by the same standards and are accepted or rejected by those standards. Generally the Library Director applies the same criteria in the selection of gift materials as he/she does for other new materials. The Library Director reserves the right to dispose of gifts as he/she sees fit, including the right to discard them. Gift items added to the collection will be withdrawn from the collection according to the same principles as purchased items. Government documents shall also be judged by the same standards and be accepted or rejected by those standards.

The Old Town Public Library appreciates and welcomes monetary gifts for the purchase of memorial books. All memorial books purchased by the Library will be appropriately marked with a bookplate in the front.

Multiple copies of outstanding and much in demand materials are purchased as needed. Worn and missing standard items are replaced periodically. Out-of-date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn from the collection.

Mass market paperbacks are only purchased to meet the needs for current materials. Full Marc records are not catalogued for these items, however, a brief listing by title and author is entered into the Library's automated catalog.

Periodical titles are chosen based on accuracy, objectivity, accessibility of contents through indexes, demand, need in reference work, representation of point of view or subject needed in the collection as well as local interest in the subject matter. Periodicals are retained for three (3) years, The Bangor Daily News for one (1) month, and The Old Town/Orono Times indefinitely.

**PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION:** The City Council shall delegate to the Library Director the authority and responsibility for selection of all print and non-print materials.

In selecting the materials for purchase, the Library Director evaluates the existing collection, consulting reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids and specialists from a variety of fields. Selection and purchase of library materials rests with the library director who may delegate some responsibilities to other staff members. Staff will adhere to accepted professional practices when making selection decisions. First, the recreational, educational, and informational needs of the community will be considered in selecting materials.

Materials will be selected based on positive reviews in professional journals or actual examination and evaluation of materials. Instead of reviews, popular demand (bestsellers, school bibliographies, and local interest) may be used as the criterion for selection of materials. Items that must be updated every year may be placed on a standing order list to ensure timely delivery. Suggestions from the community for items to be considered for purchase are strongly encouraged, but materials must meet selection criteria.

The Old Town Public Library does not attempt to acquire textbooks that support local curricula, but may acquire textbooks for general use by the public. Multiple copies of popular materials (e.g., bestsellers, resume guides, tax preparation) may be purchased to meet demand. Paperback books will be purchased when available to meet short-term demand. The library will attempt to have information available in a variety of formats (book, non-print, pamphlet, magazines, etc.) when available and practical. Generally, only one copy of materials in other formats (video, compact disk, and computer programs) will be purchased unless long-term high demand is anticipated. Video and audio recordings will be selected for potential long-term use to meet general interests. Regardless of an item's popularity, the library may choose not to select it, because its format is not durable enough to withstand reasonable library use, or it would require excessive staff time to maintain.

Reviewing aids may be used in lieu of personal evaluation. Books and other print items should be purchased if favorably reviewed in one or more of the selection aids or if they have been personally reviewed.

The following reviewing aids may be used by the Library Director:

[Library Journal](#)

[Booklist](#)

[Booklinks](#)

[The Horn Book](#)

[Appraisal](#)

[The New York Times Book Review](#)

[School Library Journal](#)

[The Bulletin for the Center for Children's](#)

[Books](#)

[Amazon.com](#)

[A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture](#)

[Books](#)

[Bookfinder](#)

[Fiction Catalog](#)

[Children's Catalog](#)

[Best Books for Children](#)

[Public Library Catalog](#)

[Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog](#)

[VOYA](#)

[Video Source Book](#)

[What Do I Read Next?](#)

[Genreflecting](#)

Various subject area specialty periodicals

**CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS:** The Old Town Public Library subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights, a copy of which is appended to and made an integral part of this policy.

**MAINTENANCE OF COLLECTION:** The collection will be evaluated on a rotating five (5) year schedule with an inventory done as needed.

This evaluation will be conducted to determine how much of the collection is being used and to identify the areas that need updating and/or expansion. Materials that no longer fit the stated service roles of the Library will be withdrawn from the collection. This may include materials that are damaged, including obsolete information, or items no longer used. Decisions will be based on accepted professional practice, such as those described in the CREW Method, and the professional judgment of the library director or designated staff. When necessary, local specialists will be consulted to determine the continued relevance and reliability of materials.

Materials will be evaluated in the following manner:

FICTION:

1. All books are retained in the collection for a minimum of five (5) years.
2. Books listed in the Fiction Catalog and/or other authority lists used by the Library Staff shall be retained in the collection unless they are in poor physical condition.
3. Books that are not kept for the above reasons are retained if they circulate at all in the current year or five or more times in the past five (5) years.
4. Books in poor physical condition will be discarded, mended, or rebound.
5. Duplicate copies of materials will be discarded as soon as the demand for them ends.

NONFICTION:

1. All books are kept for a minimum of five (5) years.
2. Books listed in the Public Library Catalog and/or other authority files used by the Library Staff shall be retained unless they are in poor physical condition.
3. Books not kept for the previous reasons are kept if:
  - a. The information is still accurate.
  - b. If it has circulated in the current year or five (5) or more times in the past five years.
  - c. If it has not circulated, is still accurate and is the only book in the collection on the subject.

## JUVENILE, TEEN, AND YOUNG ADULT MATERIALS:

1. All books are kept for a minimum of five (5) years.
2. Books listed in the Children's Catalog and/or in the Junior High Catalog or Senior High Catalog or other authority lists used by the Library Staff shall be retained unless they are in poor physical condition.
3. Books not kept for the previous reasons are kept if:
  - a. Information is still accurate.
  - b. If it has circulated in the current year or five (5) or more times in the past five years.
  - c. If it has not circulated, is still accurate and is the only book in the nonfiction collection on the subject.

**DESELECTION OF MATERIALS:** Materials that no longer fit the stated service roles will be weeded or withdrawn from the collection. This may include materials that are damaged, include obsolete information, or are no longer used. Decisions will be based on accepted professional practice, such as those described in *The CREW Method*, and the professional judgment of the library director or designated staff. When necessary, local specialists will be consulted to determine the continued relevance and reliability of materials.

Items withdrawn from the collection will be disposed of in accordance with all relevant provisions of the Charter of Old Town, which permits discarding into the trash, recycling of paper, or transfer to the Friends of the Library for their annual book sale.

**CHALLENGED MATERIALS:** Despite the care taken to select materials for community use and the qualifications of the person(s) who select the materials, it is recognized that occasional objections may be raised by community members.

In the event a complaint about materials in the library collection is made, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The complaint will be heard by the Library Director who is responsible for selecting the material in question.
2. The Library Director shall inform the person making the request of the Material Selection Policy.
3. If the person still wishes to request reconsideration he/she will be given a formal "Request for Review of Library Materials" form.
4. The Library Director will inform the City Manager.
5. The material being reconsidered shall remain on the shelf during the period of reconsideration and available for circulation.
6. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Library Director will submit a copy of the form to the City Manager.
7. The City Manager will call into session an ad hoc committee for the purpose of reconsideration. This committee shall be composed of the following persons:
  - a. one member of the City Council appointed by the City Council President;
  - b. a library director from another public library appointed by the City Manager;
  - c. one community member appointed by the City Manager;
  - d. the Library Director for the City of Old Town;

- e. in the case of a nonfiction work, a professional in the subject area of the challenged materials who shall be appointed by the City Manager.

The City's Library Director and the professional in the subject area shall serve only in an advisory capacity on this committee and shall have no vote.

- 8. Each member of the review committee will receive a copy of the material being reconsidered from the Library Director. In the case of an audiobook or a video each member will be given the material for a period of time to listen or view the material in question. Due to costs of these items it would be financially difficult to purchase copies for each person on the committee.
- 9. Each member of the committee should review the Selection Policy for the Old Town Public Library in its entirety before beginning the task of reconsidering any complaint regarding that policy.
- 10. The committee shall: read and examine the material in its entirety, consider critical reviews and consult recommended lists; weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages or portions pulled out of context; meet to discuss the material and prepare a written report on it.
- 11. The report of the committee shall be forwarded to the City Manager with a copy to the Library Director.
- 12. The City Manager will issue a report to the person requesting the reconsideration within 60 days of the initial filing of the request for reconsideration.
- 13. The decision of the committee is final and may not be appealed.
- 14. Once material has been reconsidered it may not be reconsidered again.

**REVIEW:** This policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years.

## Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

*Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980 by the ALA Council.*

## Freedom to Read

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for the fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio, and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

*We therefore affirm these propositions:*

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be

discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The idea of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrating when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these

propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Education Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers. Adopted June 25, 1953. Revised January 28, 1972, by the ALA Council.

## **Freedom to View**

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.



2. What do you feel might be the result of having access to this material?  
Please use separate paper if you need additional space.

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3. Did you find anything good about this material? \_\_\_\_ If yes, what?

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4. Did you read, hear, or view the entire work? \_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_NO  
If no, what parts did you read, view or hear?

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5. Have you read, or are you aware of reviews of work? \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO

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6. What do you believe was the intent or purpose of this work?

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7. What would you like the Library to do about this material?

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8. In its place, what item of equal quality would you recommend that would convey an appropriate perspective of this topic?

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Date

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Signature of Complainant