

SHOULD CONTROVERSIAL BOOKS BE CENSORED?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA FOR HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the [Thinkalong module](#). Students can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

COULD BANNING BOOKS ACTUALLY ENCOURAGE MORE READERS?

NPR | September 20, 2013 | Audio

6:21 Minutes

An NPR story discussing whether banning or censoring books actually encourages people to read it more.

- Most books that are featured on the ALA's Frequently Challenged Books are banned or challenged based on objections to things like offensive language, racism, sexually explicit, or unsuited for age group.
- Roy points out that "just because one person finds something objectionable doesn't mean they have the right to restrict access to that item that other people...should have access to."
- Libraries build their collections based on a selection policy that follows bestseller lists or top books lists, so often libraries respond to public interest and public need – this doesn't mean that everyone has to read that title, it just means the public has access to it.
- Often books that carry a "banned" or "challenged" stigma were passed from reader-to-reader if access is limited, but with so many ways to get books, it may seem that banning a book from a library or school would have no impact.

TOO GRAPHIC? 2014 BANNED BOOKS WEEK CELEBRATES CHALLENGED COMICS

NPR | September 24, 2014 | Audio

3:29 minutes

A story about Banned Books Week and the sometimes unexpected books that show up on the banned books list.

- Jeff Smith, Author of Bone, was baffled to find that his comic series was banned for things like violence, racism, and political viewpoint.
- While some parents may find books like Captain Underpants offensive, others say their children would not be reading were it not for the books.
- Pilkey, author of the Captain Underpants series says that it's important for kids to read books with anti-authoritarian messages like his because "there are villains in real life and they don't always wear black capes and black hats. Sometimes they're dressed as authority figures. And kids need to know that it's important to question them."
- Pilkey also reframes the idea of banning a book by saying that when parents say "children shouldn't read this book," they should instead change to say "I don't think my children should read this book," allowing others to make that decision for themselves.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

- While books are often challenged, teachers, librarians, parents, and kids fight to keep books available for those who want to read them.

NEW EDITION OF HUCK FINN WILL ELIMINATE OFFENSIVE WORDS

NPR's | January 4, 2011 | Article

258 words

An article on the new version of Huckleberry Finn, which will eliminate uses of the "N" word.

- Two scholars have proposed publishing a version of Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn to eliminate uses of the "N" word and replace it with "slave" and also shorten an offensive reference to Native Americans.
- The version hopes to keep the book from disappearing from classrooms across the country because of the repeated use of offensive language.
- They argue that the action won't remove the issues of race Twain covers in the books.
- On twitter, people were protesting the decision, saying it's not a good idea. One user said that reading the book taught them not to use the word because it was "improper."

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your classroom and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Censorship
- Controversial

CONTEMPLATE

Students will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help students answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Students will engage their peers in an evidence-based debate using the media they just analyzed. Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form an evidence-based response to the debate question.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.



In addition to rich in-class discussions, teachers can also connect with other classrooms through the Thinkalong website. [Sign up here](#) to be connected.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

LET'S INVESTIGATE

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Use this worksheet to help you investigate the media sources in the Thinkalong module.

SUMMARIZE THE TOPIC

KEY VOCABULARY

MEDIA RESOURCE 1

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS



MEDIA RESOURCE 2

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

MEDIA RESOURCE 3

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

CONTEMPLATE YOUR SOURCES

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

After watching the media in the module, answer the questions below.

1. AUTHORSHIP: Who created this message?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

2. FORMAT: What creative techniques are being used to grab my attention?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

3. AUDIENCE: How might different people understand this message differently than me?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

4. CONTENT: What values and points of view are represented? What's left out of this message?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

5. PURPOSE: Why is this message being sent?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3



CREATE YOUR ARGUMENT

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Create strong arguments for both sides from the resources in the Thinkalong module.



DEBATE QUESTION	
PRO ARGUMENT	CON ARGUMENT
REASONING	REASONING
EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE