

Censorship : the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security

art spiegelman

# MAUS



A SURVIVOR'S TALE

I

MY FATHER BLEEDS HISTORY

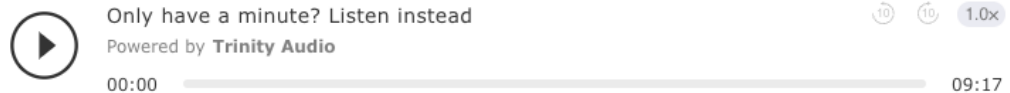
# Book bans are growing in South Florida schools. You've probably read some of these books

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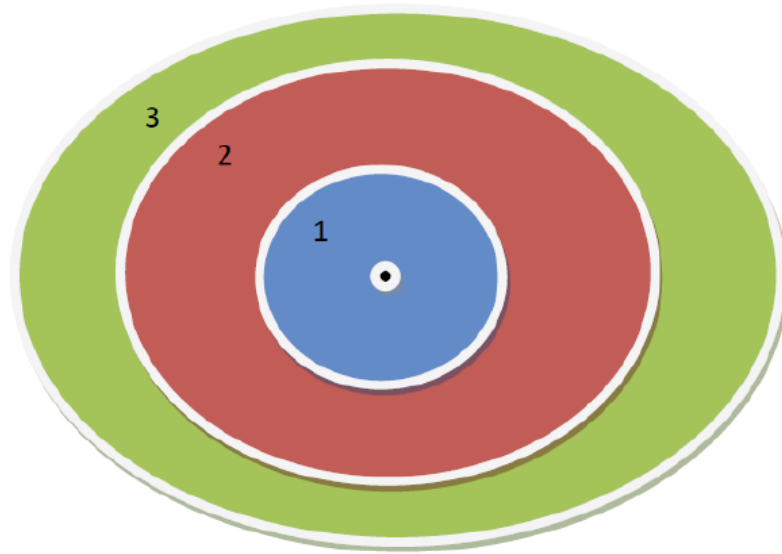
Here are the 15 books that were either banned or restricted to students in specific grades in Miami-Dade and Broward public schools in the 2022-23 school year, due to challenges.



Ignited by political culture wars and enabled by new state laws, school book challenges and book bans have grown in Florida.

For the first time this year, the Florida Department of Education required the state's public school districts to submit a list of challenged books to the department by June 30. The department said it would publish the lists by Aug. 30 to increase transparency with students' families.

The Miami Herald, through public records requests, obtained the list of books that were objected to in Miami-Dade and Broward public schools. The challenged books are about Cuba, racial justice and Black history, coming of age and characters representing LGBTQ communities, among other topics. One of the books was the inaugural poem, "The Hill We Climb," by Amanda Gorman. Many of the books are award winners.



● = TEXT

1 = ANALYZE THE TEXT

2 = ADD PERSONAL INFORMATION

3 = BROADEN PERSPECTIVES

## **Transition + Problématique**

This is something I would like to comment on now.

And I would like to ask if restricting the access to some books can be justified sometimes or if this is a slippery slope to censorship.

## **1- The decision made in Florida**

### **a. It may seem ridiculous**

- i. Shakespeare is considered the greatest English writer
- ii. References to premarital sex = does that justify banning it?

### **b. However**

- i. We don't know the age of the students (are restrictions more justified if students are young?)
- ii. The books are not actually banned. Students can read them if they want → Could this be a happy medium?

### **c. The problem is, this is only one of many examples**

- i. As the article shows, more and more books are under attack
- ii. Who decides what is acceptable or not?
  1. Governor and lawmakers
  2. Imposing political / social opinions?
  3. Even punishing companies like Disney who criticize the laws.
- iii. Isn't this close to actual censorship?

## **2- Censorship**

### **a. Banning books / passages is done in the name of children's safety.**

- i. But it can be ridiculous sometimes (see "Maus" banned in Tennessee)
- ii. Most of the books targeted are addressing gender and race issues. → Trying to impose cultural and/or social beliefs is going further than child protection.
- iii. Not only conservatives do it, though. Many examples of progressives trying to ban books, including classics, that are said to promote stereotypes.

### **b. First Amendment → no limits to Freedom of Speech**

- i. Does book banning go against students' right to receive and express ideas?
- ii. Isn't it more dangerous to impose information restraints on students than to let them read that information?
- iii. Is it acceptable to restrict the access to some content in specific cases?
- iv. Is it possible to restrict access to some books in the age of the internet (books can easily be found online?)

- **Conclusion (≠ ~~\*that's all~~ / ~~\*I'm done~~ )**

This leads me to the conclusion that banning or simply restricting access to some books is undermining one of the primary functions of education: teaching students how to think for themselves. Such actions endanger tolerance, free expression, and democracy. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that Americans will stop arguing about the books they use in schools anytime soon.