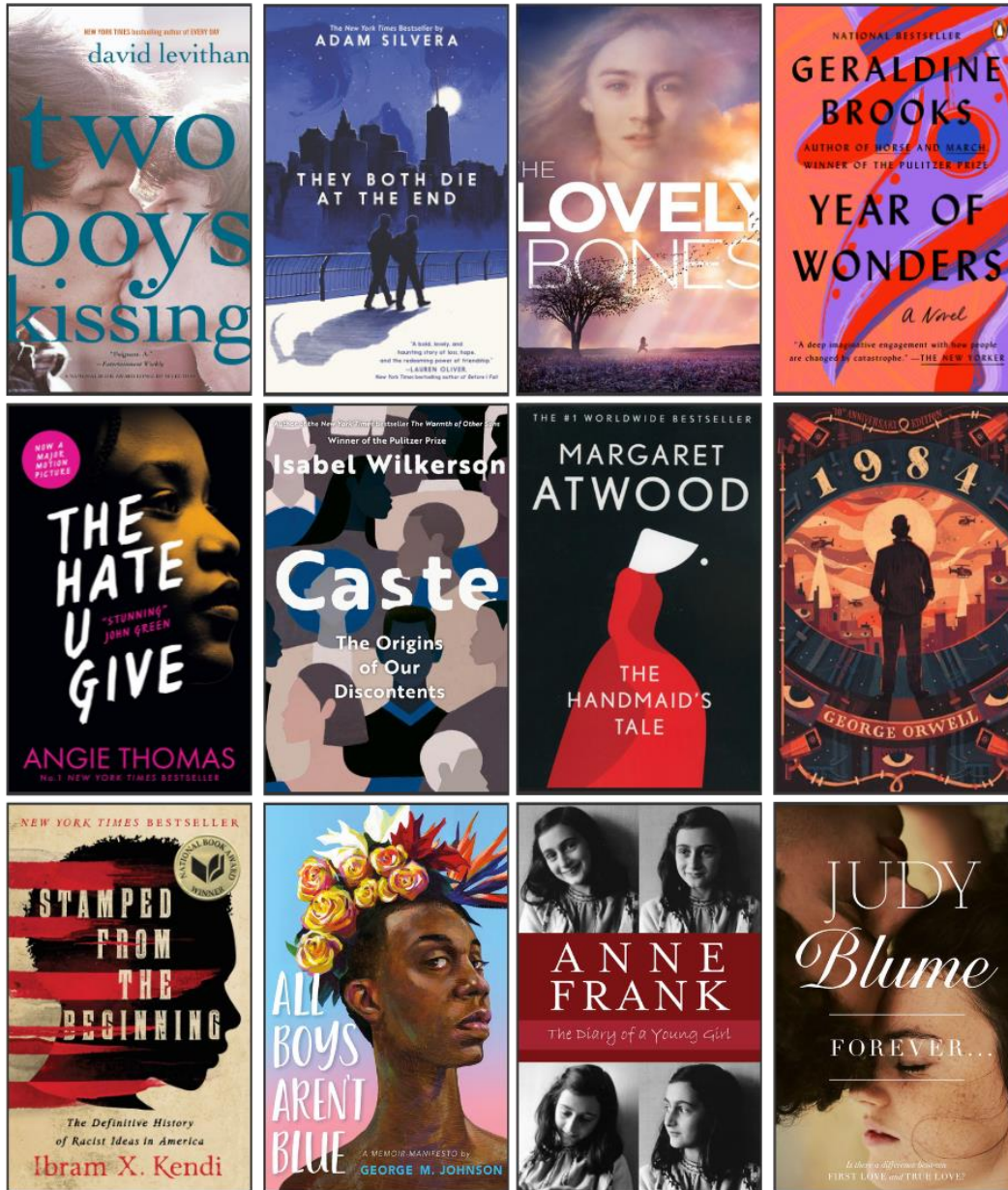


WTBBL Recommended Reads: Banned Books Week, 2023



Join the American Library Association and us as we recognize the 2023 Banned Books Week, October 1-7. An annual tradition since 1982, Banned Books Week highlights books which have been challenged or removed from library shelves by individuals or organizations who have personally determined the content unsuitable for the rest of their

communities. At a time when these attempts of censorship are at an all-time-high, it has never been more important to “Let Freedom Read!” – and where better to start than with these staff-recommended Banned Books? Most of the books on this list were challenged for material that critiqued society, dealt with race relations/critical race theory, or because of LGBTQIA+ representation, but other reasons books are challenged include sexual content, violence, or strong language; all of which are things best left to the individual to determine the appropriateness of for themselves.

For more information about Banned Books Week, including a list of the most challenged books by year, please visit <https://www.bannedbooksweek.org/>

Two Boys Kissing by David Levithan, 2013. ([BR20465](#), [DB78286](#))
Narrated from the perspective of the gay men who died during the 1980s HIV/AIDS epidemic, this chorus, resembling that of ancient Greek theater, observes the novel’s present-day characters—several gay teenage boys in neighboring American small towns—as they explore love, relationship, and identity. The central narrative follows two boys, Harry and Craig, who attempt to break the Guinness World Record for longest continuous kiss by kissing for 32 hours in front of their high school. Inspired by the historical world-record-breaking kiss by two gay college students in 2010 (College of New Jersey), Levithan’s book presents as a love letter from the LGBT people of the past to the queer youth of the present. *Two Boys Kissing* was a New York Times Bestseller and a Stonewall Honor Book in Children’s and Young Adult Literature in 2014. – Book Description from SuperSummary.com

They Both Die at the End by Adam Silvera, 2017. ([DB89341](#), [LP026393](#))

What would you do if you knew you only had a single day left to live? In a not-so-distant future, the service Death-Cast purports to know when you are going to die, and they'll conveniently notify you at midnight of your last day on earth. But at least you don't have to go it alone – there's a buddy app called Last Friend in which you can meet another unlucky soul for a last great adventure! That's how Rufus and Mateo meet, and together find out if they can really LIVE, enough for a lifetime, in a single day. – Book Description from WTBBL Staff.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold, 2002. ([BR14806](#), [DB54698](#))

"My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973."

So begins the story of Susie Salmon, who is adjusting to her new home in heaven, a place that is not at all what she expected, even as she is watching life on earth continue without her -- her friends trading rumors about her disappearance, her killer trying to cover his tracks, her grief-stricken family unraveling. Out of unspeakable tragedy and loss, *The Lovely Bones* succeeds, miraculously, in building a tale filled with hope, humor, suspense, even joy. – Book Description from the Publisher.

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks, 2001. ([DB54834](#))

When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. As death reaches into every household and villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must find the strength to confront the disintegration of her community and the

lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive and grow, a year of catastrophe becomes instead annus mirabilis, a “year of wonders.” – Book Description from the Author’s Website

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas, 2017. ([BR21874](#), [DB101117](#), [LP025936](#))

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil’s name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life. – Book Description from the Publisher.

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent by Isabel Wilkerson, 2020. ([BR23343](#), [DB100088](#), Español [DB104623](#), Adapted for Young Adults [DB111416](#))

Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people’s lives and behavior and the nation’s fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. Using riveting stories about people—including Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball’s Satchel Paige, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson

herself, and many others—she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day. She points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity. – Book Description from Goodreads

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, 1986. ([BR11911](#), [DB24695](#), Español [DB90213](#))

In Margaret Atwood's dystopian future, environmental disasters and declining birthrates have led to a Second American Civil War. The result is the rise of the Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian regime that enforces rigid social roles and enslaves the few remaining fertile women. Offred is one of these, a Handmaid bound to produce children for one of Gilead's commanders. Deprived of her husband, her child, her freedom, and even her own name, Offred clings to her memories and her will to survive. At once a scathing satire, an ominous warning, and a tour de force of narrative suspense, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a modern classic. – Book Description from Amazon.

1984 by George Orwell, 1949. ([BR10312](#), [DB73474](#), Español [DB25710](#))

Winston Smith toes the Party line, rewriting history to satisfy the demands of the Ministry of Truth. With each lie he writes, Winston grows to hate the Party that seeks power for its own sake and persecutes those who dare to commit thoughtcrimes. But as he starts to think for himself, Winston can't escape the fact that Big Brother is always watching... – Book Description from Amazon.

Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi, 2016. ([DB89293](#), Español [DB104219](#))

In this deeply researched and fast-moving narrative, Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-Black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. *Stamped from the Beginning* uses the lives of five major American intellectuals to offer a window into the contentious debates between assimilationists and segregationists and between racists and anti-racists. From Puritan minister Cotton Mather to Thomas Jefferson, from fiery abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison to brilliant scholar W. E. B. Du Bois to legendary anti-prison activist Angela Davis, Kendi shows how and why some of our leading pro-slavery and pro-civil rights thinkers have challenged or helped cement racist ideas in America. – Book Description from Goodreads.

All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson, 2020. ([BR24033](#), [DB85028](#), Español [DB107445](#))

Prominent journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years in New Jersey and Virginia in this series of personal essays. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies, to flea marketing with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, this memoir weaves together the trials and triumphs faced by Black queer boys. In his emotionally frank writing style, Johnson has created both a primer for people eager to be allies, as well as a reassuring testimony for young queer men of color, while grappling with gender identity, toxic masculinity, bonds of brotherhood, family, structural marginalization, consent, and ultimately finding Black Joy. – Book Description compiled by WTBBL Staff.

The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank, 1995 [Definitive Edition].

([BR10113](#), [DB40424](#), Español [DB68986](#), [LP012166](#))

In 1942, with the Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding. For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, the Franks and another family lived cloistered in the “Secret Annexe” of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period. By turns thoughtful, moving, and surprisingly humorous, her account offers a fascinating commentary on human courage and frailty and a compelling self-portrait of a sensitive and spirited young woman; Anne Frank’s remarkable diary has become a world classic—a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit. – Book Description from Goodreads.

Forever by Judy Blume, 1975. ([DB55595](#))

Judy Blume’s groundbreaking novel about first relationships, first love, and...the first time. Katherine and Michael are in love, and Katherine knows it’s forever—especially after she loses her virginity to him. But when they’re separated for the summer, she begins to have feelings for another boy. What does this say about her love for Michael? And what does “forever” mean, anyway? Is this the love of a lifetime, or the very beginning of a lifetime of love? – Book description from the Publisher.