



Materials Selection and Collection Development

Overview and Purpose

The Clark Public Library provides a sizable collection of print, media, and digital content to meet the informational, educational, and leisure-time interests of the community and includes items for all ages, interests, education and reading levels, and many cultural backgrounds. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and establish the process used by the library to add items to its collection and evaluate its content over time.

Collection Scope

The Clark Public Library is responsive to the demand for contemporary materials of interest and significance, but attempts to balance this demand with the need to preserve materials of permanent value. The library's collection development objectives are:

- To provide resources that inform, educate, empower, entertain, and enrich people as individuals, as families, and as a community.
- To include works of enduring value as well as timely material on current issues.
- To provide a balanced collection that represents a variety of viewpoints and opinions.
- To select materials based on community needs, both those expressed and those inferred from user demographics and other evidence of areas of interest.

The Freedom to Read Statement

The Board of Trustees believes that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward 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 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 people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany

these rights.-("The Freedom to Read Statement", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed January 20, 2021) Document ID: aaac95d4-2988-0024-6573-10a5ce6b21b2).

In support of these principles, the library incorporates as part of this policy the following statements and/or policies of the American Library Association: (1) Library Bill of Rights and all subsequent official interpretations; (2) Freedom to Read; (3) Freedom to View; and (4) Statement on Labeling (see Attachment 2).

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Groups or individuals may find library materials that do not support their tastes and views. Staff is available to discuss concerns and identify alternate materials that may be available. If a concern is not satisfied through discussion with staff, a formal, written request for reconsideration of materials may be submitted to the director. [Please click here to fill out the form.](#) The request will then be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Library Board of Trustees.

Community Input

The library staff welcomes and encourages input from the Clark community concerning the collection. Collection development staff use the suggestions for purchase to shape collections that serve the interests and needs of the community. Suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. Clark library cardholders may make suggestions for purchase using the Recommend a Title form located by [clicking here](#) or by asking for assistance at any of the service desks.

The Selection Process

Materials selection is a discerning and deliberate process, involving general knowledge of the subject and its important literature, familiarity with the library's collection, an awareness of bibliographies on the subject and understanding of the community's needs and interests. There is no single standard that can be used to evaluate the numerous and varied types of materials included in the library's collection. However, there are some general criteria that selectors use to evaluate regardless of format, including the following:

- The authority, reputation or significance of the author and/or publisher of the work
- Content of the work including objectivity, accuracy and timeliness of the information
- Social significance
- Suitability of the subject format and style for the intended audience
- Clarity, readability and manner of presentation
- Overall value to the collection
- Suitability for library use
- Evaluation by critics and reviewers

- Public demand for the title
- Scarcity of resources on a particular subject, the importance of the subject to the overall collection, and availability elsewhere
- Potential local use
- Cost
- Local emphasis or local authorship
- Compliance with current U.S. Copyright Law

Selectors use a variety of tools to make decisions about selection, including but not limited to professional and trade journals, reviews from other reputable sources, subject bibliographies, publishers' promotional materials, online title databases, and current media reviews and promotions.

In addition, selectors review data about collection use to make a determination about the need and demand for materials in specific subject areas as well as the number of individual titles and formats that will be purchased.

Gifts

Gifts of books and other library materials in good condition are gratefully accepted by the library with the understanding that they will not necessarily be added to the library's collection. The same selection criteria used for the purchase of materials are applied to gifts. The library assumes ownership of all donated materials and reserves the rights to sell or otherwise dispose of gift materials not added to the collection. The library reserves the right to refuse conditional donations.

Receipts for materials given to the library are limited to acknowledgement of the quantity and format of materials donated. Assignment of value for income tax or other purposes is the responsibility of the donor. The library will not appraise gifts or endorse appraisals obtained by donors.

Monetary gifts may be designated as memorials or given in honor of individuals or special occasions. Subject or title preferences of donors will be honored insofar as possible, but the library reserves the right of final selection. An appropriate acknowledgement will be placed on items acquired with gift funds.

No guarantee is made that gift materials selected for inclusion in the library collection or materials acquired with gift funds will be kept permanently or will continue to be replaced indefinitely if worn, damaged or lost.

Gifts of books and other library materials in good condition are gratefully accepted by the library with the understanding that they will not necessarily be added to the library's collection. The same selection criteria used for the purchase of materials are applied to gifts. The library assumes ownership of all donated materials and reserves the rights to sell or otherwise dispose of gift materials not added to the collection. The library reserves the right to refuse conditional donations.

Receipts for materials given to the library are limited to acknowledgement of the quantity and format of materials donated. Assignment of value for income tax or other purposes is the responsibility of the donor. The library will not appraise gifts or endorse appraisals obtained by donors.

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Materials and Resources

The library purchases materials for adults, children and teens.

Adult Collection

Based on the selection criteria outlined in the Collection Development Policy, the library collects and maintains a wide variety of materials to meet the needs of the Clark community. These materials vary by format, use, and intended audience. The adult collection consists of the following categories:

Fiction (includes mysteries, science fiction, romance, short stories, graphic novels, manga and paperbacks), nonfiction, large print books, audiobooks, e-books, movies, television series, music, magazines and newspapers, and downloadable digital content.

Children's Collection

The children's collection provides a broad range of materials to stimulate interest and satisfy curiosity across the spectrum of age, interest and ability. A variety of viewpoints and treatments are sought. The library's collection supplements but is not intended to support any specific educational curriculum. Material is selected from respected review sources on the basis of excellence among various factors including text, illustrations, information content, format, interest to and suitability for children. The children's collection consists of the following: fiction and non-fiction books, graphic novels, music, Vox books, movies, software, and downloadable digital content.

Teen Collection

The teen collection consists primarily of books which widen the boundaries of an adolescent's thinking, enrich their life and help fulfill emotional and recreational needs. Titles selected for this collection may duplicate titles in the children's or adult collections. The collection includes materials on public school reading lists. The teen collection also includes movies, music, audiobooks, graphic novels, comics, manga and magazines.

Selection Criteria

Multiple Copies

Multiple copies of items are purchased when there is high demand. Bestselling titles are purchased in multiple copies and formats.

New Formats

New formats will be added to the library's collection when industry reports and public library practice and the evidence of community demand make it clear that the Clark community is interested in using material published in such a way. The library will keep abreast of new formats and, when possible, will acquire and make new ways of delivering content readily available to the community.

Fiction

The fiction collection is a major component of the library's collection. Fiction is purchased on the basis of positive reviews, anticipated demand, or cardholder request. The collection includes novels of the past and present, notable for literary merit, cultural value and popularity. Multiple copies in multiple formats are purchased to meet demand.

Nonfiction

The library purchases nonfiction on a wide variety of subjects and periods and to provide information on a topic. Nonfiction is purchased on the basis of reviews, anticipated demand, and/or cardholder request. The collection includes philosophy and religion, pure and technical sciences, business and economics, the arts, engineering and technology, education and careers, gardening, cooking, animals, history and geography, language and literature, interior design, medicine, music, performing arts, politics, government and law, psychology, recreation and sports, sociology, travel, and biographies.

Electronic Databases

The library subscribes to databases that supplement and expand the reference, periodical and circulating collections. Subscriptions are selected and evaluated yearly based on the same content policies of the rest of the collections, paying special attention to usage, accessibility, ease of use and cost.

Historical Materials

The library collects and makes available to the public for research a small collection of resources pertaining to Clark, Union county and New Jersey history. The collection serves as an entry point for those interested in learning more about the history and development of Clark. It also preserves materials

of local interest including works by local authors, works dealing with local subjects and locally published works.

Periodical Collection

The library's periodical collection supplements the book collection by providing up-to-date information, covering current topics not yet available in books and presenting less in-depth treatment of a subject than is usually found in books. In addition to magazines, the collection includes national, regional and local newspapers. The library also supplements the collection with access to digital newspapers and magazines via subscription databases. Journals that are highly technical or scholarly are generally not included in the print collection. However, many are available through the library's electronic database subscriptions.

Large Print Collection

The library maintains a large print book collection to meet the leisure reading needs for anyone who has difficulty reading conventional size types. This collection is chiefly composed of classic and contemporary fiction, emphasizing bestsellers and mysteries. Some high-interest nonfiction is included, such as biographies and health-related materials.

Media Collection

The library purchases a variety of media including movies, music, audiobooks, and Vox books. The selection criteria for adult, children's, and teen media are the same as those applied to print material. Special consideration is given to the purchase of items that have received awards or other special recognition by organizations, institutes, or associations such as: Audie Awards for audiobooks; for music: Gramophone Awards, Grammys, The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; for film: the Library of Congress National Film Registry, ALA Video Round Table Notable Videos for Adults, Film Festival winners, the New York Film Critics Circle and the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Collection Maintenance

To maintain an up-to-date and useful collection, ongoing evaluation and judicious weeding of the collection by professional staff is necessary. Materials are withdrawn if they have little or no use or have been superseded by a more recent edition or better work on the same subject. Selectors will make replacement decisions about material withdrawn because of loss or physical damage.

Replacement will be based upon:

- The number of copies of the title already owned and continued demand.
- Continued value of the title and significance as identified in standard bibliographies.
- Local relevance of the title, author, illustrator or producer.
- Uniqueness to the collection.
- Alternative coverage of the subject or genre in the collection.
- Availability of newer or better materials on the subject.

- Number of copies owned.

Information used to make decisions about removing a title from the collection include:

- Review of statistical information such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates and electronic resource use statistics.
- Visual inspection of materials to determine poor condition.
- Library holdings compared to standard bibliographies and recommended purchase lists.

BOOK & MEDIA DONATION POLICY

The Friends of the Clark Public Library takes donations year-round for the library's book sale spinner and book sales.

Condition

The library accepts gently used books. Rule of thumb: Is the intended donation presentable enough to be on the shelves of a good used book store?

If the answer is, "yes", then you may donate it.

Donations should have intact binding and be free of the following:

stains, water damage, mold, yellowing pages, mildew, dust, musty smell, missing front covers, ripped or missing pages, pages falling out, taped or glued pages, writing of any kind or kept together with rubber bands or tape.

We do NOT accept the following materials:

- Computer books (Unless Published in the Past 2 Years)
- Romance series (i.e. Harlequin)
- Textbooks
- Health books (Unless Published in the Past 2 Years)
- Magazines
- *Readers Digest* condensed books
- Encyclopedias
- Audiocassettes
- VHS tapes
- National Geographic Books and Maps

Media

We DO accept: CDs and DVDs. They must be in good condition.

Where and When to Drop Off

A maximum of one bag or one small box may be dropped off at the Reference Desk during our regular hours of operation. We will not accept more than that.

Attachment

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.

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. 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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

The Freedom to Read Statement

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 or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently arise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. 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.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. 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 less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the

untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that 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 toward 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 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 people 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 that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that 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 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 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 can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

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 people can flourish that 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 expression 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 values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that 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 the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. 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; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

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 individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish 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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

- 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, they 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 the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's 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 the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans 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 the written word. We do so because we believe that it is 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 of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)

[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)

[The Association of American University Presses](#)

[The Children's Book Council](#)

[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)

[National Association of College Stores](#)

[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)

[National Council of Teachers of English](#)

[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)

Approved by the Board of Trustees: February 2022