

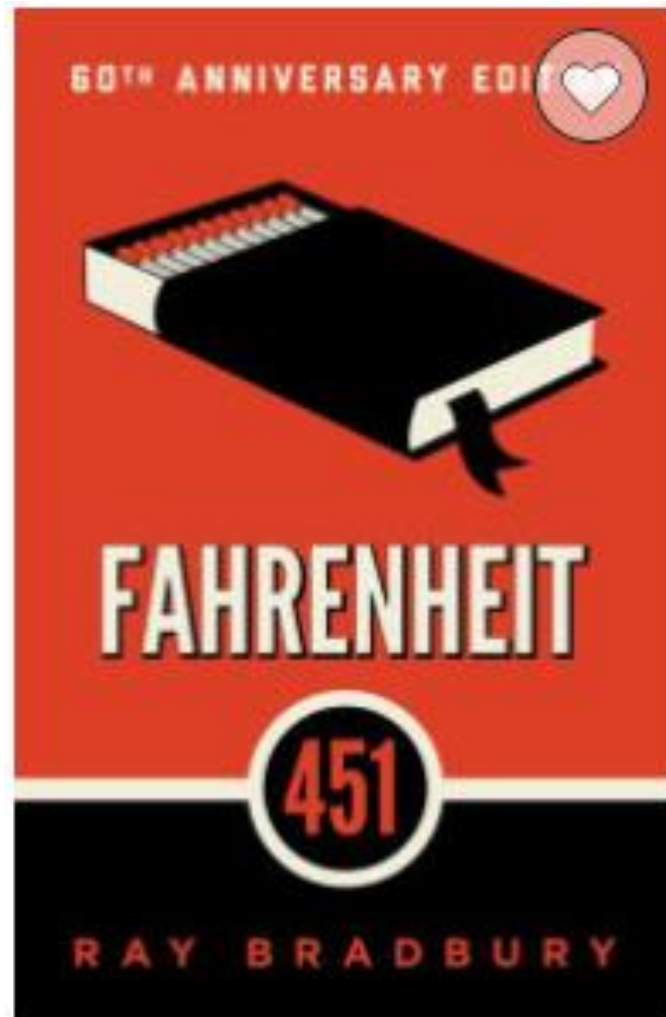
# Banned and Challenged Books: Why?

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GRAPHIC NOVELS, COMICS AND MORE

2.29.24

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*Fahrenheit 451* is a 1953 American novel by Ray Bradbury, set in a future dystopia where books are banned, TV screens are the size of whole walls, and Firemen set fires instead of putting them out.

The protagonist is a Fireman named Guy Montag, who begins to question why books were banned in the first place. After befriending a kind but unusual neighbor named Clarisse and encountering an old woman who would rather burn with her books than live without them, Montag realizes that he might have been on the wrong side this whole time.

The biggest themes present in the novel are technology, dissatisfaction, and knowledge vs ignorance. *Fahrenheit 451* shows how even though technology can be beneficial for society, it can also be destructive.

For example, vehicles called “beetles” can reach speeds up to more than 100 miles per hour but are often used for reckless driving and hit-and-runs.

And instead of going out and socializing, people stay indoors watching television, interacting with the characters in the programs instead of each other. This causes a strong sense of dissatisfaction in people, who seek dangerous, chaotic ways of satisfying themselves, such as by driving fast and destroying things.

The novel also tackles the theme of knowledge vs ignorance. Books are a primary source of knowledge both within the world of the book (as they are in real life). By burning books as a part of their job duties, Firemen promote ignorance. The available television and radio programs promote ignorance about the world outside the United States, creating a bubble for the unaware.

[https://www.barnesandnoble.com/b/banned-books/\\_/N-rtm](https://www.barnesandnoble.com/b/banned-books/_/N-rtm)

# Banned book history

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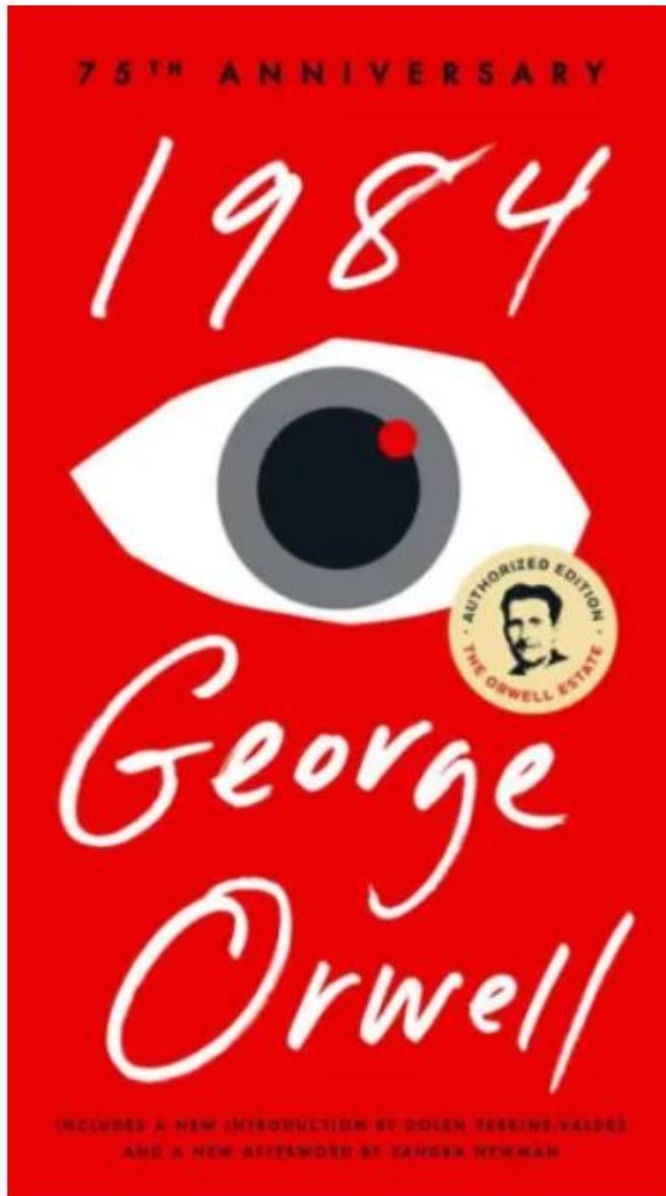
Ironic as it may seem given the role that book burning plays in the novel itself, *Fahrenheit 451* has faced multiple censorship and banning attempts throughout the years, primarily for vulgarity and discussions about drugs.

In 1967, an edition known as the “Bal-Hi edition” censored swear words and changed “drunk man” to sick man.

In a similar instance in 1992, obscenities were once again censored by the school system.

A more recent attempted happened in 2006 where the novel was challenged in Texas for going against religious beliefs (because a Bible was banned and burned) in addition to the common criticism that the novel contains “dirty talk”.

Despite the efforts by parents and schools to ban or at least censor the book, any censorship made did not last long due to complaints by teachers or other parents.



**It is a classic.** Orwell's wrote his enduring classic in 1948 (published 1949) and 75 years later it remains as thought-provoking as it did when read by the original audience. Not only that, it has since become the Most Banned Book in America of all time, opening the doors to important conversations even today. It's a classic for a reason and if you have not yet read it, this needs to be the year you remedy that.

**It is prophetic.** Fascinating, isn't it, how classic authors such as George Orwell anticipated the future, the future in which we now find ourselves living? We aren't talking about flying cars or dwellings on Mars, but predictions about world order and the structural basis for societies. Reading *1984* opens up vital social conversations because it reads "fresh" and "now" because of the author's prophetic forethought.

**It is a template.** Several popular, more contemporary novels that you have read and loved have piggy-backed off Orwell's prophetic prediction of things to come like *The Hunger Games*, *The Giver*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Parable of the Talents*, to name a few.

1984 BY GEORGE ORWELL

HE WHO CONTROLS  
THE PAST CONTROLS  
THE FUTURE.

HE WHO CONTROLS  
THE PRESENT  
CONTROLS  
THE PAST.

”



PrettyLiterate.com

**It is the MOST Banned Book in America.** The fact that it is the MOST banned book in America of all time is enough reason for any of us to want to read it. Since its publication (1949), the novel *1984* has been challenged or banned so many times for its content, that the content must contain ideas that are threatening to those that seek to ban it.

**It is relevant.** There is a frightening amount of parallelism between the fictitious world in which *1984* is set and the reality we are living in today. We live in a time when social control is exercised through disinformation and surveillance is commonplace; a time when fake information is the norm and the everyday citizen is at a loss to know who to believe. What is more *1984* than that?

*The most genuinely frightening aspect of the novel is the dizzying depiction of power as an end in itself: the global war to maintain the status quo; the insignificance of the individual.*

- 1. Freedom vs Censorship
- 2. Newspeak
- 3. Big Brother
- 4. Thought Police
- 5. Government Boundaries





To those who seek to stop young people from reading *The Handmaid's Tale*: Good luck with that. It'll only make them want to read it more.

By [Margaret Atwood](#)

It's shunning time in Madison County, Virginia, where the school board recently banished my novel *The Handmaid's Tale* from the shelves of the high-school library. I have been rendered "unacceptable." Governor Glenn Youngkin enabled such censorship last year when he signed legislation allowing parents to veto teaching materials they perceive as sexually explicit.

This episode is perplexing to me, in part because my book is much less sexually explicit than the Bible, and I doubt the school board has ordered the expulsion of that. Possibly, the real motive lies elsewhere. The conservative Christian group Focus on the Family [generated](#) the list of "unacceptable" books that reportedly inspired the school board's action, and at least one member of the public felt the school board was trying to "limit what kids can read" based on religious views. Could it be that the board acted under the mistaken belief that *The Handmaid's Tale* is anti-Christian?

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The novel sets an inward faith and core Christian values—which I take to be embodied in the love of neighbor and the forgiveness of sins—against totalitarian control and power-hoarding cloaked in a supposed religiousness that is mostly based on the earlier scriptures in the Bible. The stealing of women for reproductive purposes and the appropriation of their babies appears in Genesis 30, when Rachel and Leah turn their "handmaids" over to Jacob and then claim the children as their own.

What if this were to happen today?