A List of Banned & Challenged Books Honoring Black History

Includes Reasons for Being Banned or Challenged

Organized by Elementary • Middle School • High School

📗 ELEMENTARY (K–5)

- *The Undefeated* — Kwame Alexander & Kadir Nelson
  - *Reason:* References to slavery, racism, and historical violence.
- *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* — Vashti Harrison
  - *Reason:* Included in bans of books about racial or cultural identity.
- *Little Legends: Exceptional Men in Black History* — Vashti Harrison
  - *Reason:* Removed during challenges to books featuring diverse historical figures.
- *Malcolm Little* — Ilyasah Shabazz
  - *Reason:* Challenges to civil rights content and historical racism.
- *Rosa* — Nikki Giovanni
  - *Reason:* Considered "too political" for younger grades.
- *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* — Carole Boston Weatherford
  - *Reason:* Swept up in bans targeting books addressing race.
- *Portraits of African-American Heroes* — Tonya Bolden
  - *Reason:* Banned along with other titles celebrating Black historical figures.
- *Who Was Maya Angelou?* — Ellen Labrecque
  - *Reason:* Removed for references to racism and Angelou's difficult childhood.
- *Harbor Me* — Jacqueline Woodson
  - *Reason:* Addresses race, immigration, policing, and family trauma.
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* — Mildred D. Taylor
  - *Reason:* Historic racial violence, racist language used in context.

📘 MIDDLE SCHOOL (6–8)

- *Ghost Boys* — Jewell Parker Rhodes
  - *Reason:* Claimed to be "anti-police" due to themes of police violence.
- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* — Christopher Paul Curtis
  - *Reason:* Historical racial violence; church bombing scene.
- *New Kid* — Jerry Craft
  - *Reason:* Falsely accused of promoting "critical race theory."

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- *Class Act* — Jerry Craft
  - *Reason:* Challenged for discussions of systemic racism and identity.
- *Dear Martin* — Nic Stone
  - *Reason:* Addresses police brutality, racial profiling, and activism.
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* — Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi
  - *Reason:* Targeted by anti-CRT laws; accused of being "divisive."
- *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Boy* — Emmanuel Acho
  - *Reason:* Challenged for discussing racism directly with young readers.
- *The Land* — Mildred D. Taylor
  - *Reason:* Historical racism, violence, and racial injustice.
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (YA adaptations)
  - *Reason:* Discussions of medical racism and consent; deemed "too mature."

📕 HIGH SCHOOL (9–12)

- *Between the World and Me* — Ta-Nehisi Coates
  - *Reason:* Themes of systemic racism; restricted under "divisive concepts" laws.
- *Just Mercy* — Bryan Stevenson
  - *Reason:* Addresses mass incarceration, wrongful convictions, and racial bias.
- *The Hate U Give* — Angie Thomas
  - *Reason:* Depictions of police violence; labeled "anti-police."
- *All Boys Aren't Blue* — George M. Johnson
  - *Reason:* LGBTQ+ themes; targeted in political bans.
- *The Bluest Eye* — Toni Morrison
  - *Reason:* Includes sexual trauma; also addresses internalized racism.
- *Beloved* — Toni Morrison
  - *Reason:* Depictions of enslavement's brutality, sexual violence, and trauma.
- *Song of Solomon* — Toni Morrison
  - *Reason:* Mature themes, sexuality, and race-related content.
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* — Maya Angelou
  - *Reason:* Sexual abuse, racism, and traumatic experiences.
- *The Color Purple* — Alice Walker
  - *Reason:* Mature themes including sexual violence and abuse.
- *Native Son* — Richard Wright
  - *Reason:* Violence, racism, and discussions of systemic oppression.
- *Black Boy* — Richard Wright
  - *Reason:* Racist violence, abuse, and harsh depictions of Jim Crow.

- *Go Tell It on the Mountain* — James Baldwin
  - *Reason:* Religious critique, sexuality, and family conflict.
- *Black Reconstruction in America* — W.E.B. Du Bois
  - *Reason:* Challenges to its framing of Reconstruction and white supremacy.
- *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* — Nell Irvin Painter
  - *Reason:* Removed in districts restricting content about racial history.
- *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* — Juan Williams
  - *Reason:* Topics of civil rights litigation and racial injustice.
- *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* — Paul Ortiz
  - *Reason:* Labeled "political" or "revisionist."
- *Caste* — Isabel Wilkerson
  - *Reason:* Accused of being too "political" due to comparisons of racial systems.
- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* — Beverly Daniel Tatum
  - *Reason:* Frequently included in anti-CRT book removals.
- *The 1619 Project* — Nikole Hannah-Jones
  - *Reason:* Banned by multiple states for reframing U.S. history around slavery.
- *Stamped (Adult Edition)* — Ibram X. Kendi
  - *Reason:* Targeted in laws restricting how race and history can be discussed.

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