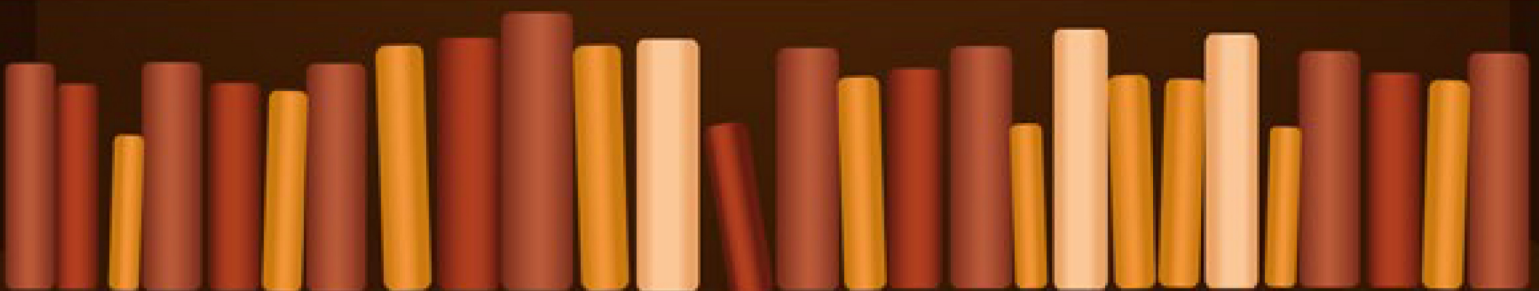




EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

All Ages/Community Toolkit



Fandom Forward turns fans into heroes. We're changing the world by making activism accessible through the power of story. For over a decade we have organized hundreds of thousands of fans for social change.

Our members have collected over 400,000 books for organizations across the globe, helped build five libraries, made thousands of calls and wrote thousands of letters to the United States Congress in support of libraries, and raised funds to send eight young women to school who would not otherwise have had access to education. Together we're building a world that is more equitable, more loving, and a little more magical.

This curriculum is provided free of charge in order to make activism education more accessible for everyone. To learn more and help support our mission, you can visit us at fandomforward.org.

WHY
ADVOCATING
FOR
LIBRARIES
&
EDUCATION
MATTERS

“We will work to make truthful education accessible to all and advocate for public libraries.”

Fandom Forward Commitments



EDUCATION

It doesn't take a Ravenclaw to know that education is magic. Learning and sharing knowledge are essential in every part of the magical and non-magical world. But access to education is something many of us take for granted. Here at Fandom Forward, we believe that access to truthful education is a human right, yet people throughout the world are denied the right to education and even more are denied the right to *accessible* and *truthful* education. Like Hermione, we know that even the thought of being denied an education can feel scarier than facing a three-headed dog.

Barriers to Education

There are many (too many) barriers to accessing fair education: discrimination, inaccessibility to disabled or neurodivergent people, economic barriers, physical location or distance to schools, and violence. According to the [UNESCO Institute for Statistics \(UIS\)](#), in 2016, 263 million children under the age of 18 had either left or never attended school. **That's 1 out of every 5 children in the world.** This directly contributes to high rates of adult illiteracy; over [750 million](#) people around the world are not literate.

In particular, women have been kept from an education at much higher rates than men. According to a [2012 UNESCO report](#), there are 4 million fewer boys than girls out of school in primary school alone. In 2014, nearly 15% of women globally could not read or write. This is doubly concerning because educating women is one of the number one ways to reduce poverty, decrease infant mortality, and solve the climate crisis. Can you *imagine* how Harry would have succeeded against Voldemort without Hermione's help? (He probably wouldn't have – in fact, it's likely he would have plummeted to his death Year One during that Quidditch match.)

WHAT IS LITERACY?

Broadly, literacy is the ability to read, write, and communicate. But literacy is so much more! Literacy is the key to being able to communicate, get a job, advance in a career, and to access healthcare. In the United States, over 36 million adults cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third grade level. Children whose parents have low literacy levels have a 72% chance of being at the lowest reading levels themselves. Gender discrimination is another major barrier. In 2016, the global adult literacy rate for men was 90%, and the rate for women was 83%.

Another frequent barrier to education is food insecurity, a symptom of poverty. When students don't have access to a nutritious meal during the day, they don't do as well in school. According

to [a report by the Children’s Healthwatch](#), **students experiencing food insecurity are more likely to repeat a grade, score poorly on tests, and even have trouble making friends with other classmates.**

This is why free and reduced school meal programs are so important to families struggling to feed their children. Unfortunately, in the United States many students don’t qualify for or can’t access free or reduced meals. Many are also in debt to their school cafeteria. In fact, [75% of US school districts reported student meal debt in the 2017/18 school year.](#) [The Washington Post reported](#) that students in Washington D.C. owe \$20,000 to \$127,000 to their school cafeterias and that many students are denied a hot meal if they can’t pay. [In Denver Public Schools](#), school lunch debt skyrocketed from \$13,000 to \$356,000 in 2018. Some families have nearly [\\$1000 in school meal debt](#) that they might never be able to pay off.

Censorship

Hogwarts has a selection of books in its library that students can only access with professor permission. The Restricted Section holds books that are rare, valuable, or not considered appropriate for general student use. Harry is only able to access information from that section by using his invisibility cloak. While it’s important to protect rare books, restricting certain topics and resources from students is an example of censorship in the wizarding world. Restricted Sections exist in our world in the form of banned books, challenged resources, and other barriers to education.

The American Library Association (aka the A.L.A., aka our heroes) [maintains a database](#) of challenged/banned materials, hate crimes on library property, and more. Every year they release a list of the [10 most challenged books](#) in the US as well as lots of other resources related to intellectual freedom. You can actually report challenged materials in your community to the ALA via a [form on their website!](#)

BANNED BOOKS WEEK

Banned or challenged books are a serious form of censorship. These are books or other materials that have been historically banned or censored in libraries and schools.

Each year the ALA hosts Banned Books Week, featuring books that have been historically censored in libraries and schools. The entire book community– libraries, book sellers, journalists, teachers, readers, and more– comes together during this week to stand up for intellectual freedom. The ALA believes that banning books “keeps us in the dark.” We want to challenge you as wizard activists to cast Lumos and advocate for intellectual freedom to keep the light on for all readers.

As champions for equitable communities, we have a responsibility to stand up for education, literacy, and access to libraries.



LIBRARIES

When in doubt, go to the library. Hermoine knew from the very beginning that libraries are an incredible resource. In the United States, the [Library Bill of Rights](#) states, among other things, that libraries have a responsibility to challenge censorship, library books and other resources should be provided for all people of the community the library serves, library materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval, and a person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

Why are libraries important?

- **Libraries provide free educational resources:** When you think of a library, you probably imagine books, but you might not immediately remember that you can also get access to the internet, as well as free classes, audiobooks, presentations, and more!
- **Libraries are safe public spaces:** Vulnerable populations can find refuge at the library every day, including youth, individuals experiencing homelessness, low-income people, and others.
- **Libraries provide language resources:** Learning another language is hard! Children and people learning new languages can access classes and other free resources at the library for writing, reading, and speaking.
- **Library books preserve knowledge:** Knowledge is power, and libraries have kept that knowledge alive for many years by preserving old manuscripts and records.
- **Libraries help communities grow:** Not many people know that librarians can help them access health insurance information, entrepreneurial resources, job-hunting opportunities, and more!
- **Libraries provide affordable spaces for community organizing:** Many libraries contain rooms you can rent for meetings, studying, seminars, etc. Very often these rooms are free or cheap to reserve!
- **Libraries include access to free digital entertainment:** You can often enjoy free music, video games, software, movies, and television at the library!
- **Libraries provide printing, scanning, faxing services:** You can access cheap, simple printing, scanning, and faxing at the library. This is often especially useful for students, job seekers, or for sending important documents via email or fax.
- **Libraries have discounted or free passes to local attractions:** Your library may offer free or discounted passes to nearby museums, zoos, events, and more.

- **Libraries offer children’s programming:** Dropping children off at a library is cheaper than a sleep-away camp or daycare; many libraries have children’s programming that can double as child care.
- **Libraries provide ample studying opportunities:** Like Hermione, students use their local library for a quiet place to study and find references they need for schoolwork. Many libraries also have quiet study rooms you can either use for free or reserve for cheap.

“ WHAT’S THE NARRATIVE? WHO’S IT BENEFIT? ” - HARRY AND THE POTTERS

Library Funding

Harry Potter and his friends relied on the library time and time again to learn key information in the battle against Death Eaters. When Harry, Ron, and Hermione needed to learn who Nicolas Flamel was, they turned to the library! Remember when a basilisk was lurking through the bowels of Hogwarts? Hermione found the answer in the library. And when Umbridge stopped teaching practical skills? Hermione and Harry planned D.A. lessons with help from library books!

Library funding is often one of the first budget cuts governments make and school libraries in impoverished districts are usually the first to see library closures and librarian layoffs. In 2017, The Chicago Tribune reported that [3/4 of Chicago Public Schools didn’t have librarians](#) and in 2019 the number of schools without a library jumped to 80% according to [American Libraries Magazine](#). In the United Kingdom, [library budgets dropped by £25 million](#) in 2016 alone and in 2018, [nearly 130 libraries closed](#) across Britain. Imagine if one of those libraries had been Hogwarts! Harry, Ron, and Hermione wouldn’t have stood a chance against the dark arts without the help of their school library.

Library Censorship and Propaganda

Libraries are one of the few remaining free community spaces and an important institution for creating community-driven neighborhoods. Libraries are powerful resources for good, so it makes sense that throughout history those who want to harm people have attacked access to education.

During the [Nazi regime in Germany](#), library personell were often replaced with “politically reliable” individuals. While the number of libraries increased in Germany during WWII, this was done solely to spread Nazi ideology; any books that challenged Hitler’s ideas were burned. This squandered the resistance and made it seem like there was only one German narrative.

DID YOU KNOW?

For our [2016 Accio Books](#) campaign, we partnered with Good Shepherd School in Masaka, Uganda - a school built, in part, by our very own chapter, Masaka HPA. Our fan activists raised enough books to open a brand new library at Good Shepherd School and still donate to over 50 other organizations around the world. How many books did our fan activists raise, exactly? A record-shattering **101,190 books**. Together with Masaka Fandom Forward, Books for Africa, and Out of Print Clothing, we even raised enough funds to send 23 new laptops and tablets to the library that fan activists built!



**SIX WAYS
TO
ADVOCATE
FOR
EDUCATION
&
LIBRARIES**



START A CONVERSATION

Many times inequity persists because it is socially taboo or uncomfortable to talk about -- like "He Who Must Not Be Named." When it comes to convincing others that these problems are important, there is nothing more effective than a trusted friend or family member starting that conversation. Here are some ideas for starting the conversation with your loved ones:

1. Describe a time you needed services your local library provides. How was the library there for you? What would you have done if the library had not been there?
2. Who in your community needs libraries the most?
3. What is your favorite thing about public libraries?
4. Why do we need to preserve public libraries and keep them funded?
5. What have you valued about your own educational journey? What do you hope for others' experiences with their education?
6. Can everyone in your community access the same quality of education, or is some education restricted? Who gets access and why?
7. What barriers exist to accessing education, and what can be done to break them down/help others overcome them?
8. What expenses are associated with attending college aside from tuition? What challenges do students face even if their tuition has been paid for?
9. What resources exist to help people in your community access educational opportunities? What can you do to help publicize those resources?



ACCIO BOOKS!

Accio Books is the our book drive and library advocacy campaign. Fandom Forward Chapters, classrooms, and individual wizard activists donate **thousands** of books to libraries in need all around the world. Our members have donated over 400,000 books and helped build libraries worldwide. We've also fought for libraries through direct action such as letter writing campaigns, calling representatives, and participation in National Library Legislation Day. Isn't that magical??

You can run a book drive whenever you like! Here's some tips to get your own book drive started. For more information, check out [Accio Books](#).

Step 1: Find and contact a donation site.

You can donate books anywhere: your local library, a school or nonprofit in your neighborhood, the official donation site, or a combination of different places. It's totally up to you!

Make sure to reach out to the organization you want to donate to before you decide to send books their way. Some organizations might have specific requirements for donations or might be looking for books for certain age groups. Always make sure to ask what they're looking for.

If you're in the United States, our partners at [Reading Is Fundamental](#) will help you locate a local partner site in need. Simply reach out to them at chapters@fandomforward.org.

Step 2: Decide on a timeline.

Decide on a timeline in which you will be collecting books. Do you want to have one big book drive event? Decide on a date. Are you planning on having a donation box available for one month? Make sure people donating know when and where the box will be open for donations. You can talk to your school, your local library, or local businesses to ask if you can place a donation box there. Pick a date and start planning.

Step 3: Publicize, publicize, publicize!

Make sure you get the word out about your book drive! Post about it on social media (and tag @fandomforward so we can share!); ask your school to put out an ad in the student newspaper; put up posters at your donation site; tell friends and family and ask if they'd be willing to donate.

Step 4: Collect materials

For basic materials, you will need:

- Cardboard boxes to collect books (clearly labeled and placed in a visible location)

- More undecorated boxes if mailing books to the organization
- Jar or envelope for monetary donations (to send to organizations or help with shipping)
- Notebook for an inventory of books received/event notes
- Optional: Colored paper, paint, or markers to decorate your boxes. We really get into our box decorating.

Step 4: Host your book drive!

Wherever you've decided to have your event or drive, put out your boxes, set up your tables and get ready for your first books to arrive! (Be careful to avoid flying books in the event the Accio Charm is used. Have first aid on hand, just in case!)

Step 5: Sort your books.

It's helpful to sort your books into categories so that the organization you donate to knows what they're getting. You can sort by age group, genre, subject, or anything else. Make sure to ask the organization what they prefer. While you're sorting, be sure to count how many books were donated.

Step 6: Share your results!

Make sure to touch base with your donors and the HPA about how many books you got! You can report your donation number and check how many points your drive brought in on the [Fandom Forward Website](#).

HOST AN OWL POST PARTY

When witches, wizards and magical folks send a letter, they don't just drop it off at a boring old mailbox; they send it via Owl Post! Help your community get more excited about advocacy and contacting their legislators about the importance of library funding by opening your own public Owl Post Office!

Step 1: Pick a Date!

- Check and see what legislation or topics are important to your community right now and use this information to decide what you're going to write about and when you're going to target your letters (for example, if you want to advocate for library funding it's usually a good idea to do that when the federal government is building their budget for the next year).
- Find a host site -- maybe, ahem, a library, or a classroom, bookstore, or coffee shop! -- and check in to see if they can accommodate a large group and if this date works for them. If gathering in person isn't an option, you could also host a party online via Zoom, Google Meet, or another virtual meeting platform! Decide what will work best for your group.

Step 2: Invite Everyone to Your Pop Up Owl Post

- Spread the word on social media (and tag @fandomforward so we can share!): Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc.
- Encourage your host site to hang posters advertising the event.
- Consider adding the event to community calendars and letting local media know via a [press release](#).

Step 3: Decorate!

- Look around your house/school/community center for decorations you might already have like Owl plush animals or Harry Potter posters, or [DIY your own wands!](#)
- Can you make a room or a corner of a library or coffee shop or bookstore look like an Owl Post for a few hours?
- Make some quills! Carefully tape a feather to a pen for a Quick Quill.
- Consider creating a letter drop box that looks extra magical.

Step 4: Write your letters!

- Have the information for your [representatives](#) OR government leaders OR local community

leaders readily available.

- Regular paper is always fine, but consider some parchment-y stuff for an extra special touch.
- If you can find them, some owl stickers can be a fun way to seal envelopes.
- Label your FROM address as “The (Your City) Owl Post”, followed by your address.
- Have stamps available! If you’re unable to cover this cost yourself, ask attendees to bring one or two of their own.

Step 5: Send your letters!

- Keep track of how many you send -- a public counter can be extra motivating
- Document it! And make sure you share pictures with @fandomforward!

BONUS STEP:

- Provide pop up owl post snacks, like butterbeer or chocolate frogs, to help people feel extra magical.

For more information and resources on event hosting, check out our Wizard Activism School’s lesson on [Hosting an Event!](#)

THE APPARATING LIBRARY

Every “Hermione” knows that magical moment when their eyes light on *that* book, the one they know will sweep them away on a fantastic journey and leave in its wake a new way to see the world. At a book swap, even the less-library-inclined Ron Weasleys out there might find a copy of *Flying With the Cannons* or *Quidditch Through the Ages* to keep them occupied. What treasures will await you and your guests at your next magical book swap?

Step 1: Pick a time and location

- Ask your local libraries, book shops, coffee shops, and other community spaces if you can host the Apparating Library there. Based on their availability and yours, pick a time and date for your Apparating Library.

Step 2: Publicize!

- Post on social media (and take @fandomforward so we can share!) and encourage your location to put up posters advertising the event.
- Make sure you include details about how the event will work and remind guests to bring a book to trade.
- Don't forget to include a note that there will be extras available just in case!

Step 3: Collect Books

- Collect a few books to have available so that there are plenty of extras if guests aren't able to bring a book of their own.
- Ask for donations from libraries/bookstores and/or encourage guests to bring an extra if they have one to share.
- You may also want to have a plan in place for donating any excess books at the end of the event.

Step 4: Decorate!

- Plan out a table/station to suit your specific event.
- Make signs explaining the purpose of the book swap station and be sure to clearly explain the instructions.

- If you have a little extra time on your hands try designing/printing labels for the books or set up description cards that guests can fill out to encourage others to choose that specific book (because it's the best book, obviously).

Step 5: Set Up

- On the day-of, set up your table in an easy-to-find spot where there will be a lot of guest traffic. Put your signs and decorations in place.
- Set up the books you have to start with in an enticing display -- let your creativity shine!

Step 6: Greet the Guests

- As guests pass by, be enthusiastic in your interactions and get people excited to read something new. Depending on your desired level of involvement/formality, you may make a list of guests and check off each name as they add a book to the pile/take a book with them to ensure there will be enough for everyone.
- When people begin to leave the event, offer one last reminder for them to pick up a book for the journey home if they haven't already. Compliment the guests on their excellent choices.

Step 7: Clean Up

- If there are any books left over, donate them or save them for your next book swap.
- Make sure to clean up and thank everyone for participating/helping out!

FIGHTING STUDENT FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity and school meal debt is a systemic issue (if you're in the United States, consider hosting an Owl Post Party to talk to your representatives or School Board members about this problem), but one way to make a difference now is to help pay off student lunch debts. Here's how to fundraise to end school lunch debt by paying it off for families in need.

Step 1: Look up a school in your community and find out how much meal debt is outstanding.

- This might be as easy as calling the school nearest to you and asking. Some schools might keep that information private, in which case you might need to do a little digging, but wizard activists are no stranger to that.
- If your school has a PTA or a parent Facebook page, you can create a post or email encouraging those with lunch debt to contact you.

Step 2: Find out *how* to pay off that debt.

- Does your school have a system for other people to pay off lunch debt or is it better to give the money directly to the parent or guardian in need?
- Is there an organization in your area like [SchoolLunchFairy](#), [NoKidHungry](#), [#HashtagLunchbag](#), or [Food For Thought](#) that is already working to pay off school lunch debt?
- Does donating to an organization make a larger impact on the problem or is it best to give directly? The answer may vary depending on the school or area.

Step 3: Decide how much you want to raise.

- The amount of debt will determine how much you want to raise. If the amount is lower, you could fundraise for the full amount and help a lot of people all at once! If the amount is really high, consider how much money you can feasibly raise and make that your goal.
- You'll also need to decide whether to pay off individual debt, an amount of the entire school's lunch debt, or to donate to an organization.

Step 4: Pick a fundraising method (or several)!

- Depending on the school and size of debt, one campaign length will make more sense than another. Perhaps you pick one event to fundraise at or have a continuous fund that people can donate to whenever they are able. It's up to you!

- There are lots of ways to raise money for your cause. You could host a fundraising event like a bake sale, start a GoFundMe or ask for donations from family, friends, and community members.
- Check out the [Wizard Activist School](#) on the Fandom Forward website for more information on hosting a fundraising event.

Step 5: Prepare, prepare, prepare.

- Determine what you will need in order for your fundraising to be a success. Do you need a permit or school form? If you're hosting or have a table at an event, do you have flyers or pamphlets to explain more about your cause? Whose job is it to bake for the bake sale? Do you have a secure place to store the money? These are all important things to know before the campaign starts.

Step 6: Spread the word!

- Make sure people know about your fundraiser. Posting on social media (and tagging @theHPAlliance so we can share!), putting up posters, or sending out a school-wide email are all great ways to promote your campaign.

Step 8: Do the thing!

- Run your campaign and be gracious toward donors.
- Be sure to keep track of how much you've raised and keep the money in a secure place.

Step 9: Donate the money toward lunch debt.

- You did it! Now all you have to do is give the money to the right person and celebrate! You just made access to education that much easier for students in your area.

ADDITIONAL READING

If you're interested in learning more about education and library advocacy listen to Hermione—"When in doubt, go to the library!" Find out which terms spark your interest in the glossary below, delve further into some readings, and check out the resources we used to create this toolkit!

ACCIO BOOKS: <https://bit.ly/2RADmjX>

A WORLD WITHOUT HERMIONE

ACCIO BOOKS LITERARY ACTIVISM RESOURCES: <https://bit.ly/37zgI7A>

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION STATE MAP OF LIBRARY ACTIONS: <https://bit.ly/3I6K4kQ>
Use this map to find specific legislation and events related to library activism in your state!

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER: <https://bit.ly/2vst6Sa> ALA's lobbying initiative website. Easy way to identify important bills and sign petitions electronically.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION "ADVOCACY UNIVERSITY": <https://bit.ly/2RxrIGo>
Resources for organizing around and advocating for libraries, including action toolkits. Member or registrant only materials

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LIST OF CELEBRATION WEEKS AND PROMOTIONAL EVENTS: <https://bit.ly/38MmbBo> Continually updated list of current and upcoming events related to literacy, such as National Library Week or Teen Literacy Day.

LIST OF MOST FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED OR BANNED BOOKS: <https://bit.ly/3aQcLGU>

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY MAKING GUIDE: <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>

LIST OF BOOKS ABOUT ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: <https://bit.ly/38Oggf9>

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS LIST OF CHAPTERS: <https://bit.ly/2vl26no> Ask how you can volunteer at your local chapter.

WORLD BOOK NIGHT WEBSITE: <https://bit.ly/3oWCNnA> Occurs annually on April 23rd

WE NEED DIVERSE BOOKS: <https://diversebooks.org/>

CONGRESSIONAL HOWLER TEMPLATE: <https://bit.ly/37BXp72>

WIZARD ACTIVISM SCHOOL: <https://bit.ly/38IhJDL>

NCAC'S BOOK CENSORSHIP ACTION KIT: <https://bit.ly/2RwdMMF>

SOURCES

Education

Barriers to Education

["One in Five Children, Adolescents and Youth is Out of School" via UNESCO](#)

[Education for All Global Monitoring Report Girls' Education Fact Sheet via UNESCO](#)

["Too Hungry to Learn: Food Insecurity and School Readiness" via Children's HealthWatch](#)

["2019 School Nutrition Trends" via School Nutrition Association](#)

["Hidden crisis: D.C.-area students owe nearly half a million in K-12 school lunch debt" by Heather Long via The Washington Post](#)

["When Denver stopped lunch-shaming, debt from unpaid meals skyrocketed" by Ann Schmike via Chalkbeat Colorado](#)

["Lots of American families are struggling with student lunch debt. What's the solution?" by Jessica Fu via Chalkbeat National](#)

Literacy

[UNESCO on Literacy](#)

[U.S. Adult Literacy Facts via ProLiteracy](#)

["Literacy Rates Continue to Rise from One Generation to the Next" via UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#)

Censorship

["Banned Books Week \(September 27-October 3, 2020\)" via The American Library Association](#)

["Top Ten Most Challenged Books Lists" via The](#)

[American Library Association](#)

[Challenge Reporting From via The American Library Association](#)

[Banned Books Week](#)

Libraries

Library Funding

["Information literacy lost: Most CPS schools no longer have librarians" by Nereida Moreno via The Chicago Tribune](#)

["How the CPS Strike Affected Chicago School Librarians" by Timothy Inklebarger](#)

["UK Library Budgets Fall by £25m in a Year" by Danuta Kean via The Guardian](#)

["Nearly 130 public libraries closed across Britain in the last year" by Sian Cain via The Guardian](#)

Library Censorship & Propaganda

[Library Bill of Rights via The American Library Association](#)

["The Second World War and the Public Libraries of Nazi Germany" by Margaret Stieg via Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 27, no. 1](#)