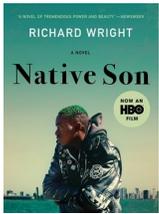


Challenged or Banned Books by African American Authors

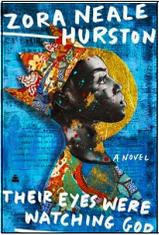


Native Son (Challenged and removed in at least eight states for violence and graphic sexual content.)

Richard Wright

Right from the start, Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. It could have been for assault or petty larceny; by chance, it was for murder and rape. *Native Son* tells the story of this young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, a reflection on poverty and feelings of hopelessness, and of what it means to be black in America.

Available via [Hoopla](#), [Overdrive](#) and [Catalog](#)

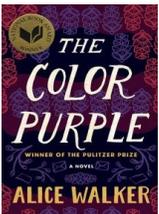


Their Eyes Were Watching God (Challenged in schools in 1997 for sexual explicitness; retained after challenge.)

Zora Neale Hurston

Fair and long-legged, independent and articulate, Janie Crawford sets out to be her own person -- no mean feat for a black woman in the '30s. Janie's quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots. This story was out of print for almost thirty years due largely to initial audiences' rejection of its strong black female protagonist.

Available via [Hoopla](#), [Overdrive](#) and [Catalog](#)

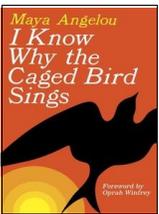


The Color Purple (Challenged 18 times in 13 states for sexual explicitness and situations of violence and abuse.)

Alice Walker

Celie has grown up in rural Georgia, navigating a childhood of ceaseless abuse. Not only is she poor and despised by the society around her, she's badly treated by her family. As a teenager she begins writing letters directly to God in an attempt to transcend a life that often seems too much to bear. Her letters span twenty years and record a journey of self-discovery and empowerment through the guiding light of a few strong women and her own implacable will to find harmony with herself and her home.

Available via [Hoopla](#), [Overdrive](#) and [Catalog](#)

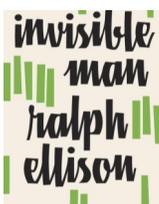


I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Over 35 challenges in 20 states. Graphic portrayal of racism and rape.)

Maya Angelou

Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." At eight years old and back at her mother's side in St. Louis, Maya is sexually assaulted. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns that love for herself, the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors will allow her to be free.

Available via [Overdrive](#) and [Catalog](#)

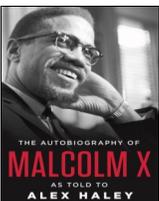


Invisible Man (Banned from high school reading lists in three states. Lack of literary value, language and rape.)

Ralph Ellison

The book's nameless narrator describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood", before retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be.

Available via [Overdrive](#) and [Catalog](#)



The Autobiography of Malcolm X (Challenged in school libraries in the 90s for advocating racism and violence)

Malcolm X

Malcolm X, tells the story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time.

Available via [Overdrive](#) and [Catalog](#)