

# CHALLENGED!

## START UP

How would you feel if someone told you that you couldn't read a certain book or watch a certain movie that you were interested in?

**THE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS SAYS THAT EVERYONE HAS THE FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, BELIEF, OPINION, AND EXPRESSION.** In Canada, we sometimes take this freedom for granted. But we shouldn't. Every day, books, DVDs, and other materials are challenged and sometimes removed from schools and libraries.

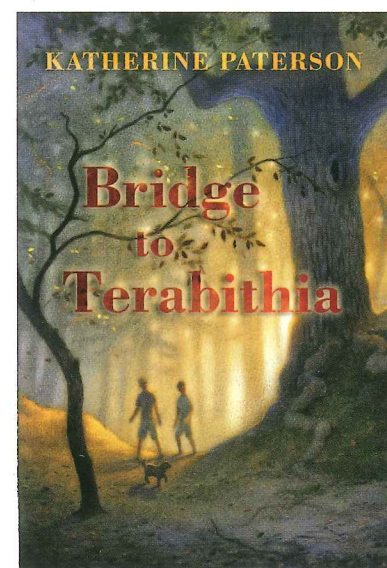
The Harry Potter series has been very popular with children (and adults) since the first book was published, but it is often challenged on the basis of the witchcraft in the form of wizardry that occurs in the books.

## HARRY POTTER SERIES

J.K. Rowling's popular Harry Potter fantasy series was the subject of a challenge in 2000, in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. A parent complained to an elementary school principal in Corner Brook about the magic and wizardry in the books. The result? The books were removed from the school.

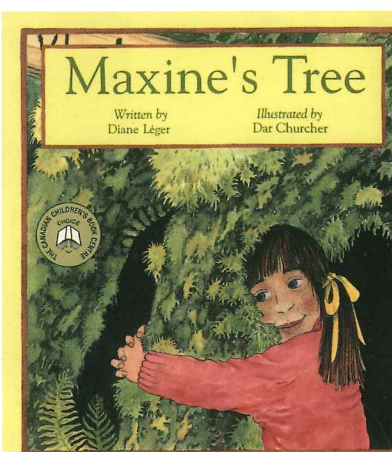
## Hmmm

*Hop on Pop* is a children's book written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Dr. Seuss and published in 1963. It was challenged in March 2013 by a patron of the Toronto Public Library. The objection was that it encouraged children to use violence against their fathers. The challenge was unsuccessful. The book was kept in the children's collection in the library system.



## BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

*Bridge to Terabithia*, Katherine Paterson's award-winning book, was challenged in 2006 by a parent in Ottawa due to objections to certain words. The school principal reported the challenge to the school board's resource centre. The librarians there did not remove the book, but they did suggest that the student whose parent complained be given a different book to read.

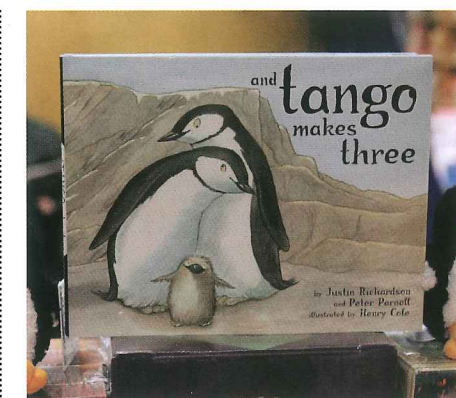
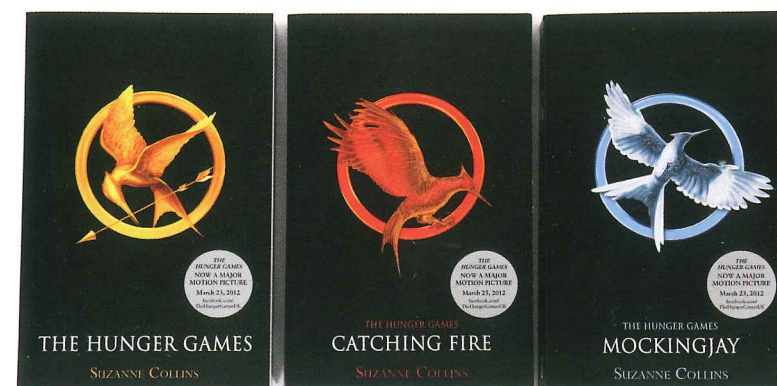


## MAXINE'S TREE

*Maxine's Tree*, Diane Léger's book about a girl who tries to save a tree in BC's rainforest from being clear-cut, shows that there are many reasons that people challenge materials. In 1992, a member of the woodworkers' union in BC asked that the book be removed from elementary school libraries in Sechelt, BC, because it was anti-logging. The school board rejected the request.

## Hmmm

According to the American Library Association's 2014 report, Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* is one of the most challenged books in US libraries. Complaints about the *Hunger Games* series have focused on concerns that the series is anti-family and inappropriate for the age group of the intended readers.



## AND TANGO MAKES THREE

It may seem hard to believe that a children's picture book could cause as much controversy as *And Tango Makes Three*, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell's book about two male penguins raising a baby penguin in the Central Park Zoo. Published in 2005, this book was on the American Library Association's Top Ten Challenged Books List between 2006 and 2012. In Canada, there have been dozens of challenges to the book to try to remove it from school and public libraries, usually due to religious objections about the "two dads" in the story. The challenges seem to have increased the book's popularity, but in some cases, it has been moved from the children's sections of libraries to different sections.

## DIVE DEEPER

What are some pros and cons of reading a book that discusses a controversial topic?