

POST READING DEBATE - censorship



SITUATION

You are meeting today to discuss about the pros and cons of censorship and about whether certain forms of restriction of expression can be acceptable. The various panellists are present to express their ideas and then take questions from the audience to engage in a conversation with members of the public about a broad number of topics, including book banning, sensitivity reading, as well as freedom of thought and speech. The various roles offer a spectrum of perspectives on this complex debate.

>>> **RULES OF THE ROLEPLAY:** choose and prepare **A ROLE for the debate**. In addition to your role, prepare to **introduce yourself: name / age** (use the male/female/gender-neutral names given). A panel of at least **8/10 participants** should be constituted. The debate will take place only once, during at least 45 minutes. Participants playing a role must each **prepare a 2/3-minute initial speech** explaining their views. After a **2/3-minute presentation on the various issues at stake in the current censorship debate**, the **moderator will invite each participant to expose their views on book censorship one by one**. After everyone's 2/3min introductory speech has been heard, the moderator will then **summarise the oppositions at stake** and ask participants to **continue the discussion freely** in order to reach a consensus. Listeners in the room will be invited to **first watch attentively during the speeches** and take notes. They will then ask a series of questions to the various members of the panel. After the debate comes to a close, the moderator will quickly debrief on what has been said and ask everyone to **give their say on the delivery and outcome of the role-play**.

TOPIC QUESTION >> "Do we have a right to censor books?"

KEY ROLES

MODERATOR

He/she is in charge of **announcing** the debate, presenting the issues at stake and allowing everybody to **get their say**. During the debate, he/she will be **moderating the panel**, making sure everybody can **express their opinion** and get **right of reply**. After **asking everybody to briefly introduce themselves**, you'll have to **organise the discussion** and ask everyone to present their views in short speech (of about two minutes). Think of **follow-up questions and of ways to get everyone to interact**. You can choose to **provoke, crack jokes, express your personal opinion etc.**

GUEST N°1. Victor/ia Harper - Publisher (Freedom of Speech Advocate)

- Profile: a bold and outspoken publisher who believes that complete freedom of speech should be ensured.
- Position and arguments : advocates against censorship, arguing that literature should be a platform for diverse voices, ideas, and perspectives without interference. Gives examples of some of the books s/he helped published recently to show how they celebrate freedom of speech.

GUEST N°2. John/Jean Miller - Renowned Author (in favour of the Preservation of Literary Integrity)

- Profile: a celebrated writer known for his/her literary contributions and traditional views on literature.
- Position: firmly against any form of censorship, considering books to be sacred and inviolable, emphasizing the importance of preserving the author's original intent.

GUEST N°3. Evelyn White - Conservative Librarian (Defender of Public Virtue)

- Profile: a librarian with a conservative outlook, dedicated to maintaining public virtue and protecting younger readers.
- Position: supports certain levels of censorship to shield children and teenagers from literature deemed inappropriate or morally objectionable, including books about LGBTQAI+ topics.

GUEST N°4. Jordan Taylor - Sensitivity Reader (Modernization Advocate)

- Profile: a sensitivity reader who believes in the importance of modernizing literature to reflect evolving societal values.

- Position: argues in favor of sensitivity reading as a tool for improving representation, avoiding stereotypes, and ensuring cultural and social sensitivity in literature. Give examples of the changes you are sometimes brought to operate in the books you help "rewrite".

GUEST N°5. Lawrence / Lorraine Hemingway - Descendant of a Dead Writer (Adaptation Advocate)

- Profile: a descendant of a famous author whose works are being reconsidered for adaptation.
- Position: acknowledges the need for adaptation to contemporary standards while preserving the essence of the original work for continued relevance and sales. You want to make sure that your relative's literary success continues in the 21st century and would hate to think that future readers will stop reading Hemingway's novels because of the strong language or biases they sometimes contain.

GUEST N°6. Professor Martin/a Turner - University Literature Professor (Traditionalist)

- Profile: a seasoned literature professor at a university, known for his traditionalist views on literary studies.
- Position: strongly opposes rewriting, considering it a disgrace to alter the integrity of classic literature and advocating for the preservation of original texts.

GUEST N°7. Alexis Rodriguez - LGBTQAI+ Advocate (Anti-Censorship Campaigner)

- Profile: an LGBTQAI+ advocate passionate about representation and inclusion in literature.
- Position: accuses certain libraries and institutions of censorship, especially when it comes to limiting access to material that addresses sensitive topics relevant to the LGBTQAI+ community. You're also in favour of rewriting offensive books that contain offensive comments, gender stereotypes and might encourage discrimination against members of sexual minorities.

ADDITIONAL ROLES

GUEST N°8. Morgan Foster - Bookstore Owner (Free Market Advocate)

- Profile: a local bookstore owner with a commitment to providing diverse reading materials.
- Position: advocates against book banning, emphasizing the importance of letting the free market and individual choice dictate the availability of literature.

GUEST N°9. Dr. Alex Patel - Academic Freedom Activist (Freedom of Thought)

- Profile: an academic freedom activist with a background in education policy.
- Position: argues for the protection of academic freedom, opposing any form of censorship that hinders the free exchange of ideas within educational institutions.

GUEST N°10. Chris Anderson - High School Student (Youth Perspective)

- Profile: a high school student with a passion for literature and activism.
- Position: advocates against censorship, especially in schools, arguing for the importance of exposing students to a diverse range of perspectives and voices.

GUEST N°11. Senator Glenn Lawson - Conservative Politician (Censorship Advocate)

- Profile: a seasoned conservative politician known for his/her advocacy of family values and traditional beliefs.
- Position: supports certain forms of censorship, particularly in educational settings, to align with what he perceives as the community's moral standards.

GUEST N°12. Leslie Thompson - Family Values Advocate (Censorship Advocate)

- Profile: an influential advocate for family values with a strong presence in the community.
- Position: argues in favor of censorship to protect children and families from content deemed morally objectionable, emphasizing the importance of upholding community standards.

GUEST N°13. Reverend James Carter - Religious Leader (Censorship Advocate)

- Profile: a respected religious leader with a significant following in the community.
- Position: advocates for censorship based on religious values, contending that certain literature may conflict with or undermine the moral fabric of the community.

GUEST N° 16 INVENT YOUR OWN ROLE

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