

Case 7: Did one complaint get the novel banned?

Overview

Students read a short story in which a group chat claims that one parent’s complaint got a novel “banned” from Anika’s school library. They compare the claim with the district’s reconsideration notice, the committee input form and the ALA’s example procedure. They map where the novel is in the review. They then write input to the review committee that is tied to the selection criteria.

Before this case

Students should already be able to:

- tell a law from a policy and from professional guidance
- label a source as a news report, a secondary source or data
- write in a neutral tone for the public

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- state the novel’s stage accurately
- separate the district’s policy, the ALA’s guidance and court decisions
- describe Pico as a decision with no majority opinion
- label each source by type and name no one who filed a challenge

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per participant

Materials, continued

- Evidence A and B
- Real sources: the ALA toolkit summary, two Chalkbeat reports (Colorado, 2025; Tennessee, 2024), a law-firm alert (September 2025) and the ALA list (April 2026)
- A chart: law, adopted policy, professional guidance

The task in this edition

Task: Write an explainer for a public library newsletter or a campus newspaper on how a school library review works. Use the district’s reconsideration notice as the example. Separate the district’s adopted policy, the ALA’s guidance and what courts have and have not settled.

Students make: Explainer, 450—600 words, with a labeled source list

Pacing

Opener (page 127): 4 min. Short on time: 3 min. Summarize What happened in one minute.

Key terms (pages 128 and 129): 5 min. Short on time: 5 min.

Look at the evidence (pages 134 and 135): 8 min. Short on time: 8 min.

Pacing, continued

Key idea (pages 136 and 137): 10 min. Short on time: 8 min. Read the key idea and one In the news source only.

Sort the evidence (page 138): 8 min. Short on time: 5 min. Do the deciders column only.

Practice (page 139): 5 min. Short on time: skip.

Your task (pages 140 and 141): 12 min. Short on time: 12 min.

Your draft (pages 142 and 143): 35 min. Short on time: 35 min.

Check your work (pages 144 and 145): 6 min. Short on time: 6 min.

Questions to discuss (pages 146 and 147): 8 min. Short on time: 8 min.

Talk about this case at home (page 148): at home.

Periods: full chapter 101 minutes; one period 90 minutes.

Standards

Information Literacy VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for finding, evaluating and using information for a purpose, ethically and legally. In this case: Students weigh a district notice, a professional toolkit, news reports and a law-firm alert for what each can support (Evaluate Information and Its Sources Critically).

Case 7 plan, continued

Standards, continued

Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for taking part in community life, including civic communication and working within community structures toward a civic aim. In this case: Students tell the public how and when students, parents, staff and community members may give input (Civic Contexts/Structures).

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual A source’s authority depends on its creator’s expertise and on the question it is being used to answer. In this case: Students explain why the ALA’s guidance is not law and why a district’s adopted policy governs its own review.

Information Has Value Information has value, including as a means to influence people, so credit, access and privacy matter. In this case: Students connect the review process to readers’ access to a book that stays available during the review.

Codes of ethics

- **ALA Code of Ethics:** Principle 2 (of 9)
- **Code of Ethics of the Education Profession:** Principle I: Commitment to the Student, item 2

Codes of ethics, continued

- **Credo for Ethical Communication:** “We strive to understand and respect other communicators’ intent...” (one of nine unnumbered principles)

Heat map

- ■ □ **Opener (page 127):** Medium
- □ □ **Key terms (pages 128 and 129):** Low
- □ □ **Look at the evidence (pages 134 and 135):** Low
- ■ □ **Key idea (pages 136 and 137):** Medium
- ■ □ **Sort the evidence (page 138):** Medium
- □ □ **Practice (page 139):** Low
- ■ □ **Your draft (pages 142 and 143):** Medium
- □ □ **Check your work (pages 144 and 145):** Low

Try it at your school

Find your library’s reconsideration policy.

- Ask your school librarian how book challenges are handled
- Find the written policy on the district website
- Learn whether students can give input during a review
- If a review is happening, read the whole book before commenting

Try it at your school, continued

Who to ask: School librarian or media specialist, public library staff, school board clerk

Safety: Don’t post names of people who filed a challenge or who spoke at a meeting. Disagree with ideas, not individuals.

Sources

- Penguin, “Matilda by Roald Dahl: authorized extract,” No date listed
- American Library Association, “Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit: formal reconsideration,” No date listed
- American Library Association, “Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit: selection criteria,” No date listed

Case 7: Did one complaint get the novel banned?

A group chat says one parent's complaint got a novel banned, so Mari and Gia check what the school library's notice says.

On your own Read What happened and underline the word in the group chat that may go too far. About 4 minutes.

Your role: You're the one who reads the library notice before anyone replies "banned." **New skill:** Find what stage a process has reached.



Gia, Mari and Sami talk around a table on a rooftop terrace at sunset.

What happened

On Thursday night, a message about a novel in the library at Anika's high school appears in a group chat. The message says one parent complained, so the novel is now banned and gone from the library. Gia replies that this is censorship.

On Friday, the school library posts a notice about the novel. Mari reads it and compares it with the group chat. Gia deletes her first reply, because she had not read the notice or the novel.

Your question: Is the novel really banned, and what can people who care about it do next?

Mari works the counter at the neighborhood bookshop. She switches between print and audio, and she is halfway through the novel on audio. Gia is planning a discussion at the bookshop. First, both of them want to know what stage the library's process has reached.

Case 7 | Opener | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 4 min.

✂ Short on time: 3 min. Summarize What happened in one minute.

💬 Say this

"The chat says "banned." What would you need to see before you repeat that word?" — List answers on the board: stage, policy, who decides.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat a complaint as a removal.

Listen for: "One complaint and it's gone." **Then:** Ask which document would show the book is gone. Write "Check the stage" on the board.

📖 Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Book challenges can bring up students' political or religious views.

Cool-down: Say: "Today we check what happened, not who is right about the book."

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example, then write your first guess in the box. About 5 minutes.

Challenge A challenge is a formal request to remove or restrict a book or other library material.

En español: impugnación

In this case: A parent's request about a novel at Anika's school started a review. The novel stays available while the committee reads it.

Reconsideration policy A reconsideration policy is a library's written process for reviewing a challenge to a book.

En español: política de reconsideración

In this case: The library's notice follows district policy: a committee review, the selection criteria, written input by the 15th and an appeal.

Selection criteria Selection criteria are the written standards a library uses to decide which materials to include.

En español: criterios de selección

In this case: The committee judges the whole novel against the district's selection criteria. The input form asks which criteria your comment addresses.

Who is involved



Mari

Works the bookshop counter

"The chat says the book is gone from the library. The notice says it stays available during the review. Those can't both be true."



Gia

Planning a book discussion at the bookshop

"I called it censorship before I'd read the notice. Now I'm planning a discussion at the bookshop, so I'd better get this right."

Case 7 | Key terms | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min.

💬 Say this

"Which key term names what the parent did, and which names what the committee will use?" — Wait for "challenge" and "selection criteria."

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students hear "challenge" as "ban." **Listen for:** "A challenge means they took it." **Then:** Reread the key idea: a challenge starts a review. On its own, it does not remove a book.

📄 Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term in their own words.
- Show the process as a flowchart: request, review, decision, appeal.
- **Cognates:** reconsideration (reconsideración), criteria (criterios), committee (comité), decision (decisión), appeal (apelación), process (proceso), novel (novela), district (distrito), censorship (censura).

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🔑 Answer key

Any first guess is fine. Students return to it on the My take page.

Your first guess

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think happened to the novel?

My first guess is ___, because ___.

➡ My first guess is that the library pulled the book while it looks into the complaint, because the chat says it is gone.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 128. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 128.

Reading passage

Challenges, process and the language of book bans

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **Challenge:** A challenge is a formal request to remove or restrict a book or other library material.
- **Reconsideration policy:** A reconsideration policy is a library's written process for reviewing a challenge to a book.
- **Selection criteria:** Selection criteria are the written standards a library uses to decide which materials to include.
- **Claim:** A claim is a statement that something is true. You can check a claim with evidence.
- **Correction:** A correction is a public statement that replaces wrong information with accurate information.

The story: The speed of a word

A group chat claims that one parent's complaint got a novel "banned" from the library at Anika's high school. Gia replies, "censorship, full stop." The next day the school library posts a notice that contradicts the chat. The book remains available while a committee reviews it. Mari, who works the counter at the neighborhood bookshop and is halfway through the novel on audio, catches the contradiction. Gia deletes her reply and admits she had read neither the notice nor the book.

The case is a study in how a single word can outrun a process. "Banned" is vivid, shareable and morally clear. It also asserts a finished outcome. In practice, library disputes pass through stages, and people who want to influence the outcome need to know which stage they are in. Gia's turn is instructive. She plans a bookshop discussion aimed at getting people to the input form before the 15th, and she rules out attacks on the parent who filed the request, noting that the parent used the process too.

Your role is to read the library notice before anyone replies "banned."

Stop and think. Why might advocates on either side prefer the word "banned" or the word "review"?

Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (731 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

Stop and think

1. **After "The story: The speed of a word":** Why might advocates on either side prefer the word "banned" or the word "review"?
2. **After "Mapping the process":** How does the input form's design shape who can take part effectively?
3. **After "Guidance, law and contested terms":** With federal courts split, what can local participation accomplish that litigation cannot?

Mapping the process

The notice describes the procedure. A request for reconsideration has been received for one title. Under district policy, the title remains available during review. A committee will read the full work and evaluate it against the district's selection criteria. Written input may be submitted by the 15th, and the decision may be appealed.

A **challenge** is a formal request to remove or restrict a book or other library material. A **reconsideration policy** is a library's written process for reviewing a challenge to a book. **Selection criteria** are the written standards a library uses to decide which materials to include. These three terms separate what the chat merged: the complaint, the procedure that evaluates it and the standards the procedure applies. The chat's **claim** describes an outcome that the notice shows has not occurred.

The skill here, identifying the stage of a process, rests on two earlier ones. Case 1 sends you to the original source, and Case 3 defines a **correction** as a public statement that replaces wrong information with accurate information. A good correction in this case also respects the notice's silences. It does not name the book, the committee or the criteria, because the notice does not.

The input form reveals what the committee values. It asks for the respondent's role, whether they read the entire work and which selection criteria their comment addresses, within 300 words. Mari's plan fits that design. She will finish the book and then join her personal reasons for caring to the criteria the committee must apply.

 **Stop and think.** How does the input form's design shape who can take part effectively?

Guidance, law and contested terms

The American Library Association's toolkit models a formal reconsideration process in which a committee reads the whole work, and it offers guidance on selection criteria (American Library Association, updated January 2018). This guidance is professional, not legal, and districts adapt it. State legislatures are now writing the rules more directly. Colorado lawmakers advanced a bill requiring clear reconsideration policies (Chalkbeat Colorado, February 10, 2025). Reporting from Tennessee found that a stricter law altered the review steps and that some books quietly disappeared (Chalkbeat Tennessee, September 17, 2024). In Florida, the governor backed limits on repeated challenges (PBS NewsNight, February 23, 2024).

The constitutional status of removals is unsettled. A law-firm client alert explains that the Fifth Circuit applied the government speech doctrine to public library book removals, creating a split with the Eighth Circuit (Cahill Gordon and Reindel, September 22, 2025). National data complicates the picture further. ALA's annual list tracks how many challenges were filed, by whom and how many led to removals (American Library Association, April 20, 2026).

This page continues page 130. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 130.

Guidance, law and contested terms, continued

The book connection offers a contrast. In Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988), Matilda's father tears pages out of her library copy of *The Red Pony* because he disapproves of her reading, and no one reviews his choice. A real school library is supposed to follow a written process instead. The novel does not set rules for real libraries, but it shows what a process is for.

Professional ethics names the values in tension. The ALA code commits librarians to "resist all efforts to censor library resources" (ALA Code of Ethics, 2021). The NEA code says educators "shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view" (NEA Code of Ethics, 1975). Using the right word for the stage is where fair advocacy starts.

? Stop and think. With federal courts split, what can local participation accomplish that litigation cannot?

Sources

Real source | American Library Association | January 2018

Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit: formal reconsideration

Real source | American Library Association | January 2018

Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit: selection criteria

Real source | Chalkbeat Colorado | February 10, 2025

Colorado bill to curb school library book challenges clears first legislative hurdle

Real source | Chalkbeat Tennessee | September 17, 2024

Under stricter Tennessee law, some school library books quietly disappear

Real source | PBS (NewsNight) | February 23, 2024

Tackling Frivolous Challenges to Books in Public Schools

Real source | Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP (**law-firm** client alert) | September 22, 2025

Fifth Circuit Holds That Government Speech Doctrine Applies to Public Library Book Removals, Creating Circuit Split With Eighth Circuit

Real source | American Library Association | April 20, 2026

American Library Association releases 2025 Most Challenged Books List as National Library Week Begins

Real source | Penguin | June 24, 2026

Matilda by Roald Dahl: authorized extract

Real source | American Library Association (ALA) | 2021

ALA Code of Ethics

This page continues page 130. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 130.

Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

[illegible]

Look at the evidence

On your own Read the notice and the input form, and fill in both boxes for each one. About 8 minutes.

Evidence A | Library notice

Reconsideration notice, posted Friday by the school library

A request for reconsideration has been received for one title in the library collection. Under district policy, the title remains available during the review. A review committee will read the full work and evaluate it against the district's selection criteria. Written input may be submitted by the 15th. The committee's decision may be appealed.

Look closely: Which sentence tells you where the book is right now? Underline it.

What it shows

➤ A request, not a decision: the title stays available while a committee reviews it.

What it leaves out

➤ The criteria, the committee's members and what the request says.

Evidence B | Input form

Review committee input form, due the 15th

Name and role (student, parent, staff or community member). Have you read the entire work? Yes or No. Which selection criteria does your input address? Comments, 300 words maximum.

Look closely: Who can send input? What does the form ask before your comments?

What it shows

➤ Anyone in the community can comment, but the form asks if you read the whole work.

What it leaves out

➤ How the committee weighs comments, and the full list of criteria.

Case 7 | Look at the evidence | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min.

💬 Say this

“Find the sentence that says where the book is now. Read it aloud.” — Wait for “the title remains available during the review.”

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat a review as a ban in slow motion. **Listen for:** “They’re reviewing it, so it’s basically banned.” **Then:** Ask what the notice says comes after the review: a decision, then a possible appeal.

📄 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page with the key sentence enlarged.
- Offer the notice as a read-aloud.
- **Cognates:** reconsideration (reconsideración), criteria (criterios), committee (comité), decision (decisión), appeal (apelación), process (proceso), novel (novela), district (distrito), censorship (censura).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask why the form asks whether you read the entire work, and what that suggests about the criteria.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

What is still missing from the evidence?

Q* Which novel is under review and what the request says, who sits on the review committee, what the district's selection criteria say in full, and what state law, if any, adds to the district policy.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a dark vertical margin line on the left side. The paper appears to be part of a notebook or binder, as evidenced by the binding edge on the left.

This page continues page 134. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 134.

Key idea: book challenges

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 10 minutes.

A **challenge** is a formal request to remove or restrict a book or other library material. A challenge starts a review. On its own, it does not remove a book. A complaint, a temporary change and a final decision can happen at different times. Check which stage a process has reached before you repeat a claim.

A **reconsideration policy** is a library's written process for reviewing a challenge to a book. The American Library Association (ALA) recommends that libraries adopt one, and its example has a committee read the whole work. **Selection criteria** are the written standards a library uses to decide which materials to include. ALA's guidance is a professional recommendation, not a law. Each district's adopted policy and the applicable law govern its own process.

Whether removing a book breaks the law is a harder question. Federal courts disagree about how the First Amendment applies when a library removes a book. The answer can depend on where you live. Right now, the notice at Anika's school describes a review, and the novel is still available.

Professional standards

Real source | American Library Association (ALA)

ALA Code of Ethics: Principle 2 (of 9)

"We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources."

In plain words: Library workers who follow the ALA code support people's freedom to read and oppose censorship of library materials.

Question: The district notice says the title stays available during review. Does that match the group chat's claim that it's "gone"?

Your answer

The notice says ____, so ____.

➡ The notice says "the title remains available during the review," so the chat describes a removal that has not happened.

Case 7 | Key idea | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min. Read the key idea and one In the news source only.

💬 Say this

"ALA's code says to resist efforts to censor library resources. Does keeping the book available during review fit that?" — Wait for evidence from the notice.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the ALA code as a law.

Listen for: "The school is breaking the ALA law." **Then:** Say: "ALA's code is a framework for library workers. District policy and the applicable law govern the process."

📖 Support

- Read the quotation aloud. Point out the label: a real source, quoted word for word.

🔗 Stretch

- Use the NEA row. Ask how reading the whole work tests whether a reason to remove a book is reasonable.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** The word "censorship" can start a debate about real books or groups.

Cool-down: Keep the talk on this notice. Ask what the notice says, not which side is right.

A state debated requiring clear reconsideration policies, showing a challenge is a process, not an instant ban.



A state law changed the review steps, so you have to check which rules and stage actually applied.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 136. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 136.

Sort the evidence

On your own Fill in the diagram to show who decides at each stage, which rules apply and where input goes. About 8 minutes.

Replace “banned” with the real chain of decisions. Who decides at each stage, which rules bind them, and where can a student’s input land?

Keep, restrict or remove the novel after review

Who decides

The school review committee, which reads the whole work and votes
District-level appeal and, finally, the school board

Under which rule

District reconsideration policy and selection criteria
State law and unsettled First Amendment case law (Pico had no majority opinion)

Who lives with it

Your way in

➤ Written input on the committee form by the 15th

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

➤ The committee’s view is missing. I would ask how it will weigh written input against the criteria, and what the appeal step involves.

Case 7 | Sort the evidence | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Do the deciders column only.

💬 Say this

“Replace “banned” with the real chain of decisions. Who decides first?” — Model the first decider together: the review committee.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students name the parent as the decider.

Listen for: “The parent decided.” **Then:** Point to the diagram: the parent can ask, the committee decides and the board hears appeals.

📄 Support

- Let students write D, R or A (decider, rule, affected) before they write sentences.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** The missing-perspective question can invite personal reasons a book matters.

Cool-down: No student has to share why a book matters to them. Answer about the characters.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what to check first and explain why, then fix the two marked lines. About 5 minutes.

A group chat says, “One parent complained, so that novel is banned.” What should you check first?

☒ **A** Find the library’s policy and where the review stands.

☐ **B** Ask everyone in the chat whether they like the book.

☐ **C** Read the passage people are upset about, then decide.

Why I chose it

➤ **A. Only the policy and the notice can show the stage. B treats popularity as a decision, and C ignores the whole-work standard the committee uses.**

Improve a draft

A student’s first draft

This is so messed up. One parent complains and **1** now the whole school can’t read the book?? That’s literally censorship and it’s illegal because of the First Amendment. **2** Whoever complained is a terrible person and should mind their own business. Everyone should go to the board meeting and yell at them until they put it back. Books like this are the only ones some of us actually finish. I read part of it last year and it was actually really good. I’m so done with this school honestly.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

➤ **The novel is still available while a committee reviews the whole work.**

Rewrite phrase 2

➤ **The parent used the district’s process. Our input should answer the criteria.**

Case 7 | Practice | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

“The chat says one parent got the novel banned. What do you check first?” — Hold a quick vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students choose to read the disputed passage and decide. **Listen for:** “Just read the bad part.” **Then:** Point to the notice: the committee reads the full work.

📖 Support

- Read the three options aloud before students choose.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

➤ Answer key

A revised version: Update on the novel: it isn’t banned. A parent filed a reconsideration request, which starts a review under the district’s policy. The book stays on the shelf while a committee reviews the whole work against the selection criteria, and there’s an appeal step after the decision. If you care about it, you can send written input to the committee by the 15th; the librarian has the form. Tie it to the criteria and your own reading, and please don’t go after the parent who asked. People are allowed to use the process too.

Other notes on the draft:

- “it’s illegal because of the First Amendment” The law here is unsettled and varies. Don’t claim a verdict.

College

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 12 minutes.

Write an explainer for a public library newsletter or a campus newspaper on how a school library review works. Use the district's reconsideration notice as the example. Separate the district's adopted policy, the ALA's guidance and what courts have and have not settled.

Use: Case documents: the group-chat claim, the reconsideration notice, the committee input form and Mari's statement. Real sources: the ALA toolkit summary, Chalkbeat reports from Colorado (2025) and Tennessee (2024), a law-firm client alert (September 2025) and the ALA's most-challenged books release (April 2026).

You'll make: Explainer, 450—600 words, with a labeled source list

Time: 90 minutes

- 1 Reread Evidence A and mark the stage the novel is at now.
- 2 Fill in the chart: law, adopted policy and professional guidance.
- 3 Label each source by type: example, news report, secondary source or national data.
- 4 Draft the stage, rules and source-list sections in the Your draft boxes.
- 5 Finish the explainer on lined paper, 450 to 600 words, with a labeled source list.
- 6 Check your explainer with the questions on the Check your work page.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

The novel's stage

🔗 Under review and still available. Input is due by the 15th, and the decision may be appealed.

Case 7 | Your task | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 12 min.

✂ Short on time: 12 min.

💬 Say this

"Your reader saw a headline that said "banned." What stage is the review at?" — Point to the notice's second sentence.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Explainers treat ALA guidance as law.

Listen for: "The ALA rules say the book must stay." **Then:** Ask who adopted the rule. The district adopts policy, and ALA offers guidance.

📄 Support

- Chart: law, adopted policy, professional guidance
- Stage map: request received, committee review, decision, appeal
- Model sentence for unsettled law: "Courts disagree about ..."
- Model sentence: "Courts disagree about how the First Amendment applies to library removals."

🔗 Stretch

- Explain why *Island Trees v. Pico* (1982) left the law unsettled. Use the 2025 law-firm alert to show that federal appeals courts still disagree about library removals, without predicting an outcome.

Your task, continued

Policy, guidance and courts

Policy: _____. Guidance: _____. Courts: _____.

➤ Policy: the district's reconsideration policy. Guidance: ALA's toolkit, which is not law. Courts: Pico had no majority opinion, and courts still disagree.

Source labels

➤ Notice and form: examples. Chalkbeat: news reports. Law-firm alert: secondary source. ALA list: national data.

Notes

Case 7 | Your task | College educator edition

This page continues page 140.

☑ Standards

AAC&U VALUE rubric: Information Literacy VALUE Rubric; Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric.

ACRL Framework: Authority Is Constructed and Contextual; Information Has Value.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

➤ Answer key

A strong response:

- States the novel's stage accurately: under review and still available
- Separates the district's policy, the ALA's guidance and court decisions
- Describes Pico as a decision with no majority opinion
- Labels the law-firm alert as a secondary source and the ALA list as national data
- Keeps a neutral tone and names no one who filed a challenge or gave input

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 35 minutes.

How a review works

🔗 What happens when someone challenges a school library book? In our example, a parent's request started a review under district policy. The title remains available during the review. A committee will read the full work and judge it against the selection criteria. Students, parents, staff and community members can send written input by the 15th, and the decision may be appealed.

Policy, guidance and the courts

🔗 Three kinds of rules shape a review. The district's adopted policy governs this process. The American Library Association's toolkit is professional guidance for libraries to adapt, not law. Courts are the third layer, and there the law is unsettled. *Island Trees v. Pico* (1982) had no majority opinion. A 2025 law-firm alert reports a split between the Fifth and Eighth Circuits over public library book removals. This explainer does not predict how any court would rule.

Case 7 | Your draft | College educator edition

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 35 min.

✂ Short on time: 35 min.

💬 Say this

"Could a reader on either side of this debate trust your explainer?" — Partners mark any word that picks a side.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Explainers predict a legal outcome. **Listen for:** "The court will order them to put it back." **Then:** Ask which source predicts that. None does, because courts still disagree.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Book challenges can bring out strong political and religious views.

Cool-down: Say: "We explain the process. We don't rule on the book."

🔗 Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. States the stage accurately.
2. Separates guidance from law.
3. Describes *Pico* accurately.
4. Keeps a neutral tone.

Your draft, continued

Labeled source list, first two entries

Chalkbeat Tennessee, September 17, 2024 (news report). Cahill Gordon & Reindel, client alert, September 22, 2025 (secondary source).

Notes

[illegible]

This page continues page 142. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 142.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions, mark your level in each rubric row and write one change you made. About 6 minutes.

Does your explainer state the novel's stage accurately? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does it separate the district's policy, the ALA's guidance and court decisions? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does it describe Pico as a decision with no majority opinion? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Are your sources labeled by type, with no one named who filed a challenge or gave input? ☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ Repeats "banned."	☐ Mentions a complaint without stage.	☐ States the current stage from the policy.	☐ States stage, next steps and input route.
Reasoning	☐ Declares a legal verdict.	☐ Treats outrage as the argument.	☐ Separates complaint, review and decision.	☐ Connects input to criteria and notes legal uncertainty.
Audience & purpose	☐ Attacks people.	☐ Rallies without direction.	☐ Gives a useful participation route.	☐ Invites participation while respecting other readers and the parent.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Tone only.	☐ Corrects the stage and removes attacks.	☐ Explains how each change helps the chat act accurately.

Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

 Short on time: 6 min.

Say this

"Mark your level honestly. Then make one change and say why." — Ask for one corrected stage or one removed attack.

Watch for

Misconception: Students keep a legal verdict in their reply.

Listen for: "It's illegal, period." **Then:** Point to the

Reasoning row: the law here is unsettled and varies.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: Score with the case rubric. Add checks for an accurate stage, an accurate account of Pico and neutral, clearly labeled sources.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** States the current stage from the policy.
- **Reasoning:** Separates complaint, review and decision.
- **Audience & purpose:** Gives a useful participation route.
- **Revision:** Corrects the stage and removes attacks.

Check your work, continued

One change I made after feedback

I changed ___ because ___.

➤ I labeled the law-firm alert as a secondary source, because it reports on a court decision instead of being one.

Notes

[illegible]

This page continues page 144. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 144.

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete the sentence frames below. About 8 minutes.

- 1 Whose reading experience is missing from the crew's discussion of the novel?

➤ Readers at Anika's school are missing, including the family that filed the request. Mari is halfway through, and Gia had not read the book.

- 2 Gia says nobody should go after the parent who asked for the review. Why might that matter for her bookshop discussion?

➤ The parent used the same process Gia wants people to join. Attacking the parent adds a target but gives the committee nothing to weigh.

- 3 How does calling the same action a "review," a "restriction" or a "ban" change what people think happened?

➤ "Review" names a process, "restriction" a partial limit and "ban" a final removal. The notice supports only "review," and the other words may stop people from sending input.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ My claim: the novel is under review, not banned, so a reply should name the stage and the deadline.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

➤ The best evidence is the notice, because it says the title remains available during the review.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min.

💬 Say this

"Answer with a detail from the notice or the form, not a feeling about the parent." — Post the question numbers and hear one answer per question.

➤ Stretch

- Ask how Gia's bookshop invitation could name the book, the stage and the deadline without naming the parent.
- Going further: Find the institution, its written policy and the decision process before you make a claim about rights. Which of the three does the district notice tell you about?
- Going further: What problem does a proposed restriction on a book claim to solve? Which readers' experiences or other options are missing from that proposal?
- Going further: Design a library notice that explains where a book review stands, and write a short guide for interviewing a librarian. Test whether a student can name the next document to ask for.
- Going further: Ask your school librarian how book challenges are handled. Find the written policy on the district website, and learn whether students can give input during a review. If a review is happening, read the whole book before you comment.
- Find your district's reconsideration policy and summarize its stages
- Research how your state's laws about school library materials have changed recently

My take, continued

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

Someone who disagrees might say a review alone can discourage people from borrowing the book.

The limit of the evidence is ____.

- The limit of the evidence is that we don't know the criteria or what the request says.

I would change my mind if ____.

⦿ I would change my mind if the library pulled the book before the committee decided.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 146.

Heat check

Question 1: Medium. Students may feel pressed to share why a book matters to them personally.

Cool-down: Say: “Answer about the characters, not yourself.” Nobody has to share a personal reason.

Question 2 cool-down: Say: “We discuss the request, not the person.” Return to what the notice says.

Talk about this case at home

Case 7: Did one complaint get the novel banned?

In this case, a group chat claims one parent's complaint got a novel banned from a school library. Your student compared that claim with the library's notice and learned how a book review works.

Questions to talk about

- 1 What is the difference between a book being reviewed and a book being removed?
- 2 Where could someone find out how a library decides which books to keep?
- 3 How can people disagree about a book without attacking each other?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.

Case 7 | Talk about this case at home | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

💬 Say this

“Bring this page home, or read it with someone you trust.”
— Nobody needs to share their views on any real book.