



THE LIBRARY 100

The **top 100 novels** of all time found in libraries around the world.

What makes a novel “great?” At OCLC, we believe literary greatness can be measured by how many libraries have a copy on their shelves. Yes, libraries offer access to trendy and popular books. But, they don’t keep them if they’re not repeatedly requested over the years. We’ve identified 100 timeless, top novels—those found in thousands of libraries around the world—using WorldCat, the world’s largest database of library materials.

The Library 100 is brought to you by OCLC, a global, nonprofit library cooperative. Since 1967, OCLC members have worked together to help make it easier for people to find and access library materials. Today, OCLC has more than 18,000 member libraries of all library types, including university and academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries, and museums. OCLC’s library membership is global, representing 120 countries.

Explore the list, share your thoughts and find out more!

Visit the website
oc.lc/library100

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“What should I read next?”



One of the most welcomed, fun, interesting and (sometimes) challenging questions that any avid reader can be asked. Library workers get that question more than most, obviously. And they are a reliable, knowledgeable and enthusiastic source for book recommendations.

WorldCat is a database of the materials found in thousands of libraries worldwide. It's the largest of its kind in the world, with information about more than 2.7 billion items, including books, movies, music, art, digital materials, and real-life artifacts. Readers and researchers can search WorldCat at worldcat.org, a free search engine.

Materials in libraries are described and tracked in WorldCat in two ways. Any specific work of literature, music, art, history, etc., has an associated **catalog record**. This describes the item in a general sense. Every copy of the same book, for example, shares the same record. WorldCat also tracks library **holdings**, which indicate that a specific library has (or holds) at least one copy of that item.

The Library 100 is based on the total number of holdings for a specific novel across all libraries that have registered that information in WorldCat. When a library tells OCLC, “We have a copy of that book,” that counts as a holding, and in the case of the Library 100, counts as +1 toward its ranking on the list.

And because WorldCat is used in academic as well as public libraries, it means that these novels aren't just widely read... they're also assigned, studied, taught and turned into films more than any others.

So if someone asks, “What should I read next?” you can start the conversation with, “Have you heard of the Library 100?” Not just as a source for new reads, but to start a discussion about how books on the list can lead to other new discoveries.

How to use the list

We hope that The Library 100 provides you with several new, fun and interesting ways to promote the novels your library holds. And to start conversations about what the global “collected collection” of library materials means for us as readers, teachers, students and creators.

Discussion opportunities for you and your library’s users:

Celebrate the unique work that libraries do. It’s a chance to remind your community that—unlike for-profit publishers or a snapshot ranking of purchase popularity—libraries preserve and promote important books for decades and generations... not just for one month or a year.

Connect people from popular, modern fiction that they’re reading now to classics that influenced their favorites. If someone loved “The Hunger Games,” they’d probably enjoy “Fahrenheit 451” and “1984.”

Discuss what’s not on the list, and why. The Library 100 isn’t an argument or judgment. It’s based on a specific set of data—novels that libraries make available. The count isn’t subjective. What is, however, are the systems and policies that have guided 40+ years of library collection development.

The Library 100 does not reflect today’s diverse global community, nor represent the breadth of everything available in library collections. It can be considered an “average” of widely circulated novels in libraries today. There’s a lot more variety in any specific library. But the titles on the list can spark a conversation about diversity and inclusion.

Ask people what they think should be on the list.

That’s a follow-up to the above discussion. We can celebrate the novels on today’s list. These are important books. There’s no question about that. And libraries are committed to preserving, protecting and sharing our collected narratives. But what books from less-represented groups should be on this list in the future? How can libraries identify important novels that may not be on best-seller lists or taught today to answer the question, “What should I read next?”

Discuss how the list might change in the next 5, 10, or 20 years. Will anyone still be reading “Harry Potter” in 2050? What about Mark Twain? What newer books do you think will stand the test-of-time, and which will go the way of one-hit-wonder pop fiction?

Use it as an opportunity for library literacy. Tell your patrons how you choose what goes on the shelf. Explain your acquisition, cataloging and retention (and discarding) processes. Many people don’t understand how books get into libraries. Since this list represents how a lot of books got into a whole lot of libraries, it might ignite sparks not just for future readers... but for future library workers!

Activity ideas

- Print and post the 8.5x11 poster in this kit to get the ball rolling.
- Add the web graphics to your library site or use them in social media promotions.
- Print the checklist and ask patrons to mark any books they've read. Has your library, collectively, read all of them? Maybe have a small celebration when you check off the last of the 100 novels?
- Print/cut the table tents and put them out near a display of books from the list, or even just one or two on a table to get people thinking.
- Print/cut the shelf-talkers and slip them onto the shelf under a book on the list to draw attention.
- Print/cut the bookmarks for general use and promotion.
- Print/cut bookmarks and put them in each of the books on the list as a surprise in the stacks.
- Do an "if you liked, then you'll like" display that matches current favorites with books from the list.
- Ask patrons who have read several books in one genre to lead a discussion group about that genre for newcomers.
- No matter what you do, please share pictures and stories, questions and ideas with us using the hashtag **#Library100Novels**. We'll pass them along to all our followers!

See the complete list of The Library 100 novels at oclc.org/library100.

Because what is known must be shared.®

