

Ask Rita

Resourceful



We welcome any questions you may have for Rita Resourceful. To protect Rita's identity, please email them to tingleditor@gmail.com, with the subject line "Ask Rita", and we'll be sure to pass them along!

Dear Rita Resourceful,

This year the Parent Council at my school donated some funds to the library. I was delighted to use the money to order some much-needed graphic novels. One of the books I bought was an encyclopedia of various influential authors' and illustrators' work. When the books came in, I put them out for the Parent Council meeting after school.

The next morning the principal came to see me with the very book I just mentioned flagged with dozens of sticky notes. Flipping through the pages, and making "tisking" noises, my principal asked, "Is this a Ministry-licensed

book?" I could see that the head of the Parent Council and the principal had spent considerable time finding and earmarking each illustration that depicted anything racy.

I managed to convince the principal that the book would remain part of the "professional resource" collection to assist teachers in their understanding of the graphic novel genre.

Did I do the right thing?

*Signed,
Indignant*

Dear Indignant,

Book controversies are delicious and often get people reading. Job well done. If you still feel indignant about the incident, however, many school boards offer assistance, resources and professional development opportunities focused on collection development. These items may help you to articulate your decisions for purchasing any book for your library collection. In addition, if a learning resource is formally challenged, your board may have procedures in place for dealing with public concerns.

Dear Rita Resourceful,

I'm a high school teacher-librarian who has lost confidence in my book-buying acumen. For years I've purchased books based on my observations of student reading trends, reviews of new books and my personal experience but now I wonder whether I'm irrelevant and should just use online user communities, search engines, databases like Novelist,

and commercial sites like Amazon.ca that can suggest books based on past purchases by dedicated users.

*Signed,
Amy Irrelevant*

Dear Amy,

The Internet does provide librarians with a vast quantity and quality book recommendation resources but that doesn't make you irrelevant. You still know your students' interests, their personalities, and you are uniquely positioned to recommend books from different genres to help your students explore literature. They trust your judgment. In your letter you mention many of the key ways to find books online. Many students need your help to become familiar with and stay abreast of online tools.

Dear Rita Resourceful,

At the end of June my school principal insisted that I print out a full list of overdue library books and post it on the bulletin board outside the library. This isn't at all how I've handled overdue books in the past and I flatly refused. Any suggestions on what I can do to patch things up this year?

*Signed,
Miffed*

Dear Miffed:

You were right to refuse to post overdue books outside the library because this is a breach of student confidentiality. You may want to take some time, however, to help your principal understand your reluctance. Here are a few fictional