

# 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](mailto:TingLeditor@gmail.com), with the subject Ask Rita, and we'll be sure to pass them along!

*Dear Rita,*

There are students who arrive at the library for “free time” and they don’t want to read. I found a chess set and a deck of cards and I am wondering if these games can have a place in my library program?

*Sincerely,  
Might B. Game*

*Dear Might B.,*

Give it a try! I am sure you want to encourage all kinds of readers in the library. Entice them in with a chess set and lead them to the 700s and to some of your chess strategy books. Consider hosting an Infinity Ring or Spirit Animals book club and introduce readers to the companion games available online at [infinityring.scholastic.com](http://infinityring.scholastic.com) and [spiritanimals.scholastic.com](http://spiritanimals.scholastic.com). Schedule a time with access to computers or tablets to play Minecraft and buy the Minecraft handbooks for the collection. No matter what blend of games and books you offer, you will draw students to the library and will expand the role of the library as part of the school community. Games will help the school library evolve into an even more welcoming learning commons.

*Dear Rita,*

Recently an openly gay student told us he would like to read novels with characters to whom he could relate. I have found a number of books that I am going to purchase and add to our collection. It has been suggested that

the books be catalogued but kept out of general circulation in the library office. This feels wrong. What should I do and how will I explain my decision?

*Hide ‘n’ Seek*

*Dear Hide ‘n’ Seek,*

You are correct in feeling that hiding the books would be wrong. The suggestion that the books be kept out of circulation seems to be saying that stories with gay characters, including the work by gay authors and by extension all gay people need to be hidden away and kept out of public view. This is nothing less than censorship and an example of homophobia. We are not dealing with offensive material, obscenity or extreme content. We are providing literature which will allow not only our gay students but every student who reads the titles the opportunity to begin to understand what it is like to be gay. It is our duty to uphold the intellectual freedom of our students. As teacher-librarians we need to build diverse and inclusive collections. Catalogue the books, display them with other new titles, and store the books in the stacks where any student can find them. If called into question, explain that you will guarantee the intellectual rights of all of your students and if necessary you can quote your school board’s equity and diversity policy. You might even create a display of a variety of titles promoting diversity and inclusion.