

# The importance of weeding library stock



**Some libraries look jam-packed full of books, but on closer inspection many of those books are at best tired and out-dated and at worst inaccurate and reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Here are some tips to help you make good book stock decisions:**

- Quality over quantity
- Maximise resources by ensuring every book justifies its place in the library, and that each title is used to its full potential
- Resist the temptation to hold onto old books, even if budgets are tight
- Poor performing books should be removed to allow other books to shine
- Check that non-fiction books are accurate and reflect the curriculum
- Consider a policy on the maximum age of books (eg max 5 years for non-fiction) and remove any that are older
- Older stock is less likely to be representative or diverse
- Children are choosy and unlikely to pick up a dog-eared book no matter how good the story inside! As Cressida Cowell says **“I make the cover shiny and jewel-like so that, in the mind of the child, books are sweets, not brussels sprouts.”**
- You might only have one chance to appeal to a reluctant reader – if they find the books unappealing, they may write-off the library for life!

**Getting rid of books can be difficult and divisive, but if they're not good enough for your pupils, they probably shouldn't go to a charity shop!**

## A Selection Criteria

Having a selection criteria can be a useful tool to help you say no to well-meaning but unwanted donations. Public libraries have strict criteria, and so should school libraries too. Suggestions include:

- Accept only new or nearly new books published in the last five years by mainstream publishers
- All library stock must be considered on its relevance and appeal to students
- Library stock should reflect the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010: **[equalityhumanrights.com/equality](http://equalityhumanrights.com/equality)**
- Books must reflect the current curriculum

- Consider a statement on non-censorship of books and an acknowledgement that materials may contain challenging content but will not be excluded
- Popular books that are 'of their time' can be used to promote discussion

## Book Disposal

Use book recycling services such as:

**[webuybooks.co.uk](http://webuybooks.co.uk)**

**[ziffit.com](http://ziffit.com)**

**[bookrescuers.com](http://bookrescuers.com)**

**[betterworldbooks.com](http://betterworldbooks.com)** (*collection in Scotland and London only*)

Some household recycling centres have book recycling bins. Alternatively use them for arts and crafts, there are lots of ideas on Pinterest.



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