



Novelist
Core Collections
Weeding Checklist for Libraries

Why weed?

Weeding serves several purposes. First, it removes old and outdated books from your shelves. Second, it frees up shelf space in your library. That extra shelf space makes your library more attractive and makes it easier for your patrons to browse – and allows you to continue to expand your collection. Lastly, the act of weeding gives you greater familiarity with your collection.

Overall strategy

- Develop a collection development policy that includes weeding guidelines. Having documented guidelines helps when patrons have any questions about items that have been weeded or concerns about the library getting rid of materials.
- Gather usage statistics on your collection. Such statistics might include how recently a book was checked out and how recently it was used in the library. Consult the [Novelist Select Dashboard](#) to see how often a book is viewed in your library's catalog.
- Use the CREW Method (**C**ontinuous **R**eview, **E**valuation, and **W**eeding) to plan and integrate weeding into your library's tasks.
- Create a weeding schedule, keeping in mind that weeding should be an ongoing process.
- Weed with a partner. You can remind each other of your established guidelines and offer different perspectives while examining gray-area questionable items.
- Keep materials needed for weeding (book cart, place markers, book repair slips, sticky notes) in an easy to find place.

Weeding guidelines

Use the acronym MUSTIE to help determine if an item should be weeded or not. Weed items that are:

- Misleading and/or factually inaccurate
- Ugly - Worn out beyond mending or rebinding
- Superseded by a new edition or a better source
 - Use Core Collections to check the publication dates of books to be weeded and check if a new edition has been released.
- Trivial – No discernible literary or scientific value. Core Collections can help you determine if a book might fall in the trivial category.

- Irrelevant to the needs and interests of your community
- Elsewhere – Easily obtained from another source

Core Collections provides recommendation levels that will help you determine whether a book is still a valid choice for your library. Core Collections also includes full-text articles and book reviews to help you evaluate titles.

- **Essential** titles are the highest priority to retain for all libraries.
- **Recommended** titles are recommended to retain for a well-rounded collection.
- **Supplemental** are good titles to retain for in-depth subject collections, larger libraries, and bigger budgets.
- **Weeded** titles are not recommended as titles to retain. They have been weeded due to newer editions, they contain out-of-date content, they are no longer relevant, or they have been supplanted by other topics.

You can also browse by recommendation level category and award winners from the Core Collections Home page.

Also keep in mind...

- Multiple copies – Are there many copies of an older title that do not circulate frequently? You may not need to keep all of them on hand.
- Age – Is the item no longer of interest to the general public? You may not need to keep titles that have been supplanted by new reader trends or newer bestsellers.
- Frequency of Use – Has the item been checked out within the last 3-5 years? You may want to feature the book more before you decide to weed it.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – Does an item show characters as stereotypes? You will want to remove offensive books.

Do items in your collection represent diverse people of different races, ethnicities, backgrounds, religions, perspectives, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientation, abilities, etc.? You will want to conduct a diversity audit of collection to make sure those in your community have access to both [windows and mirrors](#) in your library.

- Community Interest and Relevance – Is the item one that is of special interest to your community, for example local authors, history, or genealogy? You will want to keep items of special interest to your community.
- Format – Is the item's format no longer commonly used in your community? Is the topic one that would have more currency in online materials or formats? You may not need to keep these items in print.

Online Resources for Further Reading

<http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet15>

<http://libraries.idaho.gov/files/Weeding2018.pdf>

<https://azlibrary.gov/libdev/continuing-education/cdt/weeding>

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/pubs/crew/crewmeth08.pdf>

<http://awfullibrarybooks.net/sample-collection-documents/>