



Title: The Freedom Writers Diary (20th Anniversary Edition): How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them

Author: The Freedom Writers and Erin Gruwell

Imprint: Crown

Publisher: Crown Publishing Group

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ISBN: 9780385494229

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BOOK RESUME: THE FREEDOM WRITERS DIARY

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In 1994, an idealistic first-year teacher in Long Beach, California, named Erin Gruwell confronted a room of “unteachable, at-risk” students. She had intercepted a note with an ugly racial caricature and angrily declared that this was precisely the sort of thing that led to the Holocaust. She was met by uncomprehending looks—none of her students had heard of one of the defining moments of the twentieth century. So she rebooted her entire curriculum, using treasured books such as Anne Frank’s diary as her guide to combat intolerance and misunderstanding. Her students began recording their thoughts and feelings in their own diaries, eventually dubbing themselves the “Freedom Writers.”

Consisting of powerful entries from the students’ diaries and narrative text by Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* is an unforgettable story of how hard work, courage, and determination changed the lives of a teacher and her students. In the two decades since its original publication, the book has sold more than one million copies and inspired a major motion picture *Freedom Writers*. And now, with this twentieth-anniversary edition, readers are brought up to date on the lives of the Freedom Writers, as they blend indispensable takes on social issues with uplifting stories of attending college—and watch their own children follow in their footsteps. *The Freedom Writers Diary* remains a vital read for anyone who believes in second chances.

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Teacher’s Guide](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- [Record of challenges created by Marshall University](#) (2007–2008)
- [“Books Challenged or Banned in 2006–2007,” Illinois Library Association](#)
 - “Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) . . . ‘After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors,’ the county prosecutor wrote.”
- [“Freedom Writers Diary Pulled from Indianapolis Classroom,” National Coalition Against Censorship](#) (2008)
 - “There is, in our view, no legitimate pedagogical justification for removing the book. *The Freedom Writers Diary* is the true story of an English teacher who reaches out to ‘at risk’ high school students by encouraging them to write personal and candid diaries. The book has been taught successfully in schools across the country, and has inspired both students and educators alike

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Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

in its story of the positive effect and transformative power that journal writing can have on students' lives and education."

- ["Horry County School Board votes to remove 2 books, places another on restricted list," WPDE \(2024\)](#)
 - "The Horry County School Board voted to remove two books from district libraries, and another will require parental/guardian permission for students to read. . . . The board deemed 'The Freedom Writers Diary' by Erin Gruwell . . . age-inappropriate."
- ["More than 1,600 books banned in Escambia County, Florida," PEN America \(2024\)](#)
- ["Why This Florida Mom Sued the Board of Education Over Book Bans," Time \(2024\)](#)
 - "Three Florida parents sued Florida's Board of Education on Thursday because they allege the board violates their rights by not having a process to object to the removal of books from school libraries and classrooms. . . . Parents of public school children cited the removal of books including . . . *Freedom Writers Diary*, and others in the complaint."

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