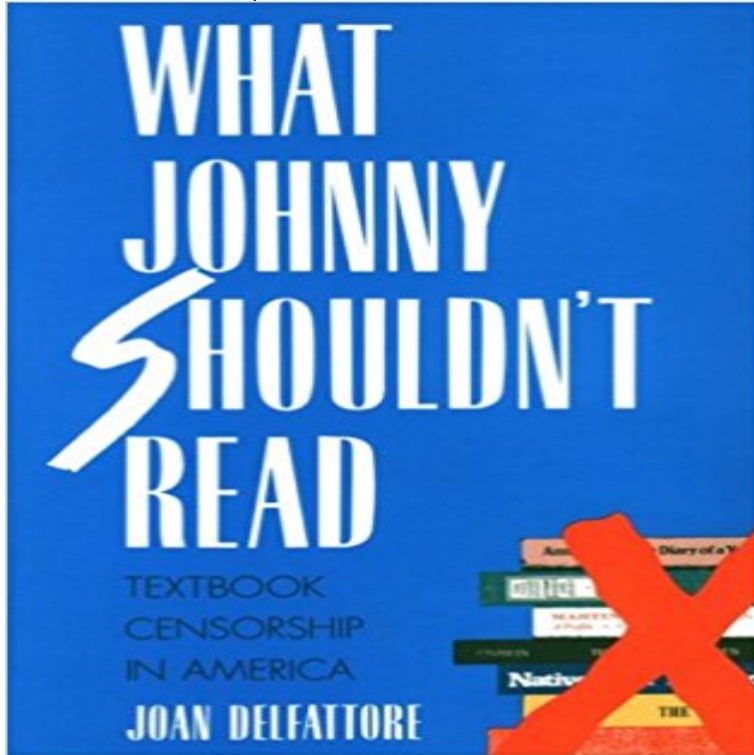


## What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America



In this lucid, disturbing, and provocative book, Joan Delfattore offers a behind-the-scenes view of the ways in which special-interest groups influence the content of textbooks used in public and private schools throughout the country. Efforts to censor elementary and high school textbooks have proliferated in the past decade. Most challenges have come from ultraconservative activists who oppose evolution, racial and ethnic equality, nontraditional gender roles, pacifism, and a host of other issues that contradict their religious, political, or social views. Other protests originate with ultraliberal activists whose goal is to eliminate all negative or traditional descriptions of racial, ethnic, religious, or gender groups, without regard for accuracy or historical context. Delfattore focuses on recent federal lawsuits involving attempts to censor or ban biology, geology, history, home economics, literature, psychology, reading, and social studies textbooks. She vividly re-creates the story behind each lawsuit, describing how politically sophisticated national organizations turn local controversies into nationally publicized court cases. She also discusses how both ultraliberal and ultraconservative groups in Texas and California pressure their state Boards of Education to demand that sections of textbooks be eliminated or rewritten as a condition of selling the books in those states. Because California and Texas are such important markets, says Delfattore, publishers almost always make the required changes in the books, which are then sold nationwide. As a result, the content of American textbooks is heavily influenced by political and economic forces as well as by educational considerations. Delfattore's investigation has profound implications not only for education but also for freedom of thought in the larger society. Her book will be mandatory reading for parents, teachers,

school administrators, lawyers, librarians,  
and other concerned citizens.

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