

	<h1 style="text-align: center;">Weeding Guidelines by Subject</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">Librarians’ guide to de-selecting titles from library collections</p> <p>Adapted in great part from CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew (Texas State Library and Archives Commission) Based on the CREW system (Continuous Review, Evaluation and Weeding). Additionally, other contributors include the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.</p> <p>Compiled by Ed Sadowski, Reference and Instruction Librarian Arapahoe Community College Library, Littleton, Colorado delicious.com/acclibrary</p> <p>1.8.10</p>
	<p>As a foundation to consulting and using weeding guidelines, examine the library's collection development policy. Consider the library’s mission and branding statements as well as the demographics of your community and usage statistics.</p> <p>MUSTIE is an easily remembered acronym for six negative factors that frequently ruin a book's usefulness and make it a prime candidate for weeding:</p> <p>M = Misleading (and/or factually inaccurate) U = Ugly (worn and beyond mending or rebinding) S = Superseded (by a truly new edition or by a much better book on the subject) T = Trivial (of no discernible literary or scientific merit; usually of ephemeral interest at some time in the past) I = Irrelevant to the needs and interests of your community E = The material or information may be obtained expeditiously Elsewhere through interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, or in electronic format.</p> <p>On the other hand, here are some guidelines why books should be kept:</p> <p>These are keepers--examples of categories where discarding is usually inappropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classic, standard works not easily available elsewhere • Items in standard bibliographies • Award-winning items not easily available elsewhere • Material on local, regional history and culture • Items by local authors still alive • Primary source material
	<p>Use patterns and time periods as criteria for weeding: Generally, if an item has not circulated in three to five years, it should be considered for withdrawal, with exceptions noted below. Age of the item (years since publication) is</p>

		generally set at five years, with exceptions that can range from one to ten years or more.
	Yrs. since publ.	
agriculture	3-5	Keep up-to-date; be sure to collect information on the newest techniques and hybrids if library serves farmers or ranchers. Books with current information will probably include discussion of biotechnology and genetic modification. Regardless of use, discard books with outdated and dangerous ideas, such as pest control using DDT.
almanacs	1	Considered to be one of the few essential reference tools. Almanacs contain statistics, facts, current events, historical records and must be updated yearly. Older almanacs may be moved to circulation for retrospective, historical information.
anatomy	5	Anatomy does not change as rapidly as other topics, and may be kept indefinitely. Retain the current edition of classics, such as <i>Gray's Anatomy</i> in the circulating collection, although historical facsimile editions may be retained in reference indefinitely. Physiology should be weeded after five to ten years.
animal science and pets		Veterinary medicine parallels human medicine and must be kept current. Animal training should be kept as use and popularity indicate. Be aware that breed standards change.
anthropology		Watch for new developments, discoveries and theories.
antiques		Keep books on antiques and collectibles, especially identification and price guides, until new editions are available. Discard books that don't have good photographs or that are simply lists of auction prices without good descriptions.
architecture	5	Histories of architecture may include general surveys or specific time periods and regions. Historical treatments do not date quickly. Books featuring house designs and plans should reflect current building methodologies and current tastes in design. Generally discard home design books after ten years regardless of circulation. Be aware of changes in building codes. Evaluate books on trends (such as feng shui), that feature celebrity designers (Martha Stewart's <i>New Old House</i>), or that are based on television shows (<i>This Old House</i>) when interest has waned.
art	5	Art books do not generally become outdated. Fine Arts - weed on condition and use. Keep standard art history titles, checking for condition and quality of illustrations. Architecture - keep historical material and weed on condition and use. Antiques - keep basic books, without prices, based on use and condition. Weed price guides after three years. Interior Design - weed according to taste changes. Drawing and Painting - keep five to ten years as use and condition warrant. Sculpture - keep history according to condition. Keep techniques five to ten years.
art history		Art histories often cover major periods and schools or specific regions of the world. While information may not become dated, watch for cultural, racial,

		and gender biases. Scholarly works that are not useful to general readers can be valuable for students. Discard books that don't include good reproductions of major works of art.
astronomy	3-5	Watch for changes in planet, solar system and universe information. Major changes have occurred, so weed titles that include Pluto as a planet or that don't include information on the space station and Mars expeditions. Stargazing books may be retained longer but should be attractive and mention relevant technology and equipment.
atlases	10	More maps are being made available online but good up-to-date print atlases allow patrons to peruse geographical elements or compare components of several maps. Usually revised every five years, comprehensive geographical atlases (<i>Oxford Atlas of the World</i>) should be replaced when updated. Although published in 1999, <i>The Times Atlas of the World</i> is still considered "the pinnacle of atlases" and should be retained until a new edition is available. Relatively inexpensive road atlases can be replaced every couple of years. Oversized atlases may require special handling to keep bindings intact. Retrospective or historical atlases, such as <i>The Routledge Historical Atlas of Religion in America</i> , may be kept indefinitely as this information is unlikely to change, although new editions or recent publications may update interpretations of events or provide new information. Weed superseded editions and those that do not reflect current conditions, even if new edition is not available. A limited number of atlases may be needed for genealogy and historical purposes and, therefore, should not be weeded. Map books, including local street guides and atlases that deal with local areas and regions may be kept indefinitely. However, these are more appropriately placed in the local history collection, since patrons may not check copyright dates before using them.
audio-visual materials		Non-print (a-v) media should be weeded on a regular schedule just like print materials, although it can be harder to judge content and quality without spending a great deal of time watching or listening to each item. Keep in mind that non-print materials can be difficult to borrow through interlibrary loan. Other issues to consider when evaluating non-print materials include format and condition. Is the format still available? If not and the material are not replaceable, you may want to investigate transferring unique materials to current formats. Watch for broken cases, missing pieces, poor sound, or visual quality of tapes or CDs. Tapes that become twisted should be discarded. Videocassettes should be examined for wear after 100-150 circulations; they will probably need to be replaced after 200-250 showings. Compact discs are relatively sturdy, but they can be chipped, cracked, or scratched.
automotive repair		Automotive repair manuals don't go out of date, so weed primarily on use and condition. If a repair manual has not circulated in two years, it is no longer of use in your community. They get dirty quickly; discard when they are beyond hope or are falling apart. Be especially ruthless in weeding if your library has access to online databases, such as Chiltonlibrary.com, that provide repair instructions and schematics.
bestsellers	10	Can be kept longer by authors still publishing.
bibliographies		Bibliographies and reader's advisory tools maintain their usefulness as long as the items indexed remain relevant and have easily accessible supporting

		materials. Many of these items will be in the reference collection, but older editions may be moved to the circulating collection. In the circulating collection, consider discarding if not used within three years. Discard most bibliographies ten years from the date of copyright or when superseded by a new edition unless the bibliography remains well used either in-house or through circulation.
biographies		The most enduring biographies are those of political, historical, and literary figures. These types of biographies and autobiographies have value for student research and contain primary sources. Unless the person treated is of permanent interest or importance, such as a U.S. President, discard a biography as soon as demand lessens. Replace biographies of people of ongoing interest with newer titles, at least once a decade, as interpretation of their lives and public perception of their impact will change over time. New information about their activities and accomplishments may be discovered. Ruthlessly weed ghost written biographies of celebrities and biographies that were published immediately following the person's death or a major scandal. Poor quality biographies of major figures should be replaced with better ones, when available. Biographies of outstanding literary value, such as <i>Boswell's Life of Johnson</i> , can be kept until worn. Collective biographies usually focus on people from similar disciplines, racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, or geographic areas. Watch for outdated interests and collections that feature gender or race bias.
biographical dictionaries		Replace when newer edition available.
biographical dictionaries for specific period of time		Can be retained indefinitely.
biology	5-10	In general weed after five to ten years, however watch for new discoveries and theories, which are frequent in human biology and especially genetics. Weed genetics after three to five years. Weed microbiology after five years.
botany	5	Botany changes less rapidly than some other areas of science. Weed books that lack color illustrations or that appear dated. Be aware of field guides that promote edible or medicinal plants and herbs to ensure that they meet safety guidelines.
careers	5	Older reference copies may be circulated. Be particularly aware of qualifications discrepancies in materials dealing with career preparation. Books on careers and job hunting should be updated frequently to ensure that requirements are current, although salary information will most likely always be outdated. Weed career guides with gender, racial, or ethnic bias. Even careers that seem fairly stable have experienced significant changes in the past decade.
children's fiction		Among children and teens a passion for horror characterized the late 1980s and early 1990s, while readers today clamor for fantasy titles. Chick lit has held similar sway over adult readers in recent years while urban fiction continues to

<p>Easy Readers/Picture Books J/YA Fiction</p>	<p>gain momentum. So, while some classics may remain of interest and certain authors should always be represented in collections, many customers do prefer contemporary titles for much of their leisure reading. When weeding a genre or section of the collection that is unfamiliar, consult a reader's advisory source. Replace popular titles that are torn and worn. Weed any book that has not circulated in the past two years. Picture books are so heavily used that every title should go out at least once in a two-year period. Discard any books that are not suitable for library use, including those with inferior bindings. Replace as soon as possible books that have been rebound and don't have attractive covers. Books that feature popular and commercial characters should be weeded when interest has faded or the television show is no longer shown. Weed books that reflect racial and gender bias. Use resources like <i>A to Zoo</i> by Carolyn Lima to determine the likelihood of continued usefulness to the collection. Weed award winners if they have not circulated in three years, or replace with a newer hardcover or paperback edition with contemporary cover art. Evaluate closely for outdated styles, artwork, and mores, or biased viewpoints. Discard if format and reading level are not appropriate to the current interest level of the book. Discard topical fiction on dated subjects and cultural fads. Discard abridged or simplified classics in favor of the original unless the particular abridgement has been very favorably reviewed. Discard YA fiction with outdated illustrations, story lines, or subjects. Classics (such as <i>The Pigman</i> by Paul Zindel or <i>The Chocolate War</i> by Robert Cormier) are not subject to the copyright guideline but should be replaced with newer paperback editions. Check for updated editions of popular classics like <i>Forever</i> by Judy Blume that have had terminology and situations updated for contemporary readers. Teen readers are very aware of current trends and therefore it is important to make sure that the covers of books are up-to-date and aesthetically appealing. Maintaining a fresh selection of fiction for teens may occasionally mean weeding titles that are only a few years old. Discard any YA fiction that has been rebound and lacks attractive cover art. Remember that sometimes as an author becomes more popular, his or her older works will be more in demand (and may be more difficult to find). Books in series require special consideration. Some series are sequential and are best when read in order (Harry Potter, for example or Janet Evanovich's Stephanie Plum novels) while others may feature repeat characters but need not be read in sequence. For sequential series it is helpful to retain the complete run while interest is strong if the size of your collection permits. Remember that the release of a new title in a sequential series may create interest in older titles.</p>
<p>children's non-fiction</p>	<p>Use adult criteria for each subject category, but look especially for inaccuracy and triviality—common faults of over-simplified children's nonfiction. Discard titles that are outdated regardless of condition. Many children's books are purchased in library editions that never fall apart! Do not retain books that have erroneous and dangerous information simply because the book is still in great shape.</p>
<p>citizenship</p>	<p>Update items about how to obtain citizenship and study guides for citizenship tests as new editions become available.</p>

collectibles price guides	1-5	Keep stamp and coin catalogues and other price guides up-to-date, replacing books that provide market valuations and price guides after five years. Keep a current edition and one previous edition of price guides that are updated yearly. Consider keeping the current edition of books like <i>The Official Blackbook Price Guide to US Postage Stamps</i> in reference, circulating the older edition if interest is high. Historical treatments of ancient, foreign, and commemorative coins and stamps may be kept indefinitely as long as interest is maintained. Many books on these topics will be used in-house. Antiques - keep basic books, without prices, based on use and condition. Weed price guides after three years.
compact discs (CDs)		CDs are the current format of choice for musical recordings, as well as audiobooks. Ideally, the popular collection should reflect all genres, styles, time periods, composers and performers, as well as include a sampling of collections or anthologies, highlights and greatest hits. Information-based CDs should be evaluated on: physical condition, currency of information, use, and duplication of information in another format. Music CDs may be judged by their popularity with library users. Discard them once use decreases. Consider weeding audiobooks that have not circulated within the past two years, especially nonfiction titles that are outdated and would be weeded from the print collection due to copyright date (of the original book) or erroneous information. CDs are made from the same material used to construct bulletproof windows, polycarbonate plastic. Sources disagree on the actual life span of this medium, and, of course, life span is determined by a number of factors having to do with use and care. Although they will not deteriorate appreciably if stored correctly, circulating CDs sustain damage from mishandling ranging from chips and cracks to deep scratches and warped discs. Light scratches can be polished out, but balance the time spent cleaning and attempting repairs against the replacement cost and continued usefulness of the recording. CDs are also susceptible to temperature extremes, excess humidity, and high intensity UV light. Discs should be regularly checked for signs of damage and discarded. Unabridged audiobooks are expensive; most producers will replace damaged or missing discs at no or low cost.
computers	2-5	Works on computers are seldom useful after three years. Works on hardware and software have an even shorter life span (1-2 years), but may be kept on hand longer if there is strong demand. Keep discussion of specific models and peripherals for no more than three to five years. Weed based on community interests and prevailing computer applications used locally. Retain manuals for software packages (Microsoft Word, Excel, etc.) at least one release back to accommodate people who didn't update their software immediately. Series like the 'Dummies' and 'Idiot's Guide' are more useful to general computer users than in-depth tomes. Discard thick books with few illustrations in favor of slimmer volumes with color illustrations and screen images. Programming languages evolve more slowly and may be retained longer, up to ten years, if the language is still used, or is surpassed by a new version. Topics such as UNIX, Open VMS, Cobol, Fortran should be updated more often. Consider what courses are offered at local community colleges and universities.
cookbooks		Be ruthless in weeding old cookbooks, except for those that are deemed to have historical value. Physical condition is the main criterion as cookbooks that are well used become grungy quickly. Also weed books by celebrity chefs and television cooks once their popularity has waned. Weed cookbooks that

		are based on popular diets (e.g., The South Beach Diet Quick and Easy Cookbook) once the diet is no longer popular. Replace classic cookbooks, such as <i>The Betty Crocker Cookbook</i> , with new editions when available. Books on nutrition and food preparation should reflect current scientific practice. Any titles that mention the four basic food groups should be replaced with titles that discuss the food pyramid.
crafts		Skills required for most crafts don't change over time. Discard handicrafts books based on use but watch for outdated styles and materials. Discard books on crafts that are no longer popular (macramé) or that feature gender bias. Sewing, makeup and hairstyling books all date quickly; weed outdated fashions and styles.
dictionaries	5	Update regularly. English language dictionaries should be replaced five years after copyright except for unabridged dictionaries. Update those when new editions are published. Replace stock dictionaries for major foreign languages (e.g., French, Spanish, Italian, German), and any other languages being studied or spoken in the community on a rotating basis to ensure currency.
dictionaries— foreign language		Foreign language dictionaries should be retained until a new edition is available unless they are unused. Update commonly used languages, such as Spanish, at least once every five years. Older editions can be moved to the circulating collection until they become shabby or cease to circulate. Be aware of changes in the needs of your community; as new ethnic groups move to town, purchase appropriate language materials.
directories		Directories are normally discarded when newer editions arrive, although several years' worth may be retained if space permits and usage warrants. Keep in mind that some directories, like <i>The Statesman's Yearbook</i> , include a subscription to the online service with the print version. This contains archival information and may allow older copies to be discarded without loss of historical data. Telephone and directory information is now online. If you have city directories and local telephone books, which are useful for genealogical research, keep indefinitely as space permits. Older editions should be housed separately from the current editions.
drawing		Books that feature drawing styles and instruction should be weeded based on use and appeal. Retain basic technique books if well illustrated; replace worn and dated materials. Replace books on cartooning and compilations of popular comic strips (Peanuts, Mutts) as they become worn unless interest in the particular cartoon characters has waned.
drugs	3	Keep only the current year plus the previous year (one reference, one circulating) of Physician's Desk Reference (PDR) and other prescription and over-the-counter drug directories, replacing when new editions become available. Do not keep drug guides that are more than three years old regardless.
DVDs/videos		DVDs replaced VHS videos several years ago and Blu-Ray may move to the forefront quickly. There are no real standards for the lifespan of various media. Under ideal conditions, theoretically, any medium could last forever. However, library use is not 'normal' use. Variations in the quality of playback equipment

and handling can mean that some media will not hold up well with even minimal use. Each media format has its own idiosyncrasies for cleaning and handling. Library staff may, for example, be able to buff or clean away minor scratches on a DVD, but Blu-Ray discs require different handling as their hard coat can easily be buffed away, destroying the data. It is generally not worth a lot of effort to clean and repair media. Good equipment that may actually repair damage is expensive and requires a great deal of time (approximately 10-20 minutes per DVD, for example). Review Jim Scholtz's article in *Library Journal*, "To Repair or Not to Repair" for an overview of the technology and a comparison of disc repair machines if you are considering trying to clean and repair discs. Fewer videocassettes are available for purchase and many libraries are only adding videos received as donations. Libraries struggling to maintain a collection in this rapidly disappearing format may be tempted to keep any videocassette regardless of interest, quality, or condition. Any video that has not circulated within the past year should be discarded regardless of its condition. Although there are exceptions, it is probably not reasonable to expect that even under the best circumstances a videocassette can survive more than about 200 to 250 plays before experiencing problems from wear and tear. Some distributors use lower quality (See Scholtz, James. "To Repair or Not to Repair." *Library Journal*, May 15, 2004, p22-25 [AudioVideo supplement]) videotape, thus reducing the price of their titles, but ensuring a shorter tape life. While many libraries rely on patrons to let them know when a videocassette has problems, it is wise to visually examine them for condition at least every 50 circulations. If you are evaluating for content, rely on patron circulation for all entertainment videos. For nonfiction or documentary videos, consider currency of the treatment of the topic; content accuracy; relevance of themes; fairness of racial, cultural, or sex role depiction; and the continuing relevance of the material within the library's overall collection development plan. When examining the media collection to weed, break it down into smaller subject areas that can be easily evaluated. Clearly, any video that has not circulated in the past year should be considered for weeding, especially in the entertainment and feature film categories. However, travel videos and documentaries may circulate less often, and you may want to retain titles that have enduring value but are used less frequently. Keep in mind, however, that if a title hasn't circulated in two or three years, it is unlikely to be requested in the next two years. For help in selecting replacement videos or in judging whether to keep a marginal item, refer to the *Video Round Table's Notable Videos* list at ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/vrt/initiatives/notablevideos The titles on this list are the best of the non-feature films (that is, they are educational, documentary, or how-to films) released during the previous and current calendar year. In general, the same criteria can be used in evaluating DVDs. Minor scratches may not impair usage and patrons will generally let you know if there are problems. Deep scratches usually cannot be easily repaired; the time and equipment needed to effect repairs don't make sense economically for small and medium-sized public libraries. Discard entertainment and feature film DVDs that have not circulated at least once during the past year. There is either something wrong with the unit or patrons have lost interest in the title. Nonfiction DVDs may circulate less frequently, although certainly titles like Ken Burns' *Jazz* or The Discovery Channel's *Meerkat Manor* may rival circulation of feature films. Foreign films and films in languages other than English may also have limited circulation. However, certain communities may have more of a population of non-native English speakers. Keep items in languages used in your community if interest warrants.

earth sciences	3-5	This section includes earthquakes, volcanoes, and other geological topics. Weed books that do not reflect current theories and science on geological activities. Also weed books that have outdated information on major disasters, such as the eruption of Mount St. Helens and replace with recent books that examine the long-term aftermath. Geology books on specific regions, especially of local interest, may be kept indefinitely, or until superseded by newer editions. All general materials should be replaced when new developments occur in the field (e.g., theories about continental drift and plate tectonics have been revised in recent years). Field guides for amateur fossil, gem, and rock hunters can be kept for up to 10 years if physical condition allows or until circulation drops, unless the area described has changed dramatically through man-made activities or natural events. Replace with up-to-date attractive titles that include clear photographs. Weed books on meteorology that do not reflect current weather technology or that include historical weather charts that are more than ten years out of date.
economics	3-5	Update items available in revised editions. Be aware of radical changes in statutes, regulations, or general climate for a particular type of investment. Well-known authors with no newer books available and items intended as histories of a particular era may be retained. Consideration of economics interdisciplinary contribution to geography, history, management, social science and international affairs. Currency of information is the most critical factor in this area; patrons want to know what is happening today when it comes to finances. Money management guides and books on personal finance and real estate investing date quickly. Books on tax return preparation and estate planning must be current to account for changes in laws Update items available in revised editions. Be aware of major changes in state and federal statutes and regulations, or changes in the general climate for a particular type of investment. Classic books by well-known authors who are no longer writing, especially those that deal with principles and philosophies of economics, may be kept as long as interest exists. Weed books that offer advice on 'how to survive' past economic depressions or how to prosper from 'good times' that occurred in the past. Retain histories that explore and analyze important periods, such as the Great Depression, as long as interest warrants.
education	5	Weed outdated monographs. No biographical materials are discarded. Different editions of encyclopedia works may be kept. Books in this section deal with formal and informal education at all levels, including homeschooling, ESL, and lifelong learning. An online acquisition option: current study guides and practice tests are readily available through the Learning Express database. Keep historical materials only if used. Discard all outdated theories; check with an instructor if in doubt. Discard books about getting an education—college guides and entrance examination books—after five years. Most of the information will be outdated. Books about the education system in general and societal issues related to illiteracy and lack of education should be discarded when interest in the writer's theories wane. Replace books on subject-specific curricula as those fields change. Visual appeal is the primary factor for books that offer ideas for lesson plans and activities.
encyclopedias —general	5	For print encyclopedias, keep the most current one in the reference collection, moving older editions to circulate. Stagger replacement sets over a three to five year period. Older sets may be sold or circulated, but withdraw circulating sets once the copyright is more than eight years old.

encyclopedias-- specialized		Subject encyclopedias are issued less often than general encyclopedias and should be replaced with new editions as soon as they are available.
ethics		Replace worn classics with attractive trade paperback editions. Discard if no longer of interest. Be especially aware of outdated philosophies on ethics and moral values and 'hot button' topics, such as euthanasia, genetic engineering, and sexuality.
etiquette	5	Basic titles can be kept until new editions are available. Discard books for specific situations, such as global etiquette, teen manners, and such, as the illustrations become dated or acceptable practices change.
fashion and costume		Books of costumes and fashion history won't go out of date but discard books about specific designers or styles of dress as interest fades.
fiction	3	Fiction can be a very difficult area to weed because in many cases it does not obviously become outdated. However, just as styles in clothing change, there are definite trends in literature, particularly light leisure reading and genre fiction. This is especially true in collections for children and teens whose readers have and express strong preferences for certain types of materials. For guidance in weeding fiction, keep in mind the library's collection development policy and mission as well as individual community's demographics and interests. When weeding a genre or section of the collection that is unfamiliar, consult a reader's advisory source. Remember that sometimes as an author becomes more popular, his or her older works will be more in demand (and may be more difficult to find). Books in series require special consideration. Some series are sequential and are best when read in order (Harry Potter, for example or Janet Evanovich's Stephanie Plum novels) while others may feature repeat characters but need not be read in sequence. For sequential series it is helpful to retain the complete run while interest is strong if the size of your collection permits. Remember that the release of a new title in a sequential series may create interest in older titles. Generally if a fiction book has not circulated in the last three years, it should be considered a candidate for weeding. For some libraries that time period may be shorter, depending upon the size of the branch and the collection. Discard works no longer in demand, especially second and third copies of past bestsellers. Retain works that are in demand and/or of high literary merit, but replace worn copies with new editions. Discard lesser works by classic authors if they are not circulating. Consider discarding all titles in a series if you are not able or willing to replace missing titles, especially if the books do not stand alone.
film	5	This area can include memoirs of actors and performers writing about their craft and overviews or histories of film genres (e.g., horror film, best western movies). It also includes books of trivia based on popular movies and television shows. Weed based on interest and condition.
finance	3-5	Currency of information is the most critical factor in this area--what is happening today when it comes to finances. Money management guides and books on personal finance and real estate investing date quickly. Books on tax

		return preparation and estate planning must be current to account for changes in laws.
folklore		Keep standard works of folklore indefinitely; weed according to use. Folktales never go out of date, so copyright is not a factor. Weed based on the quality of the retelling, especially if racial or ethnic bias is present. Watch for collections that are not circulating. Replace standard collections with new, attractive editions. Most picture book versions of individual folktales will be classified in the children's collection. Fairy and folk tales should reflect a range of countries and cultures. Regional folklore should be represented.
games		Discard and replace as rules and interests change. Handbooks on popular electronic games may be difficult to replace; retain as long as the games are played in your community.
geography	3	Geography books become dated rapidly and should be weeded about every three years unless it has a significant amount of background or history information not available anywhere else. Beyond that, age, usage, size of area collection, physical condition, and number of copies determine decisions.
gift books		Weeding guidelines for gift books are no different than those for purchased materials. The presence of a bookplate does not make an item exempt from withdrawal. The collection development criteria used when selecting new titles should be employed when assessing gift books. Never add a gift item that would not have been purchased. The cost for processing gifts, possible shelf life, and interest are major considerations.
government documents		Already many government documents that were previously available in print format are only available electronically. For non-depository libraries, documents should be discarded when superseded. Also discard documents that are not being used and are available in electronic format on the Internet. If a government document is cataloged in the general collection, weed according to the guidelines for that subject area. Refer to The Federal Depository Library Handbook, at fdlp.gov , for its suggested core collection by library type. This document indicates whether basic titles are available in print or electronic format.
handbooks		Handbooks include a wide variety of resources that pull together a compendium of information on a specific subject or technique. Designed to be easily consulted, handbooks provide quick access to information. Issues such as ease of use, indexing, and other features are frequently the decision maker in weeding questionable handbooks. Many handbooks are updated regularly, and whenever possible, the collection should include the most recent editions. Resources that deal with health issues, such as <i>The Physicians' Desk Reference</i> , must be replaced as soon as a new edition is available. Be cautious about adding older editions to the circulating collection, as outdated information may be dangerous. Subjects in the humanities (music, art, literature) may be retained indefinitely based on usefulness, supplemented by newer texts. Social science reference tools are considered outdated after ten years, by which time outmoded theories and practices are usually revised. Notable exceptions are handbooks that contain significant historical data. If local interest warrants, keep the most recent price guide for collectibles and antiques in the reference

		collection, moving the previous one or two editions to the circulating collection. Very rarely is there a reason to keep older price guides. Science resources are generally outdated in five years, although texts on botany and natural history, especially those covering local areas such as <i>Little Big Bend: Common, Uncommon, and Rare Plants of Big Bend National Park</i> may be retained for longer periods. The most recent automotive repair manuals may be kept in the reference collection; older manuals should be moved to the circulating collection.
history (see also local history)		In general, it is wise to keep: (a) Books that are too new to show use (purchased within the last five years). (b) Older books that reflect the expectations of another era, regardless of the accuracy of predictions made in them about the future. These are useful in lending perspective to present day expectations of our own future. (c) Otherwise inappropriate books if bibliography, appendices, maps, illustrations, or other supplementary features are still useful. (d) Earlier editions of classic or standard texts (at least one copy), regardless of current curriculum usefulness. Consider demand, accuracy of facts, and fairness of interpretation when reviewing histories. Carefully review histories of countries where major political and geographical changes have occurred. Discard older histories that don't reflect the unification of Germany or Vietnam or the break-up of the Soviet Union, for example. Consider discarding personal narratives and war memoirs of World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War in favor of broader histories of these conflicts, unless the author is a local person, or the book is cited in a bibliography as having an outstanding style or insight. Discard dated viewpoints (e.g., the McCarthy Era "World Communist Conspiracy" theory of modern history). Retain books that collect primary documents or include archival photographs unless the reproductions are of poor quality.
holidays		Holiday-specific books may only circulate once or twice a year. Books about celebrations of life's milestones, wedding planning, and holiday celebrations should be discarded as fashions and customs change. Discard books that lack clear color pictures. Discard books that reflect gender, family, ethnic, or racial bias. Discard books by celebrities after their popularity has waned.
horticulture (gardening)		General gardening books may be useful for a long time, so circulation is the main weeding criterion. Books about propagation of specific flowers or plants are considered outdated after 10 years. Books that focus on organic gardening and the use of pesticides and chemicals should be reviewed for accuracy and currency of information after five years. Watch for changes in hybrids and gardening techniques, use of pesticides, and the handling of lawn and garden waste. Discard books with black-and-white photographs in favor of more colorful illustrations.
immigration		Immigration issues change although the collection may also include books that look at historical elements. Retain histories of immigration to the US as long as interest warrants but be cautious about discarding primary source materials and guides that may be useful for student or genealogical research. Weed biased or unbalanced and inflammatory items.
indexes		Many general and subject specific indexes are being replaced by electronic databases. Still, a few important and useful works are provided only in paper format at this time. The library may want to retain older indexes, like <i>Song</i>

		<p><i>Finder</i>, that index material not included in online indexes. In general, paper indexes should be kept only as long as the library retains the materials cited, unless the index will be used to assist in interlibrary loan. In most cases, researchers needing historical information will use a university or large public library. Do not keep older indexes as a fall back in case the database is cancelled! In general, if an index has not been used within the past three years, it is highly unlikely to be used in the next three years. Older editions of <i>Granger's Index to Poetry</i> may be kept if they index out of print volumes that have been retained by the library. Others, such as <i>Bartlett's Familiar Quotations</i> may also be kept, since newer editions delete some items while adding others.</p>
interior design		<p>Keep all materials on the history of interior design that are in acceptable condition. Discard books that feature outdated colors and patterns. Retain basic techniques books if well illustrated; replace worn and dated materials. Discard general home decorating ideas after 10 years unless the decorating style becomes established as a distinct aspect of American interior design (e.g., Southwestern or high-tech).</p>
language		<p>Discard old-fashioned and unsightly textbooks and outdated books of grammar and books that explore the history of languages and word origins. English language dictionaries should be replaced five years after copyright except for unabridged dictionaries. Update those when new editions are published. Replace stock dictionaries for major foreign languages (e.g., French, Spanish, Italian, German), and any other languages being studied or spoken in the community on a rotating basis to ensure currency. Grammar and usage books may be kept up to 10 years.</p>
law		<p>Replace when more current material becomes available. Never keep superseded editions, even for heavily used topics like divorce or bankruptcy. Law titles which pertain to property ownership, real estate, estate planning, probate, wills, business, real estate investment trusts, income tax, pension, social security and taxes should be weeded after three to five years and checked regularly for accuracy and timeliness. Weed out-of-date titles on the Constitution and Supreme Court. Only history of law should be over five years old. Income tax guides – Keep current year plus one. Larger libraries may elect to keep older copies for seven years to meet IRS audit requirements. Books that are superseded by a new edition should be discarded. Keep only the current edition or the edition approved for use in your community of the <i>Uniform Building Code</i> and similar code books for specific areas of construction. General guides on finding and working with an attorney or the basics of our legal system may be retained based on use. Study guides for law school should not be kept longer than three years; check with publishers to ensure that major changes in the test have not occurred. Retain books that examine the history of major legal cases (e.g., Brown vs. Topeka) as long as interest exists. Remember that most government agencies now post the most current legal information, laws, and ordinances on the Internet.</p>
legal guides, basic		<p>Must be current. Such titles as do-your-own divorce, bankruptcy, estate planning should always be updated.</p>

legal forms		These are readily available online; but print versions must be up-to-date (unless older ones are retained for instructional purposes for law or paralegal students, then should be marked as “older edition” or such).
library science		Theory and history of library science titles may be retained longer. Discard all that do not conform to current, acceptable practice. Also weed previous editions of library science textbooks and titles that deal with obsolete services and material types or outdated library technology.
life sciences		Retain indefinitely classics in the field (Darwin’s <i>Origin of Species</i>) replacing with updated editions as wear warrants. Replace books on genetics, genetic engineering, human biology, and evolution due to rapid changes in scientific practices. Weed titles on ecology that appear dated, even if the information is still accurate. Watch for books that are sensational in tone.
literature	5	Age and use are not always accurate guides for weeding literature books. Some critical works (especially superseded editions) can be weeded by date and usage. Books listed in <i>Essay and General Literature Index</i> are retained. The fiction is screened against basic indexes or bibliographies such as the Short Story Index. Keep criticism of classic writers. Keep history unless superseded by better titles. Maintain multiple copies of classic literary works. Criticisms in general collection may not get much use if the library has a good collection of the Gale criticism sets. Full-texts of classics on the Web (Project Gutenberg, etc.) will impact library use. Keep basic materials, especially criticism of classic writers. Discard any works of minor writers no longer read in the local schools, unless there is an established demand among the nonstudent population. Discard older editions of classics that have unappealing covers and yellowing pages, replacing with newer copies or paperback editions. Remember that classics that are being read won’t be weeded—don’t keep classics just because they are classics! Check with local schools and community colleges for assignments or reading lists and check discards against these lists. Discard collections of poetry and short stories that are not being used, especially by minor writers. Series that collect the ‘best’ short stories of the year are rarely read after five years. Also consider weeding collections that are not indexed. Discard books of wit and humor that are not circulating. Watch for collections that feature gender or nationality bias and outdated interests and sensitivities. Humor - keep fresh and new; much is dated after five years, but retain standards.
local materials		The library is also the logical archives of the college (if an academic library), community, and, in many cases, of the county. Retain all books on the history and geography of the city and county unless worn and not repairable. Retain local newspapers for up to five years if they are not available electronically or on microfilm. If the library is the only repository for the local newspaper, consider microfilming or digitizing past editions. Brittle newspaper or fragments have little value in research. Keep local city directories. Keep most books by local authors (even if of minimal literary value) and genealogies of important local families. Local state materials should be weeded lightly, with

		an eye for new editions or updated information. Keep as much as possible. Local history, materials by local authors or with local settings, memoirs, directories and oral histories should not be weeded.
manufacturing		Weed based primarily on use and condition. Keep repair manuals for appliances indefinitely unless the technology is so obsolete that no one in the community is likely to repair the equipment. Some resources may contain information of historical value. Keep works on tools, farm implements, etc. that are still used in your community. Be wary of older books on desktop publishing and printing technology.
marriage, family, sexuality		This section includes books on marriage, family life, and sexuality. Discard as interest in the author or title wanes. Unless a book has an historical approach, the topic is usually outdated within five years.
math	5-10	Books older than ten years should be withdrawn unless they are "classics." Math does not change as rapidly as other subjects. Keep basic math and logic for 10 years. Replace older materials on algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus with revised editions. Discard books that focus on outdated teaching methods and techniques, such as books that feature 'new math' or that focus on slide rules as the primary method for making calculations. Also discard past fads. Discard workbooks and test study guides that have been written in.
medicine and health	3-5	Books in this field must be evaluated regularly and all obsolete materials must be discarded, especially in areas such as pharmacology and therapeutics. Retain classics and related books written by authorities on subjects still referred to by today's physicians. The American Medical Association recommends that all books on medicine and health, including diet and nutrition, be no more than three to five years old. Standard works from such organizations as the AMA, ADA, Mayo Clinic and related health care settings should be retained until new editions are available. Watch for changes in the theory and treatment of specific conditions and diseases that necessitate weeding more frequently. Replace if superseded by newer editions, discoveries are constantly being announced and older materials may be very misleading or even dangerous (do not put older medicine and health titles in book sales). Weed ruthlessly when it comes to current medical practices. Up-to-date information is important, outdated materials must be promptly discarded. Keep only the current year plus the previous year (one reference, one circulating) of <i>Physician's Desk Reference</i> (PDR) and other prescription and over-the-counter drug directories, replacing when new editions become available. Do not keep drug guides that are more than three years old regardless. Regularly review books on fast changing topics, such as AIDS, fertility, cancer, and genetics to ensure that the information is up-to-date and accurate. Anatomy and Physiology do not change as rapidly as othertopics. Weed unattractive titles, especially those that lack good illustrations. Retain the current edition of classics, such as <i>Gray's Anatomy</i> in the circulating collection, although historical facsimile editions may be retained in reference indefinitely.

military and naval science		Weed on condition and use. Watch for changes in military hardware and technology. Armed Forces test guides (ASVAB) must be kept current.
music	5	Music books generally do not become outdated. Keep histories and basic material, especially songbooks.
mythology		Weed only on condition for Greek and Roman mythology; others should be judged on use.
occupational guides	5	These include guides to resumes, interviewing, etc.
paleontology		Current research has changed the previously more static world of fossils. Discard materials that are not being used, as this is one indicator that the information may be out of date. The popularity of topics like dinosaurs may mean that even outdated books are checked out, so watch for new developments and theories about this area. Discard most books that lack color illustrations. Field guides may be kept longer, especially those that cover local regions and the Southwest. Discard older editions as newer ones are received.
paranormal phenomena		Books on the paranormal generally receive high use and should be kept until worn. It will be necessary to replace lost and stolen titles regularly since this category includes the popular topics of witchcraft, fortune telling, dream interpretation, and astrology. High use and wear generally ensures that a fresh supply of books is available.
parenting 3-5 years	3-5	Keep abreast of changing trends and new theories; replace standards like <i>Dr. Spock's Baby & Child Care</i> when new editions are available. Weed books that reflect outdated ideas about gender roles in childrearing.
periodicals		Libraries used to bind most periodicals but the availability of online databases has made this an unnecessary and, in most cases, a wasteful expense. Keep in mind that most patrons rarely refer to a magazine that is more than three years old. Only bind quality periodicals that are in constant use for research (e.g., National Geographic) and that are unavailable in online databases. Most popular newspapers are now available online. For the local newspaper, see section, "Local History."
pets		Histories of specific breeds don't necessarily go out of date but the collection should include books with current photographs and recent 'best of show' winners. Discard titles for once trendy breeds that are no longer popular in your community. Veterinary medicine and animal care has changed significantly in the past ten years. Discard titles that encourage outdated and cruel methods for obedience training and behavior modification.
philosophy		Most philosophy books do not become outdated. Circulation is often low, especially in public libraries, and is not necessarily a guide for weeding. Titles are retained unless superseded by more recent editions. Weed based on interest and use, but maintain a range of titles that explore Western and Asian

		philosophies. Remove scholarly treatments that have limited use unless they are part of the curriculum. Weed books that explain philosophies and introductory books that are not included in standard lists after three years without use. Retain specific philosophical viewpoints, e.g. existentialism. Retain landmark philosophies that shaped history.
photography		Check closely for outdated techniques, and especially outdated equipment; if in doubt, check with instructors or local photography club or buffs. Works about specific photographers, especially historical figures, may be kept as long as there is interest. Collections and histories may be kept as long as use, condition and space allows.
physical education	5-10	
physiology	5-10	Physiology should be weeded after five to ten years.
political science	3-5	Political science interrelates with other fields such as social science, international affairs, geography, history, aerospace sciences, and management. General guides to the political process and the electoral system may be kept longer and are judged more on the basis of use rather than copyright date. Retain titles on the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights regardless of circulation as these may be used more in-house. Books of local political history may be kept indefinitely. Be aware of changes in political rhetoric and discard books with outdated ideas. Be aware also of how books in this classification area interrelate with titles in other areas, such as history. Discard books that compare democracy with political systems in countries that no longer exist (e.g., USSR). Weed books that focus on past presidential elections when they deal with issues that are no longer relevant to current campaigns. "Current affairs" topics are often synonymous with politics, and should be updated every three to five years. Watch for titles that contain out-of-date information on government office holders, etc. Texts on citizenship must be current. Keep popular titles up to three years; historical titles up to five years.
psychology	5-8 3-5	Biography, history of psychology, psychology theory are kept indefinitely, depending on use. Other than classics of psychology that may be used in college courses, most titles in this category may be weeded based on popularity and use. Replace works on clinical, comparative, and development psychology within five to eight years. Replace worn classics with new editions. Replace works on clinical, comparative, and developmental psychology within five to eight years. Self-help psychology and guidance materials may need to be reviewed for dated pictures and concepts. "Pop" psychology titles older than three to five years should be weeded unless author is well known. Keep psychology textbooks for five years only. Review for detailed theories, pictures and concepts. Review self-help books and discard titles that are no longer popular or of current interest or that have outdated ideas. Also consider weeding self-help books that have a copyright older than five years. Keep up with television psychology gurus and weed their books when no longer popular

		or on TV.
public administration		This section includes information about the administration of government, including civil service employment and the military. Standard books, like <i>The US Government Manual</i> , should be replaced as new editions become available. Discard older editions of reference type guides if they are available online unless intense local interest warrants keeping print copies. Keep up-to-date; replace when state and federal administrations change or constitutional reforms occur. Histories of government agencies and the military may be kept as long as interest remains. Also retain classics (<i>The Art of War by Sun Tzu</i>).
quotations		Quotation books may be kept as long as they are useful, replacing or adding new titles to maintain currency.
real estate	5	Watch for changes in real estate law, financing, taxes.
reference		In today's library world, the trend is towards very lean and mean print reference collections. Libraries are redefining reference and recognizing that allowing things to circulate and be used makes better sense in our rich information environment. While tracking the use of non-circulating printed materials is more difficult, condition and your own memory is often a fair indicator of how much a book or set is used. In the past, long lists of "essential reference titles" encouraged librarians to place many things in restricted reference collections. We now know that few things need to be in the library at all times. Changing our definitions of "reference" and recognizing that allowing something to be used to death is a better fate than having to withdraw and destroy a pristine book because its contents are now totally out of date. Many reference works are issued in revised editions, and previous editions can usually be removed. At least one unabridged English language dictionary should be kept as a reflection of past usage but our language is changing daily and a new dictionary every few years is essential. Weeding the reference collection requires some special considerations, especially as more reference collections include electronic resources. Use of printed materials is more difficult to determine since most reference works do not circulate. Most of the criteria for removal remain the same as for circulating collections, with the possible exceptions of use and currency. Some sources are considered reference "classics" and may be valuable for many years. Others (especially scientific, medical and technological works) may be quickly outdated. Many reference works are issued in revised editions, and previous editions can usually be removed. An exception is any new edition that supplements rather than replaces an older edition.
religion		Spiritual and devotional materials, the Bible and other sacred texts, and introductions to the world's religions are timeless. New interpretations of religion keep patrons reading and current editions of spiritual materials encourage use. Try to have something up-to-date on each religion represented by a church, synagogue, or other assembly in the community or region, as well as something on the well-known modern sects such as Scientology. Include timely and comprehensive information on the six major international religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Taoism. This area can be difficult to weed because religious works seem like they should never go out-of-date. However, the language becomes dated, especially in books of sermons

		and religious thought. Keep classics by famous theologians as long as they are popular and in good condition. Weed superseded editions. Keep titles of popular nature no more than five years unless author is well known. <i>The Routledge Historical Atlas of Religion in America</i> , may be kept indefinitely as this information is unlikely to change, although new editions or recent publications may update interpretations of events or provide new information.
science (see also earth sciences and life sciences)	5	Science needs to be continually evaluated and kept up-to-date. Watch for new discoveries and theories. Computer science, electronics, and space science age rapidly and must be weeded in an on-going fashion. Mathematics, chemistry and botany do not change as quickly, but should be reviewed regularly. The history of science should be weeded sparingly. Retain most science biographies. Books by undistinguished authors, in hard-to-read format, with very small print on topics well-covered by other better prepared monographs are discarded. newer materials provide better or expanded explanations of complex subjects, clearer text styles, and better illustrations. New science discoveries, theories and techniques are continuously being updated. Carefully evaluate anything over five years old. Pay particular attention to the physics, environment, and astronomy sections. Keep basic works of significant historical or literary value, such as Charles Darwin's classic <i>Origin of Species</i> , or Michael Faraday's <i>Chemical History of a Candle</i> . Classic works in all fields of science should be retained indefinitely, such as Darwin, Einstein, Newton and Audubon. Replace worn copies with new editions. Watch for multi-volume sets; if the titles are not indexed individually it may be necessary to weed the entire set, especially if the set is cataloged as a single entry. Weed out-of-date science fair materials and experiments as they may contain potentially harmful compounds or dangerous chemical experiments.
social sciences	3-5	Social sciences include a wide variety of topics, including sociology, folklore, culture, crime, and education. The collection should include balanced information that represents various viewpoints on controversial issues and is current, accurate, and fair. Certain subject areas will need constant revision while others should be seldom weeded (especially historical treatments). Depending on the curriculum, historical coverage of economics, communication, transportation, politics, and education will be maintained. Weed "pop" sociology titles more than three to five years old unless author is well known. Weed true crime titles according to demand, use, condition, and timeliness, generally after three to five years, unless author is well known.
sports	5	Books on sports should be weeded if they deal with personalities no longer of interest. Watch for gender and racial bias in sports and athletics. Discard books that have outdated statistics.
statistics (collections, general and by subject)		Almanacs and statistical handbooks are of limited use after two years; keep only the current volume and one or two previous editions except for historical handbooks. Keep the most current copy in the reference collection, transferring superseded copies to the circulating collection. Current census

		information is available online but print on demand copies and print copies of related demographic information should be discarded when new decennial census data is available.
tax preparation guides		Keep current year plus one. If space permits and there is strong local need, keep tax preparation guides for three years to accommodate the needs of those with filing extensions, amended returns, or late filings. Larger libraries may elect to keep older copies for seven years to meet IRS audit requirements.
technology	3-5	Technology is making such rapid advances that materials over seven years old should be viewed with suspicion with obvious exceptions such as auto and appliance repair manuals, cookbooks, books on guns, clock, etc. watch for changes in equipment, methods and fads. Otherwise, weed on condition and use. History of technology should be retained indefinitely. The history of inventions and inventors may be kept indefinitely unless condition dictates withdrawal.
test study guides (ACT, SAT, GED, GRE, MCAT, ASVAB, Civil Service, etc.)	3-5	Test guides for civil service positions and entrance into the military should be discarded after 3 years.
travel	2-5	Guidebooks (such as the Fodor series or Mobil travel guides) are outdated within a year or two. Keep no longer than three years. Historical travel guides, especially those that deal with local attractions (books about Route 66, for example), may be kept longer for archival purposes if interest exists. Watch for changes in country names and for political changes that result in new or reformed countries. (Weed books that still refer to the USSR rather than individual countries, for example.) Atlases should be current, except for historical atlases, and replaced after major changes in political divisions occur. Weed personal travel narratives on use and interest, unless of high literary or historical value.
writer's directories	2	Directories for writers (<i>Guide to Literary Agents</i> or <i>The Writer's Market</i> , for example) should be kept no longer than two years as information becomes dated quickly.