

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Linda R. Silver

Description: How do I decide what to buy and where to buy it? What reference sources do I really need? How much do I spend on books, compared to videotapes, audiotapes, and compact discs? Speakers will discuss collection development policies, including the mission statement, management of donations, and weeding. They will present selection guidelines, resources for identifying and evaluating new materials and sources for purchasing. Maintenance of a current, relevant, balanced collection will be discussed.

Linda Silver has selected children's books in public libraries, school libraries, synagogue libraries, and for the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, where she is the librarian. She reviews and writes about children's materials of Jewish content for national and local publications and is the editor of *Developing a Judaic Children's Collection: Recommended Books and Videos* (AJL, 2001) and of a forthcoming new edition of Marcia Posner's *Juvenile Judaica*. She is a former chair of AJL's Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee and has served on the Newbery-Caldecott Award Committee. Her MLS is from Case Western Reserve University. She can be reached at lsilver@jecc.org.

A. SELECTION OF MATERIALS

Selection Criteria in General

1. Positive Jewish content
2. Compatibility of materials with Movement principles
3. Compatibility of materials with institution's educational philosophy and curricular goals
4. Literary and artistic merit
5. Age-appropriateness
6. Accuracy, solid research, and reputable scholarship
7. Timeliness
8. Sensitivity to Jewish concerns
9. Inviting and "user-friendly" format
10. Favorable reviews

Criteria for Selecting Picture Books

1. Is the content appropriate for the intended age level?
2. Does the book have child-appeal or is it really written for adults?
3. How is the theme developed through words and pictures and what makes it Jewish?
4. In what ways do the illustrations help create meaning from the text?
5. Are the illustrations accurate and consistent with the text and with Jewish practice and belief?
6. What medium has the illustrator chosen to use and does it advance the mood of the story?
7. Is the style of the illustrations appropriate for the story?
8. Does the format seem appropriate to the content?
9. How durable are the paper and binding?
10. Do the format and overall book design expand on the theme or content of the book?

Criteria for Selecting Fiction

1. What kind of book is this (historical fiction, life cycle story, etc.) and what can the reader anticipate from the title, dust jacket illustration, size of print, illustrations, chapter headings?
2. Plot: Is it believable, engaging, suspenseful, well-constructed, age appropriate? Is it marked by Jewish time, Jewish space, Jewish issues, or Jewish characters?
3. Setting: Where does the story take place, how does the setting affect the action, characters, or theme, and does the story transcend the setting to have meaning to today's Jewish children?
4. Theme: What is the theme, is it a Jewish theme, is it age-appropriate, and does it emerge naturally from the story or is it imposed and didactic?
5. Characterization: Are at least some of the characters Jewish? Is characterization believable, convincing, multi-dimensional? Is there character development or growth?
6. Style: Is the writing style appropriate to the subject and natural to the characters? What is the overall mood: reverent, cynical, depressing, hopeful, etc? Are factual details accurate and blended smoothly into the story?
7. Point of View: Is it appropriate to the purpose of the book and is it sensitive to Jewish issues?

Criteria for Selecting Non-Fiction

1. Accuracy and authenticity: What are the author's qualifications to write a book of this type? Are the facts accurate according to other sources? Is the information up-to-date? Are generalizations supported by facts? In the case of folklore and traditional literature, are sources given and explanatory notes included?
2. Content and perspective: Is the subject adequately covered? Is the content and format age-appropriate? Is the content presented objectively or does it favor a particular point of view or ideology? If so, is that point of view or perspective Jewishly acceptable?
3. Style: Is the content presented clearly, in an age-appropriate manner, and in language that is vivid and engaging? Does usage show a sensitivity to Jewish concerns?
4. Organization: Is the information structured clearly and coherently, with appropriate subheadings, and easy to use reference aids such as table of contents, index, bibliography, glossary, chronology, etc?
5. Illustrations and format: Do illustrations clarify and extend the text? Are they accurately presented and clearly captioned? Does the total format contribute to the clarity and attractiveness of the book.

From Selection to Collection Development

1. Developing a balanced collection in content and media type
2. Weeding

B. SELECTION RESOURCES

AJL Publications

Developing a Judaic Children's Collection: Recommended Books and Videos
AJL Newsletter

Other Jewish Review Media

Jewish Book World
Jewish Education News (CAJE) for software reviews
JECC website for software reviews -

Secular Review Media

School Library Journal
Booklist
Horn Book

Jewish Publishers

Orthodox (HaChai, Feldheim, Mesorah/Artscroll, Judaica Press, Merkos/Kehot)
Conservative (United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)
Reform (UAHC Press, CCAR)
General: Jewish Publication Society, Kar-Ben (bought by Lerner)
Mainly Textbooks: Behrman House, KTAV, Torah Aura, Melton

Distributors

Local stores
Amazon
Standing Order Plans (Behrman House, Torah Aura, UAHC Press)
Jobbers (Baker and Taylor, Ingram, Follett, Emery-Pratt)

General Selection Criteria

1. Positive Jewish content
2. Compatibility of content with Movement principles
3. Compatibility of materials with institution's educational philosophy and curricular goals.
4. Literary and artistic merit
5. High degree of potential user appeal
6. Age-appropriateness
7. Accuracy, solid research, and reputable scholarship
8. Timeliness
9. Sensitivity to Jewish concerns
10. Inviting and "user-friendly" format
11. Favorable reviews

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1. What kind of book is this (historical fiction, life cycle story, etc.) and what can the reader anticipate from the title, dust jacket illustration, size of print, illustrations, chapter headings?
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4. Theme: What is the theme, is it a Jewish theme, is it age-appropriate, and does it emerge naturally from the story or is it imposed and didactic?
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