

Weeding

Just like your garden at home, you must weed your library to help your book garden grow. Discarding old, obsolete, irrelevant, worn, and inappropriate materials is very important to maintaining a collection. School libraries are not archival libraries. Our job is not to keep books for as long as possible. The more room you make by discarding books, the more room you have for new books!

Criteria for weeding:

- Materials with old, out-of-date and incorrect information
- Materials with biased, condescending, or stereotyped information
- Worn out or badly damaged materials
- Unused materials – items that have not been used for several years.

Encyclopedias should be updated at least every five years. Older sets may be circulated as regular items, but should be discarded at 10 years. Online reference sources can make replacement of references optional.

If local and state history items cannot be replaced, they should not be weeded.

Weeding can be done in three ways:

- Continuous – pull materials as they circulate (or don't circulate) if they meet the criteria for discard
- Annually – go through the entire collection and weed each year
- By area – over a three-year period, weed a third of the collection (easy/fiction and AV, 000-499, 500-999)

While there are many ways to weed, the 8/3 MUSTIE guidelines is a simple formula:

“Consider a book for discard when its latest copyright is more than eight years ago; and/or, when its last circulation or in-house use was more than three years ago; and/or, when it contains one of more of the MUSTIE factors.”

- **M** – Misleading (and or factually inaccurate)
- **U** – Ugly (worn and beyond mending/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- **S** – Superseded (by a truly new edition or by a much better book on the subject)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)
- **I** – Irrelevant to the needs and interests of your patrons
- **E** – Elsewhere (the material can be obtained expeditiously from another source)

Some subject areas, like computers, technology, and statistics, tend to change quickly, so eight years may be reduced to five or three. Topics of current events also should be replaced earlier. Subjects that may not have changed much may be kept longer than eight years. Biographies of faddish celebrities can be weeded once they are no longer in demand.

Once weeded, the material must be removed from the automated library system. Contact us for help and directions. Remove or use a permanent black marker to cover the barcode and ownership labels. Box and store them. At the end of the school year, they will be collected for recycle by an outside company. Discards may not be given to staff or students. Please call us @ 303-326-1864 or 28451 with questions/concerns.