

Imagine Learning

DEI Content Development Guidelines

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Introduction to the DEI Content Development Guidelines

Imagine Learning is committed to developing educational materials that reflect and support our diverse users. To further this goal, this document includes guidance for all those who plan, create, and maintain content.

This document is directed to internal staff only and should never be shared with customers. The information provided is NOT intended to inform specific language or concepts included in customer-facing materials. This internal content is not held to the same specifications as customer-facing materials regarding terms or concepts banned or restricted in some states' legislation.

These guidelines are intended to communicate a set of guiding principles for Imagine Learning products, not a set of “rules” that must always be adhered to. Content creators are advised to collaborate with Product Managers on the appropriate strategy for the products being created and communicate with them when questions arise to ensure customers’ needs, requirements, and desires are being met.

The **Guiding Principles** that underlie the guidelines are:

- **INCLUSION:** Create products that reflect our users so that students see themselves, their family members, and their communities in the content.
 - Incorporate people, groups, and events that reflect the broad range of society.
 - Make a focused effort to include people and groups who have traditionally been less visible.
 - Ensure that this inclusion is shown throughout the content rather than being relegated to specific units or lessons.
- **REPRESENTATION:** Show people and groups the way they want to be shown.
 - Ensure that names, cultural representations, and terminology are accurate.
 - Show a wide range of individuals in both traditional and nontraditional roles.
 - Ensure representation of diverse body types, ages, and abilities.
 - Show a variety of groups in positions of power, knowledge, and authority.
- **PERSPECTIVE:** Include a diversity of perspectives to create complete and accurate materials.
 - Include the experiences and viewpoints of all groups relevant to a topic or event.
 - Let people and groups speak for themselves.
- **ACCURACY:** Be fact-based, provide context, and talk about impacts. Then let students use critical-thinking skills to draw their own conclusions.
 - Present information objectively; take proactive steps to steer away from instructional bias.
 - Don't tell students what to think. Let them use their critical-thinking skills and reflect as much as possible.

The [Content Creation Framework](#) is a separate document that presents domains to consider when creating content: Representation and Perspective, Academic Success, and Community Connections. Then for each stage of the product development process--from concept to completion--questions prompt stakeholder teams to explore how their work can be more aligned with those domains.



An abbreviated version is included [below](#).

Subject-specific guidelines include guidance for specific content issues in the core areas of Math, Science, Social Studies, and English Language Arts.

Topic Overviews

Each of the 18 entries in this section covers a topic of import to help content creators develop fair, equitable, accurate, and representative content. Each topic overview includes the following sections:

- **Topic Profile** presents the background information, definitions, key concepts, and critical understandings that serve as the foundation for developing content.
- **Avoid/Use** covers specific terminology or types of presentation that should be avoided or used in content creation.
- **Common Misconceptions** presents historical and current stereotypes or misconceptions that must be avoided in content creation.
- **Ask Yourself** includes questions that those working on the content can use to examine their own processes, viewpoints, and beliefs that may inadvertently result in biased content.
- **Quick Links** allows easy access to the other major guidelines sections that address each topic: the Examples and Non-Examples Library and the Additional Resources.

Topic Examples and Non-Examples Library

Several example/non-example sets for each topic show how common misconceptions can manifest themselves and how to avoid them.

Additional Resources

Each topic has a **References** section of authoritative reference sources as well as **Recommended Readings** that include interesting and useful website content, newspaper and magazine articles, and research papers.

The IL [DEI Review rubric](#) is available to assist teams when reviewing content and other materials based on the principals outlined in this document.



Content Creation Framework

During planning, development, and review, it may be helpful to consider questions that prompt stakeholder teams to explore how their work can be more aligned with project goals and guiding principles of DEI.

The content below is an abbreviated version. For more information, consult the full document [here](#).

During Ideation, Requirements, Planning, and Scoping stages:

- How can we ensure that customer research interviews include a high degree of diversity and representation across customer and user groups?
- Do we need multiple versions of the content or product, to account for needs of different customers?
- Where is bias most likely to exist in the content and design? How do we limit bias in our content? Does the content or instructional design introduce bias for any student identity?
- What requirements are needed to ensure that source material is highly diverse and does not draw predominantly from one perspective or culture?
- Depending on the product, how do we ensure that the content design covers instruction, practice, and assessment of all skills/concepts?

During the Content Authoring stages:

- Which standards provide direction for creating representative and equitable content?
- Where does planned content give opportunities to purposefully reflect student cultures?
- How will diverse identities and perspectives be included in content?
- Where can we feature culturally and historically responsive texts?
- Are content creators representative of diverse backgrounds and historically nondominant cultures?
- How can vendors increase the diversity of writers on their teams?
- Are authentic voices being used to create first-person narratives?
- How can materials support teachers in understanding their students' backgrounds and prior learning experiences?
- How will we track progress toward representation goals?
- Are historically marginalized groups/narratives/cultures represented in equal quantity, quality, and complexity as dominant narratives?
- Is the content being framed from an appropriate perspective? (e.g., a lesson on the Holocaust should be framed from the Jewish perspective).
- Do students view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups?
- Are texts and/or sources of knowledge authentic to the experiences of BIPOC and written by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)?
- How is this material informed by or connected to students' communities--in the classroom, in their culture, and beyond?



During Art and Media Development stages:

- Does art reflect the broad range of users: ethnicity, body type, dis/abilities, family structures, gender identities?
- What opportunities does this product/project give to include art, graphic elements, characters, etc. that reflect a variety of cultures?
- Are cultures depicted accurately, without relying on stereotypical or overgeneralized elements?
- Do onscreen presenters reflect the diversity (of ethnicity, culture, body size, gender identities, etc.) of our students?
- Do we have a balance in gender, ethnicity, age, etc. in our narrators/presenters?
- Are there instances where content must be presented by someone of a specific ethnicity, culture, etc.?
- Can we include more diverse voices in narration? Can we include speakers with accents?

During Copyedit and Review stages:

- Do we use language about a particular group in ways that people within that group use it?
- Does discussion of each concept, issue, event, or theme take into account the perspectives of diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups? People of varied gender identities?
- Are the accomplishments and contributions of women and BIPOC included? Are historically marginalized narratives represented equally or in place of dominant narratives?
- Does content include words and phrases that exclude or marginalize? Is context provided when texts or other sources include outdated terms?
- Is a dominant, White, middle-class existence portrayed as the norm, and all others portrayed negatively, less than, “foreign,” or “exotic?”
- Are BIPOC portrayed as having agency and power?
- Are representations of BIPOC issues or groups treated as add-ons, side bars, or one-offs?
- Are cultural settings and perspectives represented authentically?
- Do we perpetuate bias by presenting only one interpretation of an issue, situation, or group of people?
- Does the content reinforce stereotypes?
- Are the chosen cultural representations connected to students' lives and lived experiences?
- Could any content be trauma-inducing or considered curriculum violence by any student/group?
- What information do teachers need about potentially traumatizing or triggering content in this lesson?



Topic Overviews

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Ableism: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Ableism is prejudice or discrimination against someone who has or is perceived to have a disability s based on physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological, or neurodiverse factors. These factors can be visible, invisible, or both.</p> <p>Ableist assumptions are often made about the presence or absence of capabilities. Ableism and disability are related concepts. Disability can affect people of all age groups, many of whom often experience some form of ableism due to that disability.</p> <p>To avoid ableism in educational materials, content creators should be aware of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability is both an extremely broad and an extremely specific concept—meaning, it is experienced or understood in ways that should always be context (or person dependent). Experiences can be shared but also be diverse and individualized. For example, the experiences of a person with a physical disability will be different from a person who has depression, yet both people may experience ableism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many smaller communities within the larger disability community, and people view and describe their disabilities in different ways. It may be necessary to research specific disabilities to accurately represent how people with those disabilities live with and talk about them (see Terminology to Avoid). Representation of disability should center on the actions, thoughts, and experiences of the person who has the disability, not on a nondisabled person’s interpretation of what those actions, thoughts, or experiences might or should be. This includes narratives offered by family members, spouses, and friends. While these individuals may be able to relate to the disability experience, that is different from representing it. Representation of disability must present individuals with disabilities as their own agents with valid independent feelings, thoughts, and aspirations uninfluenced by the ideas, wishes, or recommendations of non-disabled people.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms that have multiple meanings that also have ableist connotations: crazy, nuts, psycho, lame, psychotic, feeble-minded, lame, crippled Special, Special Needs, Handicapped/Handicapable Blind/Deaf (as adjective unrelated to physicality) Challenged, Retarded Normal, Abnormal, Deformed, Dwarf/Midget Afflicted by, Suffers from Patient, Victim, Invalid Shut-in/Recluse Idioms, phrases, or euphemisms used to soften reality of disability or in place of specific naming Casual use of conditions as descriptor (i.e., “I’m basically OCD” or “He is so ADD”) 	<p>Language is an important issue in the disability community. Some prefer to use identity-first language while some prefer person-first language. Identity-first is when a person with a disability is identified as/with their diagnosis (e.g., “He is autistic”). Person-first language offers a diagnosis as a descriptor, not a definer (e.g., “He has autism”).</p> <p>While there is no consensus within the disability community on this topic, Imagine Learning products will identify someone using person-first language (not based on their abilities or disabilities but as a person with a disability as an additional aspect of their identity).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of identity-first language: wheelchair user, deaf actress, disabled person, neurodivergent, little person (or literal in description of size) Examples of person-first language: person who has bipolar disorder, person who uses a communication device <p>Always consult vetted resources for most up-to-date usage, as this language is constantly evolving.</p>
Common Misconceptions	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portrayed only as sources of emotions for others or framed as the vehicles to teach others about life Shown only as physically or mentally infirmed and in need of assistance/care Shown only if their visible disabilities are perceived as “cute” or “not too disabled” (e.g., images of children with severe disabilities are deemed “too scary” for editorial use) Portrayed as “not looking disabled” or “not being disabled enough” to receive necessary accommodations at school or work Portrayed as incapable, lazy, or taking unfair advantage of people or situations Represented only as requiring special education services, as being unemployed, or as working in jobs that do not require an education Portrayed in the extreme (e.g., happy all the time or always angry and bitter) or as one-dimensional (portrayal of identity through disability) Portrayed as lonely/dependent on family for interaction Assumed to be without a life partner or children Assumed to be a member of other dominant groups (e.g., Caucasian, Christian, heterosexual) Not represented as authority figures or in leadership roles (e.g., supervisor or boss, politician) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portrayed as knowing every person with a disability or as only having friends, partners, or acquaintances who have disabilities (also portrayed in the inverse: surrounded by nondisabled people and expected to conform to mainstream activities without appropriate accommodations) Expected to want to participate in any activity related to disability (e.g., Special Olympics, Paralympics) Life is portrayed as a struggle or as something to overcome Seen as a source of effort or burden for others Expected to defer to the wants, wishes, requirements, etc. of those who do not have disabilities Minimization of feelings (e.g., told to stop being “upset” or “sensitive”) Minimization of the disability experience to join or “bond” with others Recipient of demeaning or simplistic praise Portrayed as uninterested in issues beyond immediate sphere (home, school, friends, etc.) Portrayed as having an endless ability to persevere and demonstrate resilience A disability is shown as having only one root cause or effect A disability is represented as only affecting older people
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented this character for purposes other than having a disability (If no, reevaluate the reasoning for representation.) Given characters with disabilities both voice and agency Ensured that disability status has not limited anyone’s participation in portrayed activities (hobbies, work, school, etc.) Included the perspective of those who have disabilities Gotten the information from a relevant source 	<p>Examples and Non-Examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>

Ageism: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Ageism is prejudice or discrimination against someone based on their chronological age. People in all age groups can be affected by ageism.</p> <p>Ageist assumptions are often made about the presence or absence of capabilities that members of different age groups possess. To avoid ageism in education materials, content creators must understand:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation of those who are older or younger should exist outside of their age and the listed simplifications above. Age is an attribute, NOT an identity. In materials, one can note a person’s age, status, or role—if it is in addition to an already person-centered portrayal. Specificity in word choice and presented qualities can help avoid shallow and stereotypical representations.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageism simplifies identities and cultures to a number, assumes characteristics and capabilities, depicts roles of a group only in relation to others, or projects societal value and worth on a group. 	
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elderly Senior/senior citizen Junior Old person Kid, girl, boy (when referencing adults) Dismissive use of generational markers (Boomer, Millennial, Gen Z) Grandmotherly, grandfatherly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older Younger Experienced Developing (in place of “inexperienced”) Specify age if contextually relevant
Common Misrepresentations	
<p><i>Older People</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shown only as retired or with limited skill/physicality (i.e., not as lawyers or construction workers) Represented only in relation to a physical or mental health status Shown only as physically or mentally infirmed and in need of assistance/care Assumed to be inflexible, traditional, or politically or morally conservative Portrayed as unable or unwilling to embrace modern society Portrayed as unemotional/distant or always nurturing Assumed to be lonely or fully dependent on family for interaction Assumed to be grandparents Portrayed as mature due to age rather than life experience Represented only as interns, students, new hobbyists, etc. and not in in growth and learning roles Shown as needing help interacting with technology (e.g., a photo of a younger person helping an older person at a computer) 	<p><i>Younger People</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed to be less competent than older people Represented as lacking work ethic or lazy Portrayed as having a sense of entitlement, lacking a sense of the value of money, or spoiled by parents, culture, or society Represented as having an inflated sense of their own knowledge Portrayed as uninterested in issues beyond their immediate sphere (home, school, friends, etc.) Portrayed as unable to persevere and demonstrate resilience Shown as emotionally sensitive soft and/or attention seeking Represented only as interns or entry-level workers instead of in positions of power or authority Assumed to be living without hardship due to abundant opportunities Shown as excessively attached to social media or social activities Assumed to be politically and morally liberal Assumed to have strong abilities to use and understand technology
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included a range of ages in this text Given people/characters from various age ranges both voice and agency Ensured that age is not a limiting factor in anyone’s participation in activities (hobbies, work, school, etc.) 	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Current Events/Difficult Conversations: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>People experience current events through their own life lenses. Due to these personal experiences and beliefs, conversations about and representations of current and controversial events often lack nuance. Personal biases are often further encouraged when ideas and beliefs are framed or aligned with a political party. When current events are represented through these lenses, arguments and conflict are prioritized over curiosity, research, and mindful discussion.</p> <p>Students all have their own belief systems and world views that are informed by their backgrounds and experiences. These beliefs/views may even conflict or contradict each other. Critical thinking can help negotiate beliefs between people and help an individual understand, challenge, and/or change their beliefs when presented with new information. Understanding this internal conversation is key to understanding the external conversations—as opposed to framing them as simply one immutable world view versus another. Content creators should present complex current events in an accurate, impartial, and factual manner, providing both context and nuanced discussion so that students can think and respond critically.</p>	<p>When addressing current events in educational materials, content creators should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portray people, groups, or nations without nuance or as absolute victims/ absolute aggressors • Provide factual information, discuss processes, tasks, or concepts, and enable students to engage in critical thinking • Avoid using any material that brings bias into instruction (Educators must keep personal viewpoints from coloring the materials by remaining fact-based; presenting the full context of the topics/issues under discussion, including the perspectives/accounts of those directly involved; presenting the impacts of the events/issues; and giving students the opportunity to apply critical thinking to the content.)
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalizations offered as factual or definitive • An inflammatory tone • Loaded or defensive language • An “us” versus “them” point of view • A single perspective on an event or issue • Sources that are not reliable or scholarly or that offer editorial slant rather than fact-based information • Opinion words (e.g., should, ought, must) • Assumptions about people or the ways that people think as related to their cultures and communities • Name-calling and/or judgmental, demeaning terms to distract from the conversation and undermine perspectives that contradict one’s own point of view • Labeling people or viewpoints as true, false, right, or wrong, etc. when views are not supported by facts • Assigning characteristics that cannot be impartially measured (bravery, greatness, patriotism, etc.) • Use of demeaning tone or language to identify those with opposing points of view or lack of empathy or understanding for legitimate disagreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate, thorough descriptions that allow for complexity rather than simplification • Factual, unbiased language • Specific or precise words • Multiple, established, credible sources (.Edu or .org sources), peer-reviewed, academic journals, credentialed sources, etc. • A neutral tone that respects all viewpoints • Multiple perspectives on the event or issue • Information and details that establish common ground • Descriptions that identify or clarify the validity of information • Inquiry questions that direct students away from yes or no answers and instead invite critical evaluation
Common Misrepresentations	



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presenting current events as though one person or group is the cause of a situation or of another person or group's difficulties—without nuance, full context, or the perspectives of all those involved• Presenting current events only through the lens of an immediate news outlet or social media coverage rather than through the lens of gathering information over time and enhanced perspective• Presenting current events through the lens of opinion rather than fact• Presenting current events in a way that is oversimplified, decontextualized, or framed in “us” versus “them” language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restricted coverage that only represents certain geographic locations or regions, including rural versus urban, US or Eurocentric versus other world regions when appropriate.• Individuals in disagreement portrayed as problematic instead of as people who hold an opposing point of view• Assuming, inferring, or assigning intention behind a subject's actions/statement without clarification by multiple sources
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Included all (or as many as possible) pertinent perspectives about the issue• Portrayed those involved in an accurate, impartial, and factual manner• Considered my own biases when portraying people, groups, or perspectives• Avoided allowing certain people, groups, or perspectives to dominate the content (If not, what people, groups, or perspectives have been unintentionally diminished?)• Created instructional elements that neither explicitly nor implicitly convey bias (Are readers able to interact with the content without being able to identify my personal viewpoints?)• Avoided including content that is explicitly for or against particular people, groups, or perspectives• Considered how I can reframe material so that students are given space for critical assessment of nuanced ideas (e.g., creating inquiry-based materials, offering open-ended questions that lead to more questions, etc.)	<p>Examples and Non-Examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Family Structures: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>There is no average or typical way to define the structure, livelihood, or living conditions of a family. Therefore, it's vital that students see varied representations of family structures and places where families live.</p> <p>When addressing family structures, content creators must be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family structures can vary across racial, cultural, ethnic, or social groups and within those particular groups. These structures can include grandparents as parental figures as well as members who are LGBTQ+, multiracial, multicultural, multigenerational, single parents, etc. Heteronormative and nuclear family representations (mother, father, two children, and a dog) are the pervasive/dominant narrative. Providing a wide range of family structures allows students to see themselves and their families represented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family structures are not static. They grow and change over time, and these changes can have both short-term and long-term effects on family members. Physical buildings or geographic locations are the places in which families might live, but they are not the elements that determine the structure of a family. Avoid describing a family structure by the spaces or locations where individuals may live. Family structures are about people, not places. Livelihoods and living conditions do not dictate the value or identity of a family. Offering diverse living arrangements (houses, apartments, shelters, mobile homes) and regions (rural, suburban, urban) allows students to see themselves reflected in educational materials.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reference to a family structure as broken, damaged, or incomplete Representation of single-parent households as created only through divorce Descriptive terms such as <i>adoptive family</i>, <i>blended family</i>, or <i>stepfamily</i> (stepmother, stepbrother, etc.) Some families find such terms to be inappropriate or hurtful since they simply describe themselves as a family; consider this on a case-by-case basis. The term “the homeless” The term <i>mixed</i> to identify racial backgrounds Assumptions about family structures and/or types of housing Reinforcing stereotypes about particular family structures, such as “the impoverished single mother” Portrayals of environments without nuance (e.g., “rural places lack education” or “urban settings are dangerous”) Using terms like <i>real</i> to describe a biological family member, which implies that family relationships not based on biology are not legitimate Representations of adoptive families focusing only on the perspective/experience of the adoptive parents, which can lead to a romanticization of adoption and harm to adopted children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive representations of family structures Feature cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity both across and within family structures Emphasize respect and a sense of belonging whenever possible—take a human-centered approach to family descriptions The terms <i>multiracial</i> or <i>biracial</i> to identify racial backgrounds Terms like “foster mother” or “foster brother.” Note that these terms are used within the foster care system (see Recommended Readings), but not all people may choose to use them or consider them to be acceptable Instead of using gender-specific language to describe family members (<i>mother</i>, <i>father</i>, etc.), consider using <i>parents</i>, <i>guardians</i>, or <i>caretaker where appropriate</i>. Focus on nuanced perspectives of adopted children rather than prioritizing the experience/perspective of adoptive parents Terms like <i>unhoused families</i>, or <i>families without housing</i> The term <i>military family</i> Single parent, divorced parent, co-parent, and widowed parent offer a spectrum of phrasings defining parenting situations Terminology, names, or family structures that are specific to a particular cultural or ethnic group (Patriarchal vs. Matriarchal structure)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A variety of buildings and settings for housing, including rural, urban, and suburban locations that feature single-family houses, multifamily buildings, apartments, townhouses, condominiums, mobile homes, shelters for families without housing, etc.
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Family portrayed only in terms of biological relationshipsRelationships portrayed as most valid when recognized by U.S./Western lawOmits references to the extended familial unit (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) and focuses only on the <i>nuclear family</i>Romanticize adoption with no allowance for, or recognition of, the sense of grief or loss that adoptees may experiencePortrayal of families that include adopted children as not/less than <i>real</i> familiesErasure of LGBTQ+ family membersStereotyping a family structure across an entire race, culture, or ethnic group (e.g., not all families within a specific cultural group live with members of their extended family)Stereotyping family structures by socioeconomic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Represented only as the people who reside within a particular buildingDefined by living only in particular types of buildingsPresented only as structures that include two adults as heads of a householdShown only as including adults who gender identify as traditionally <i>male</i> and <i>female</i> or <i>only shown in traditional gender roles</i>.Represents disabled adults only in older, <i>grandparent</i> roles, not as young parents raising childrenPortrayed as always/necessarily including childrenExclusion of familial structures created over short or long periods of time, such as through remarriage, adoption, guardianship, or participation in the foster care systemExclusion of family structures that might frequently or repeatedly change, such as through movement within the foster care system or deployment of a family member in the military
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
Have I done the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Represented diverse types of family structures and housing in the textAvoided assumptions about specific family structures or the ways they were createdAvoided references that favor or diminish specific family structures over othersUsed words, illustrations, or images free from stereotypes about family structures or the types of housing families live in	Examples and Non-examples Additional Resources



Gender Identity and Expression: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Gender is the term used to describe the social, cultural, economic, and behavioral attributes associated with being male or female. Gender identity is a person's internal sense of identifying with one, none, or multiple genders, and is not defined by, or limited to, what is commonly called biological sex. Biological sex, also referred to as sex assigned at birth, is the "biological category based on reproductive, anatomical, and genetic characteristics, generally defined as male, female, and intersex. Sex is used when describing anatomical, chromosomal, hormonal, cellular, and basic biological phenomena. "(NIH)</p> <p>Though gender has long been portrayed as a binary system based on biological sex (i.e., male/masculine or female/feminine), in truth, gender identity (and expression) exists on a spectrum that may or may not be informed by assigned sex.</p> <p>It should be noted that some states prohibit the discussion of gender identity in their content, so care needs to be taken when addressing this issue.</p> <p>Some of the most common terms used to note one's gender identity include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisgender—term for someone who identifies solely with their sex assigned at birth. • Transgender/Trans—umbrella term for someone who does not exclusively identify with their biological sex; this term encompasses many gender identities; may or may not identify under the nonbinary umbrella as well. • Genderfluid—term for someone whose gender identity and/or expression is variable/changes/is fluid. • Non-binary/Nonbinary—the preferred umbrella term for genders other than male/female; existing outside of the gender binary; may or may not identify under the trans umbrella as well • Agender—umbrella term for any number of identities that do not have a gender or are considered gender neutral; this applies on a case-by-case basis and is entirely dependent on how an individual defines what Agender applies to their identity. <p>Gender expression is the physical presentation of one's gender through clothing, behavior, voice, attitudes, and more. While the list above includes a handful of gender identities, it is important to understand that they may or may not be linked to one's gender expression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender exists on a spectrum. Avoid assuming that an individual identifies within the gender binary (i.e., woman or man, girl or boy, feminine or masculine). • It is important to use accurate terms when information about gender is relevant to the content (e.g., nonbinary, transgender, cisgender) to describe individuals. • It is necessary to avoid assuming or assigning a gender identity when that identity is not known or cannot be presumed based on evidence (such as with historical figures) in written and visual content. • The gender markers a person adopts in their clothing or behavior (their gender expression) may not represent their gender identity. • Some transgender people identify with a binary gender, such as <i>man</i> or <i>woman</i>, but others may identify with a nonbinary gender or no gender. • Individuals whose gender is in opposition to the biological sex they were assigned at birth may use terms other than "transgender" to describe their gender, including <i>gender-nonconforming</i>, <i>genderqueer</i>, <i>gender-nonbinary</i>, <i>gender-creative</i>, <i>agender</i>, <i>two-spirit</i>, etc. (Note that <i>two-spirit</i> is a term specific to Indigenous and Native American communities.) • Many individuals who do not identify with their biological sex may use names (their name in use) other than the ones they were assigned at birth. <p>While gender identity is not binary, gender roles in many societies, past and present, certainly can be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to avoid imposing or assuming gender norms or stereotypes when referring to specific cultures or religions. • When discussing gender roles (as is often required by standards), careful attention should be paid to language to ensure students understand these roles are specific to the time/culture being discussed, and that individuals often challenged these expectations. • Avoid reinforcing stereotypical gender roles in selection of literature and images. • See the sexism topic for more information.



<p>It is important for content creators to understand that gender—identity and expression—is not fixed, is complex, and exists beyond the binary of male/masculine or female/feminine. To be inclusive of all genders <i>and</i> avoid gender stereotyping in educational materials, content creators should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and biological sex are commonly conflated. The term sex refers to characteristics that are biologically understood, such as anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes, while gender refers to characteristics that are socially defined through personal identification, expression, appearance, and behaviors. 	
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language that promotes an unfair or irrelevant distinction based on gender Referring to someone's pronouns or name in use as <i>chosen</i> or <i>preferred</i> Language that suggests innateness of characteristics, especially language that pulls for essentialism of gender (e.g., "Women are inherently gentler than men.") Generic <i>he</i>, <i>him</i>, and other male prototypical language as the norm or standard <i>He/she</i>, <i>he or she</i>, or <i>(s)he</i>, used to present binary alternatives. References to one gender (or sex) as the <i>opposite</i> of another. <i>Transgendered</i>, <i>transsexual</i>, <i>a transgender</i>, <i>tranny</i>, or <i>transvestite</i> Phrases like <i>birth sex</i> and <i>natal sex</i> Derogatory language for transgender people such as <i>gender-bender</i>, <i>she-male</i>, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In grammar instruction, pronouns are best known as <i>personal gender pronouns</i>, rather than <i>chosen pronouns</i> or <i>preferred pronouns</i> Using singular, <i>they/them/their</i> if gender or pronouns are unknown Refer to pronouns as pronouns. One could say "The pronouns Mari uses are they/them/their" or "Michal uses she/her/hers pronouns." People that use more than one set of pronouns (e.g., she/they) can be referred to both ways throughout a piece Only mention that a person's gender identity is different than their biological sex (a transgender man/women) if it is crucial to the point being made and the person uses these terms when describing themselves. Mentioning a person's trans identity when it isn't necessary only continues to put that person into a category of <i>other</i>. In general, defer to a person's description of their own gender variance. Use <i>transgender</i> as an adjective (i.e., "a transgender woman"—which notes identity—and not "she is transgendered"—which notes a condition) Transgender/Trans Non-Binary/Gender Queer (NB) (GQ) Gender non-conforming (GNC) Using self-identifying language for the person being referred to (i.e., if a person calls themselves <i>gender queer</i>, do not use the term <i>non-binary</i> to refer to them)
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and biological sex are portrayed as the same Gender is portrayed as binary/only male or female Cisgender is portrayed as the norm and/or default Assumed that an individual goes by the name assigned at birth; also known as dead naming—the continued use of the name assigned at birth rather than the <i>name-in-</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed that someone who asks for pronoun use beyond he/her is fragile or sensitive Pronouns such as they/them are portrayed as confusing and best understood as plural, not a singular pronoun Assumed that gender is always identifiable by physical appearance



<p>use (sometimes referred to as <i>chosen name</i> or <i>preferred name</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assumed that those who do not identify as cisgender are confused, depressed, sad, broken, attention-seeking	
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Incorporated gender neutral/inclusive pronouns in my writingMade choices that upend expected or status quo representations of genderUsed a range of sources of knowledge (authors, images, narratives, etc.) from various genders and contextualized the story/source as it relates to genderConsidered how I can include appropriate and diverse perspectives from people of various genders, particularly those beyond my own understandingAvoided double standards in my representation of gender, offering representation that moves beyond masculine/feminine gender stereotypesChecked for generalizations based on actual or perceived gender in the contentUsed graphics or images that relate respectfully to genderRepresented all people with complexity and uniqueness, including people's complete lives instead of reducing people to aspects of their gender identity or gender expression	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Government and Politics: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>In the U.S. there is a tendency to describe the government and politics in terms of political parties, more specifically through the lens of the two-party system (Democratic Party and Republican Party). However, politics encompasses so much more.</p> <p>Politics refers to one's opinions, values, and actions as they relate to economics, identity, and access—concepts that are impacted by governmental policies.</p> <p>While US politics are based in notions of democracy, there are many different political ideologies (Maoism, Marxism, postmodernism, fascism, Pan-Africanism, McCarthyism, etc.) that have informed historical and contemporary social movements.</p> <p>In trying to both represent many understandings of the world and not prioritize a few above others, it is important to note that local and universal politics, however they vary, influence cultural notions on jobs, families, housing, food, public safety, the environment, transportation, and more. To appropriately represent the range of issues and intricacies as they relate to government and politics, content creators must be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting any situation as <i>two sides</i> or <i>both sides</i>, reinforcing simplistic, uncritical understandings of politics and their impact. There are many nuanced beliefs and values beyond those presented as binary. • Governments and those in positions of power often set a tone for political discussions. Those discussions change with shifts in power and how our culture responds to those shifts. • Political initiatives to enact (often collective) change can occur not only at the state, national, or international levels, but also at the grassroots level and within communities. • Political work takes many forms, from political education, mutual aid (people working together to meet basic needs), to more violent responses that may be motivated by a political belief and/or affiliation. • Social movements happen on a range of political ideologies, structures, and thought. For example, there are Veterans for Peace groups who actively demonstrate against war after having been at war themselves. The movement for policing reform includes people who prioritize police training and others still who call for abolition of policing as it is today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations that emerge out of social and political movements are also considered political organizations. The Tea Party, The Millennium Action Project, Greenpeace, Global Fund for Women, The Federalist Society, and The Family Research Council are just a few examples of political organizations to emerge across historical and current social and political movements. • All systems of government (including democracy) have strengths and weaknesses, benefits, and drawbacks. • All governments are flawed and may be imbued with corruption, lacking representation, etc. • The role of the US military, controlled by the government, is a contentious issue. Many believe that the military exists to protect the freedoms of U.S. civilians or to ensure democracy and/or peace in other nations. The critique is that the military aids in the development of empire via imperialist and colonialist projects. Avoid simplistic portrayals of the U.S. military, especially those that reinforce binary understanding. • The main role of law enforcement is to support and defend the government and capital—federal, state, and local. Like the military, many valorize police officers and view them as <i>peacekeepers</i>. Many low-income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities who have experienced police and state-sanctioned violence may view law enforcement as harmful and racist. Try to refrain from portraying police as an inherently good or bad body. Consider other roles that provide public safety (e.g., fire fighters, community leaders, clergy, social workers, etc.) • Terrorism by definition is the unauthorized use of violence or pressures for a political purpose. In the U.S., the phrase has often been used to reinforce bigotry against those from Middle Eastern countries—though the phrase also applies to white supremacist groups engaging in violence in this country. Use the word sparingly, if at all, to avoid reinforcing subjective points of view. • The U.S. has the highest rates of incarceration of the world, which increases the likelihood of students being connected to someone who has experienced incarceration. Avoid moralizing about those who have been convicted, as situations presented as good or bad lack context and generalize the realities of crime—committed, at times, due to poverty, lack, mental health concerns, drug addiction, and more.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any representation of political issues should include not just policy makers but those without political power and those who are most impacted. Identity politics—groups of people forming coalitions or shared values based in identity categories like gender, sexual orientation, race, and more—are often dismissed as niche, trivial, or divisive. In reality, these identity-based connections complicate <i>mainstream</i> perspectives and add context to the creation or maintenance of political beliefs. Economic realities informed by politics are more complex than how they are often represented. For example, sustainable clothing is green and also very expensive; fast fashion is affordable and is also harmful for our environment. 	
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peacekeepers/Peace officers Terrorist (particularly when only used to reference those who are not from the U.S. or are BIPOC) Riot (when used to discredit protests or demonstrations) Race riot—historically the word <i>riot</i> is only applied to BIPOC protestors and used to discredit movements for justice in instances of police brutality War metaphors as they apply to government policy: War on Women; War on Schools; War on Christmas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law Enforcement, police officers Protest, convening, direct action, demonstration, a political action Describe an act as a form of terrorism instead of the person as a terrorist. This is less problematic.
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed that politics refers only to one's political party affiliation Assumed that it's always good or productive to give equal weight/importance to both sides of an issue (even if one idea is based in fact and another based only in feelings and ideologies) Compromise is portrayed as always possible U.S. is portrayed as only having two political parties Assumed that voting is the only way to express one's politics/political opinions Elected officials represented as the only group who has the authority to engage in major political work The Civil Rights Movement and counterculture thought that dominated the 1960s are represented as rooted not in political discourse and ideology, but anarchy and radicalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing politics with others is often deemed inappropriate. Identity politics are represented as only divisive, trivial, and distracting. Democracy is portrayed as the ideal form of government without discussion of its drawbacks. The disadvantages and harmful aspects of socialist and communist governments are discussed, without mention of their advantages. Non-Western governments are often portrayed as dictatorships or run by military coups Western countries are often centered, portrayed as moral, and just, and deemed to comprise the global majority War is a necessary evil. Politics are inherently bad/harmful.
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoided categorizing members of the military or police officers as inherently/automatically better or more noble than people in other jobs/positions 	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoided presenting the U.S. system of democracy as the default or standard• Emphasized the validity of other political ideologies• Recognized difference and the importance of identity politics• Included resources and/or materials that center on and draw from grassroots movements• Avoided presenting a group through my own lens rather than from the perspective of an outsider	
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Immigration: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Immigration—the action of moving to live in a country foreign to one’s home country—is an important topic personal to the lives of many students. Language around immigration often centers the lens of the citizen. Ensure that all people are represented as real people with lived experiences. Do not dehumanize or vilify those without citizenship.</p> <p>Educators today teach students of many national identities, political allegiances, and immigration or citizenship statuses. With these people in mind, content creators must ensure that historically dominant perspectives are not the only lens provided in educational materials. Students today may have any of the following identities, and materials should represent them appropriately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants often settle permanently. • Migrants are temporary residents. • Refugees have been forced from their home countries by war, conflict, or destabilization. • Asylum seekers are in need of protection from conflict or persecution in another country. • Exiled people, or exiles, include those who are forced to flee their home country for any number of reasons. <p>To help all students become culturally competent, we must ensure that no singular culture or worldview is the standard by which other experiences are understood or compared. To achieve these goals, educational content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must be given the tools to think critically about bias, social organization, power, and nationalism, as nationalism is often used to excuse prejudice against those who immigrate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to teach about how immigration policies emerge from historical dynamics and the political process, providing necessary historical and contemporary context. For example, American history is filled with reactionary and nativist political policies and laws that discriminate against people and limit access to citizenship to people from certain countries or of certain identities (Chinese Exclusion Act, Immigration Act of 1924, Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, REAL ID Act of 2005, the RAISE Act of 2017, etc.) • It is important to include the perspectives and experiences of those who have immigrated and not just those in positions of power. • It is crucial to note the distinction between documented and undocumented immigrants without valuation. It is necessary to contextualize the process of legalizing citizenship without marking someone as legal or illegal. Pathways to citizenship and legal residency are expensive, complex, and difficult by nature. Consider the origins of policies determining citizenship, which were often created for prejudiced reasonings and which privileged the rights of citizens over those prevented from or unable to become citizens. • While migration can be a positive experience for individuals and communities and can benefit countries of origin, transit and destination, migration that places people in precarious situations is a serious human rights concern. <i>Push</i> factors often result in forced or unwanted migration (on the part of the migrant) and refugees who flee from war, religious persecution, and more.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronouns <i>we</i>, <i>us</i>, or <i>our</i> when describing the US, historical events, or other issues in a way that betrays the author’s bias or allegiance towards nationalism or a political identity, casting non-citizens to the outside. • Third World/Developing— Instead, use <i>less developed countries</i> or <i>nations</i> in accordance with accepted terminology. <i>Third-world</i> and <i>developing</i> reinforce notions of country-wide impoverishment and lack of modern advancement; also used to stigmatize non-democratic governments and delineate them from Western, wealthier countries. Language like <i>developing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on historical and contemporary social context to understand the nuances and language of each event, personal story, and social movement. • asylee • asylum seeker • children of immigrants • foreign national • person seeking citizenship • person with citizenship • refugee



<p>also distracts from the nature of poverty in some countries, often predicated on and maintained through colonization by Western or <i>developed</i> countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First World/Developed: This phrasing was developed in the Cold War to delineate Western countries from their less-developed allies. Also used to establish countries as those with wealth and/or considered (by themselves) as modern, civilized, and technologically advanced. This also ignores systemic poverty, inequality, and other social ills in <i>First World</i> or <i>developed</i> nations. • Classifying countries as <i>poor</i> or <i>rich</i>, which may be inappropriate given the concept of emerging market economies and dependency structures of countries traditionally deemed rich. With interconnected economies, due in large part to globalization, the rich and poor divide is difficult to ascertain. • Alien • Illegal • anchor baby • failed asylum seeker • East-West dichotomy—the false separation between the two hemispheres is predicated on Orientalist, imperial, and racial and religious biases and should not be reinforced. It otherizes and oversimplifies entire regions and peoples and is considered culturally insensitive and erasing identity. See also: Global North/South (Topic: Imperialism and Colonialism) <p>Phrases that infer/prioritize criminality, imply that humanity can be made legal or illegal, and oversimplify/moralize the movement of people across nations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal alien—someone who is allowed in a country though they migrated from somewhere else • legal citizen—allowed to become a citizen though they migrated from somewhere else • legal resident—allowed to live in a country though they migrated from somewhere else • lawful immigrant • resident alien • melting pot • Non-native • “a nation of immigrants” in referring to U.S.A. • first/second generation—phrasing here creates a hierarchical understanding of those who have immigrated and separates them (and their kin) from citizens with longer country lineage. • second-language—often used to describe English language learners; others and devalues home language to favor the development, or explain the lack of the development, of English-speaking abilities. • language that unintentionally separates immigrant and refugee populations from the rest of the country (e.g., terms such as <i>nationals</i> or <i>citizens</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refused asylum seeker • stateless person • Irregular migration/migrant: used in placed of <i>legal</i> or <i>lawful</i> migration to prioritize humanity above policy • <i>Undocumented</i> or <i>unauthorized</i> is the preferred term for people who lack legal authorization to be in a country; while not perfect, they contain less severe value-judgements about a person’s actions. • home language • multilingual speaker • Consider qualifying the classifications of countries by GDP, population living under the global poverty line, or by mortality rate, literacy, etc., rather than <i>rich</i> or <i>poor</i> • Only use <i>illegal immigrant/resident</i>, <i>illegal</i>, or <i>alien</i>, when quoting law, policy, or a specific individual; in such cases, provide the proper context for why the term is being used. • Use geographic and political names preferred by the people that live in those places and identities. People in the Middle East don’t refer to their geographic region as <i>the Middle East</i>, but instead specify locale. <i>Southwest Asia</i> is preferred for this geographic region.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• flood• swarm <p>One trope about migrants is that of <i>the disorderly crowd or wave</i> that is a common means of representing migrants as a threat. Water metaphors are often used as a warning about the number of asylum seekers entering/already in a country. They have the effect of disconnecting migrants from the roots of the problems and the causes of their displacement. This language dehumanizes migrants and refugees and paints them as a <i>faceless mob</i> and menace to <i>civilized society</i></p>	
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigrants will take jobs from citizens• Immigrants don't pay taxes• Framing history as <i>Us</i> vs. <i>Them</i> rather than from a human-centered, globally informed perspective• Racializing immigration. Casting all Latinos as immigrants and most immigrants as Latinos. (Neither is true)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assuming all people immigrate because they want to• Assumptions about knowledge of any particular national history or culture in place of proper sourcing and vetting
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensured the materials represent a diverse range of experiences (not just those of citizens) and that characters of different immigration statuses have both voice and agency• Considered how represented members of a group (individually and separately from their home country's actions) might feel about the materials• Consulted experts or resources to check the accuracy and respectfulness of the representations• Considered the context for the qualities of American life considered <i>exceptional</i> and how those inform portrayals of people who have immigrated; identified whether violence or oppression contributed to making those qualities possible and whether someone else lost in order for the United States to gain	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Imperialism, Colonization, and Global Majority: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Imperialism is when a dominating country imposes rule upon another, often for political, economic, and cultural influence and control. Much of the rhetoric used to describe imperialism is meant to obscure or excuse the act and portray the taking over of other countries as positive, necessary, or useful, without consideration of the country and people from which power has been taken.</p> <p>Imperialism at its core is about domination, power, exploitation, and the development of empire through varied systems of oppression—often through the guise of <i>nation building</i> or helping people and places with less power. Historically, there have been many ways a country might deploy imperialist attitudes, actions, and beliefs.</p> <p>Colonization is the process of politically, economically, and/or physically seizing and occupying another country by force, often through violence, displacement, and with the intent of exerting dominance and exploitation over a country. Historically, colonization has taken many forms, the most common being settler colonialism. The term was coined by scholar Edward Said and denotes the “implanting of settlements on a distant territory.” For example, the history of North and South America changed course after the settler colonialism by several European countries. While it is true these lands were settled by outsiders, the phrase itself is out of use, as <i>settled</i> or <i>settler</i> softens the reality of colonization: in many cases, government leaders colonized lands and people via brute military force to institute their own policies as a ruling country. Note: While the term “settler colonialism” is acceptable in academic literature and used throughout this document, it should be avoided in IL K-12 curriculum materials as it requires nuanced discussion that is generally not possible in an online environment. Colonizer is a triggering word for some customers and should generally be avoided. In addition, a single person cannot operate as a colonizer; government backing is needed to take over land. No one individual acted as a colonizer, but rather governments engaged in colonization.</p> <p>Contemporary neocolonialism is more subversive and is often rooted in a dominating country making a smaller country economically dependent. This often occurs through predatory foreign policy and lending and resulting debt. A good example of current neocolonialism is China’s Silk Road Project. China’s goal is gaining access to shipping ports and other means of distributing their goods in developing regions,</p>	<p>The legacy of imperialism by way of systems like colonization runs deep. Content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact on language: Native languages have been erased, repressed; those who spoke them were often punished. We see this in South American countries, where Spanish and Portuguese are the prioritized languages to this day. In Africa, European languages still dominate higher education and business. • The impact on legal and government structure: Most West African countries have governments and legal systems similar to British and Spanish ones. Political borders—like the European division of African nations are also imperialist constructs. • The impact on religion: European colonizers introduced Christianity, at times by force (Spanish America), or by way of missionaries (throughout nations of Africa), changing the cultural makeup of those who suffered colonization. • The impact on development: Due to centuries of colonial and imperialist rule, many former colonies remain <i>underdeveloped</i> due to exploitation (past and ongoing). Gold and ivory were taken from the African gold coast and used to build the wealth of the British empire. Today, in some countries, major resources (water, oil, rare minerals, etc.) are still controlled by their former colonizers, or private multinational companies with origins in the colonizing country. This extraction of resources has led to former colonies’ underdevelopment and forced dependence on external aid.



<p>primarily across Asia and Africa. To this end, China is lending money to fund huge infrastructure development projects in countries where most of the population lives under the global poverty line. If these countries are unable to keep up with loan payments to China, they risk losing control of their territory or other infrastructure. For example, China has lent Kenya money to develop their railway. The country is currently on the verge of defaulting on their loan, at which point they risk losing control over their port in Mombasa—an invaluable resource, waterway, and shipping route.</p>	
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settler—use is context dependent. A person in a position of power is <i>not</i> a settler; someone migrating, without displacing others, might be a settler. • Settler colonialism—generally avoid, as it requires nuanced discussion not generally appropriate for K-12 content • Undeveloped country • *Third world country • Pre-Columbian (if use is deemed necessary, contextualize the language as colonialist) • First world, Second world • Explorer—be very careful with the use of this term. There were legitimate European explorers; however, many were sent to explore for the sole purpose of colonization. • Colonizer—generally avoid as this is a trigger word for many customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonist may be acceptable • *Third world country: In some cases, this will be appropriate when talking about <i>third-world solidarity</i>, <i>third worldish</i>, or political ideology from the 1960s when <i>third world</i> was more commonly used by global south nations and people of color active within the Black Power, Chicano, Native American, and Asian American movements. • Pre-contact/ pre-contact civilizations • Global South; Global North—these phrases are used to note political, cultural, and economic differences that most closely align either with the Northern or Southern hemispheres of the globe. Use of these phrases should be in identifying regions geographically rather than classifying or comparing regions in relation to one another, or in a way that is meant to valorize one over the other. • Underdeveloped • Decolonization—the process through which lands and people who have been colonized have achieved independence. • Formerly colonized • Refer to formerly free lands and territories as Indigenous people would prefer the lands to be referred to. A good and very contentious example of this is the fraught history of Israel and Palestine. While Palestine no longer appears on most maps, for context it is important to at least reference the land’s original name when writing about history or even current Palestinian struggles. For example, a content creator might state the current name of a territory, followed by, “also known as____.” Providing both names give a fuller history and accounting for young scholars!
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperialism and resulting colonization presented as a necessary process to modernize and civilize countries of the Global South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borders, colonial names and governments represented as legitimate and the norm, while pre-contact ways of governing, naming etc. presented as illegitimate/not



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colonization presented as of the past, without recognizing its legacy and how it has often resulted in the underdevelopment of the formerly colonized, while providing wealth for the colonizing nations.• Depicted solely through the lens or understanding of the dominant culture without considering the perspective of those affected by these policies.• The history of the colonized is often presented as starting at colonization, though their histories are incredibly rich, dynamic, and predate colonization	<p>recognized by predominately western international body like the U.N.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decolonization efforts constantly presented as unnecessary radicalism• Tendency to portray former colonies as poor, uncivilized, and corrupt• Western perspectives are often centered, and deemed to comprise the global majority• Colonization and imperialism presented as being about just economic exploitation and foreign policy, not cultural influence
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensured my sources are relevant to or informed directly by those impacted by colonization• Emphasized the validity of the perspectives of formerly “colonized” peoples when writing about a historical event or cultural phenomenon• Determined whether I am writing for or about people from the Global South• Included resources and/or materials that center and draw from precontact and decolonial knowledge, experiences, and cultures• Avoided presenting Western culture as superior to cultures of colonized lands• Recognized the enduring legacies of colonization and imperialism and the ways they manifest in or inform the creation of educational materials	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Indigenous People - Global: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Within the U.S. the word Indigenous is used to describe people who existed in the country prior to the arrival of European colonists and prior to the overall process of settler colonialism. Using that same logic, global Indigenous people refers to Indigenous populations worldwide who exist despite various colonial, imperialist, political, and environmental factors that have often led to the systematic erasure of their traditions and cultures, lands, sovereignty, etc.</p> <p>To appropriately represent global Indigenous populations and give context for contemporary Indigenous issues and how they are informed by the past, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to Amnesty International, there are more than 370 million people across 70 countries that identify as Indigenous. Despite major differences, many Global Indigenous populations share similar experiences and struggles as they relate to land rights, climate change and environmental factors (e.g., wildfires, rising water, pollution, disease), the right to practice their cultural traditions and beliefs, including speaking their native language(s), and even the right to citizenship. These shared struggles have created moments of geopolitical solidarity. Conversely, each Indigenous population often maintains its own distinct culture, language(s), religious/spiritual beliefs and practices, politics, and economy. Indigenous people are referred to using a variety of terms depending on the continent/country/region, language, and time period. When writing about an Indigenous group, conduct research to identify how they would like to be addressed and named. Many will have a specific ethnic group name they prefer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, the Asante people of West Africa is most noted for their presence in Ghana. However, because the group predates borders (a product of colonization), Asante people also exist in neighboring countries like Togo, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast. <i>Indigenous</i> is often used as a catchall phrase or stand-in for specificity in identification of people—but also understand that specific naming varies between regions, groups, and whether people are naming themselves or named by others. These terms are often evolving In Canada, Indigenous people are often referred to as <i>First Nations People</i>, <i>Inuit</i> and <i>Metis</i>. In Australia, <i>aboriginal</i> and <i>Torres Strait Islander</i> are commonly used to describe Indigenous people. In Latin America, where many Indigenous people—forcefully or voluntarily—mixed with European colonizers, a class of multiracial people emerged. The term <i>Mestizo</i> was used to describe this group of people. Similarly, the term <i>Creole</i> or <i>Criollo</i> is used to describe multiracial people of partial Indigenous descent in the U.S., Mauritius, Sierra Leone, among other African and Latin American countries. Use of these words should depend on culturally specific preferences and should be rarely be used outside of the historical context, and such context should be clearly communicated to the student, along with appropriate explanation as to why such terms are today considered offensive. <i>Pygmy</i> has long been a term used to describe Indigenous people from the Congo region. However, the term is dated and pejorative and should not be used in educational materials beyond talking about historical perceptions. Any terminology based in a Western colonizer perspective should also be avoided. For example, using <i>pre-Columbian</i> as a way to date Indigenous tribes undermines the Indigenous cultures themselves: it implies that tribes or cultures are only defined by or relevant due to their historical connection to Western cultures.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aborigine Aboriginal Australian Indian Savages Uncivilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous people(s), capitalized Indigenous Australians Pre-contact/ pre-contact civilizations The specific tribe or ethnic group name First Nations People (Canada)



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pygmy• Natives• Mulatto• Pre-Columbian• Mythology*• Tribe**• Do not use “tribe” to refer casually to a group of people who share common values and interests <p>*Note, the term mythology should be avoided or contextualized in instances where sacred stories are part of a larger belief structure.</p> <p>**Use “tribe” only when it is part of the official name of an Indigenous people or refers to a government policy, and this would only be applicable to Indigenous people / government policies within the United States. Generally, the term “nation” is preferred. Do not use “tribe” at all when referring to nations outside the United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sacred Text or Sacred Story• Indigenous nation(s)
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often portrayed as uncivilized, <i>savage</i>, violent, backwards OR peaceful, connected to nature, and outside of mainstream <i>civilization</i>• Presented as of the past, without nuanced portrayal or modern representation• Depicted solely through the lens or understanding of the dominant culture• The history of Indigenous groups is often presented as starting at colonization; however, their histories are incredibly rich, dynamic, and predate colonization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous people are often portrayed as living in a singular, often isolated, area. However, Indigenous groups, whether a tribe or ethnic group, can span multiple countries and/or states• Indigenous populations are often portrayed as isolated, in rural communities, though they live in as many varied places or settings as any other community or group
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determined whose ancestral lands I live on• Named people and cultures by specific ethnic group names• Ensured that my sources are relevant to or informed directly by the Indigenous people involved• Emphasized the validity of Indigenous perspectives of the historical event or cultural phenomenon in the content• Determined whether I am writing for or about Indigenous learners• Included resources and/or materials that center and draw from Indigenous knowledge, experiences, and cultures• Presented a group through an authentic lens rather than from the perspective of an outsider• Allowed Indigenous groups to stand as their own valid culture (as opposed to comparing/contrasting Indigenous cultures with Eurocentric cultures and ways of governance)	<p>Examples and Non-Examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Indigenous People - US: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Problematic and prejudiced representation of Indigenous peoples frequently stems from a lack of healthy, modern, and specific cultural examples. Due to genocide, displacement, removal, and historical policies/laws against Indigenous practices, there are currently fewer Indigenous people in their ancestral territories. This means Indigenous issues are often interpreted and presented through a Eurocentric and White Colonialist perspective.</p> <p>To appropriately represent Indigenous populations of the U.S. and give context for contemporary Indigenous issues and how they are informed by the past, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigeneity is a global cultural definer even as these cultures are incredibly different and varying, which is why specificity in representation is crucial. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History, as it was faced by Indigenous people in the present-day US must be considered with deep nuance. For example, trade and industry impacted colonizers differently than the Indigenous people whose lands were colonized. For the most accurate and appropriate representation, content creators should be advised by those who culturally identify as Indigenous, Native American, and otherwise.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indians Hostiles Savages Natives Eskimo Squaw Inuits/Inuks Anasazi Other names that tribal groups find offensive (Anasazi) American Indian* Mythology** Tribe*** Do not use “tribe” to refer casually to a group of people who share common values and interests <p>* The phrase American Indian is accepted by some groups and rejected by others. Many terms are only appropriate when members of those communities use them to address one another. Times change, and some terms become outdated in favor of new ones. Do necessary research to use the most up-to-date and preferred representation. It is acceptable to include American Indian in the context of or organizational names (ex. American Indian Movement).</p> <p>**Note, the term mythology should be avoided or contextualized in instances where sacred stories are part of a larger belief structure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native Americans Indigenous peoples (preferred) Specific tribal or community names. For example, <i>Pueblo People</i> refers to those who share farming, housing, and religious traditions. But there are currently 19 distinct Pueblo groups, so using a specific name whenever possible is preferred. When using the name of an Indigenous group or individual, include a phonetic pronunciation of the name so that it can be pronounced properly in audio. Sacred Story or Sacred Text



<p>***Use “tribe” only when it is part of the official name of an Indigenous people or refers to a government policy, and this would only be applicable to Indigenous people / government policies within the United States. Generally, the term “nation” is preferred. Do not use “tribe” at all when referring to nations outside the United States.</p>	
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented as culturally monolithic• Only considered, explored, or understood in relation to the historically dominant group• Portrayed one-dimensionally, often as violent and <i>savage</i> (a slur) OR peaceful, connected to nature, and outside of Eurocentric perceptions of what is <i>civilized</i>.• Indigenous history is often portrayed via a rushed and mixed-up timeline, making these events seem both far away and as though they happened all at once. Neither is accurate, which leads to ahistorical understandings of violent colonialism in North America, still relevant to contemporary issues• Separate but related nations and communities are often portrayed incorrectly as members of a single group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous history in North America is usually relegated to being an issue of the past, but Indigenous people are here now. Content creators must consider Indigenous learners as students and teachers of educational material• In recent years, some Black Americans have spoken out against their exclusion from ideas of indigeneity. As colonized and displaced peoples, they, too, have been affected by diaspora• Many legal names of tribes are Anglicized or misinterpreted names. Visit official nation's websites to find more accurate and specific names and include both that and the more commonly known name. It's important to always include the name and pronunciation the indigenous group prefers.
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determined whose ancestral lands are being discussed• Named the specific nations of the people covered in the content• Ensured my sources are relevant to or informed directly by the groups of people involved• Emphasized the validity of Indigenous perspectives of the historical event or cultural phenomenon being discussed• Determine whether I am writing for or about Indigenous learners	<p>Examples and Non-examples Additional Resources</p>



Intelligences: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>One dictionary definition of the word intelligence is “the skilled use of reason.” The way in which people demonstrate their use of reason frequently influences how their intelligence is perceived by others. Intelligence is often solely associated with a student’s ability to academically succeed in school, and this perception frequently results in the flawed assumption that a lack of academic success must be caused by a lack of intelligence.</p> <p>To avoid reinforcing this assumption in education materials, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No set of grades, tests, tasks, or activities can accurately determine a person’s level of intelligence. Intelligence should not be defined as a strong aptitude in all subject areas. Most people have particular areas of study or skills at which they excel, yet they aren’t <i>unintelligent</i> because they haven’t mastered other areas of study or skills as successfully. The manner in which a person presents information may not reflect all that they know or understand. What is seen, heard, spoken, written, or performed may not be representative of the extent of someone’s knowledge; communication style is not a definitive measure of intelligence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of intelligence do not determine levels of capability. For. Example, students with intellectual disabilities can be quite capable if they are given the support, opportunity, and environment to succeed. The terms neurodiversity, neurodivergent, and neuroatypical have related, but not identical, meanings. Sociologist Judy Singer is credited with the term neurodiversity, the variations in the way the brain processes information. These variations are differences, not deficits. Someone who is a neurodivergent thinker has one or more of these variations or differences (as displayed in autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, etc.). Neuroatypical is a less commonly used synonym for neurodivergent. Characteristics such as gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status do not predetermine, limit, or guarantee a person’s level of intelligence. Materials should be created with the understanding of growth mindset.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special, Special needs Delayed Smart/Dumb Stupid/Retarded/Idiot Genius/Whiz kid/Nerd Subjective words that suggest opinion or imply judgement (e.g., easy/difficult/simple) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual disability Specific names of disabilities Neurodiverse, neurodivergent, or neuroatypical
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intelligence is portrayed as being determined by a person’s ability to academically succeed at school Intelligence is represented as a key factor in future success An individual’s ability to communicate in spoken or written form is often falsely considered an accurate indicator of intelligence An individual’s ability to perform a task (e.g., stacking blocks) is often falsely considered an accurate indicator of intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with giftedness or high potential are assumed to not require additional support or accommodations at school Students with giftedness or high potential are assumed to be socially awkward and isolate themselves from others Gifted is portrayed as the same thing as smart. (Gifted, often used interchangeably with <i>talented</i>, can extend across many kinds of abilities; it is not a fixed indicator of cognitive intelligence)



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An individual's gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, home situation, country of origin, socioeconomic status or other factor is misunderstood as determining the areas in which that person is intelligent, or has knowledge specific to that group.• intelligence is portrayed as declining with age• Students with disabilities are unfairly represented as unable to meet or exceed the academic performance of their nondisabled peers• Students with disabilities are always expected to have low levels of intelligence• Students with learning disabilities are expected to outgrow them, or the learning disabilities are expected to fade over time• All students with intellectual disabilities are assumed to be <i>dumb</i> while all neurodiverse students are assumed to be highly intelligent, or their difference is conflated with genius	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academically successful students are portrayed as nerdy or socially awkward• Students who participate in vocational education programs are assumed to do so because they have low levels of intelligence• People from wealthy socioeconomic backgrounds are expected to be highly intelligent, while people of lesser socioeconomic means are expected to have low intelligence• Extending an activity or task (i.e., giving a student more time to complete an assignment) is portrayed as an unfair advantage and as though it will increase an individual's likelihood of success over those without extra time• Students who are above or below the academic grade levels of their peers are assumed perform above or below grade level in all academic subjects
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensured that intelligence is not solely defined in terms of academic success• Avoided imposing any predeterminations, expectations, limits, or assumptions about intelligence• Ensured the way a character or person presents information does not influence how others perceive their level of intelligence• Ensured the material avoids implying subjective opinion or judgement about intelligence in any way• Avoided negatively linking the concept of intelligence with any characteristics that identify or describe members of any group	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Nationalism and Patriotism: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Ideas of nationalism—uncritical support of one’s nation, often at the expense of others—are contradictory to the educational goal of communicating factual information while facilitating analysis and critical assessment of that information. Patriotism is devotion and loyalty to one’s country, and while it is generally a positive expression of pride, Educators should be wary of portraying it to the point of nationalism. Excessive patriotism and nationalization in educational materials redirect students from facts and critique.</p> <p>In an increasingly globalized world and an increasingly cosmopolitan nation in which educational materials are used to teach diverse groups of students from diverse backgrounds and national identities, it is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present history and other subjects with as little bias as possible, giving students the tools to think critically about community, power, and even nationalism itself. • Work to ensure that language and presentation is inclusive, that historical figures, communities, identities, and symbols are represented accurately and respectfully, and that the perspectives of members of the political communities in question are included and centered when appropriate. • Understand that political identities are often the target of mockery, misinformation, prejudice, stereotyping, and outright discrimination, and that content must not reproduce these ideas and should clearly oppose them whenever possible. 	<p>Remember that misinformation, mockery, and stereotyping—couched in pride in one’s country—often uphold systems of discrimination and historically have led to crimes of great violence, wars, and even genocide.</p> <p>When representing the political affiliation, identity, belief, or culture of an individual or group, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationality or political allegiance is just one part of a person’s identity, among others. • Representation of members of national or political communities should go beyond mere identification and outside of any tropes associated with that national/political identity. • There is no one proper idea of what patriotism looks like. Beliefs about what is good about one’s country, and how these beliefs should be expressed, vary from person to person. Do not assume patriotism and displays of it as singular or without nuance. • People disagree about what actions are suitable patriotic expression.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using <i>we</i>, <i>us</i>, or <i>our</i> when describing historical events. Not all students will identify the same. • Requiring or assuming knowledge of any particular national history or culture. • Using patriotic tropes such as “nation of immigrants” or “melting pot” without careful consideration as these can be perceived differently by members of nondominant groups (for example, what does “a nation of immigrants” mean to the descendants of enslaved Africans?) • Terms with negative connotations based on how a political belief or philosophy is situated relative to another (e.g., <i>radical</i>, <i>extremist</i>, <i>terrorist</i>, <i>dogma</i>, <i>fanatic</i>, etc.). • Slurs of any kind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use geographic and political names preferred by the people that live in those places and identities. People in the Middle East don’t call it “the Middle East.” • It’s generally fine to use “American” as a noun when referring to people who live in the United States (e.g., “Americans pay taxes to fund government services.”) Additional guidance on this topic is available in the Social Studies subject-specific guidelines and the Imagine Learning Copyediting Style Guide.



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indiscriminate/non-purposeful use of national symbols (flags, etc.).• Teaching one political narrative as normative to the exclusion of others.• Using words that are demeaning or patronizing towards other peoples and political identities.• Using “American” as an adjective to mean “US” (e.g., “American foreign policy.” This is nuanced, and sometimes there is no good “US” alternative.	
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assuming that others have background knowledge of one particular national history or culture, or that others share the traditions, beliefs, holidays, etc. of the majority of the population or dominant demographic.• Ascribing the actions of a state or state institution to the populace as a whole, when speaking of one’s own government or especially when speaking negatively of the actions of foreign governments• Offering historical moments or concepts without critique• Framing history as <i>Us</i> vs. <i>Them</i> rather than from a human-centered, globally informed perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Framing war narratives as having <i>winners</i> and <i>losers</i> as if war is a competition and no more• Presenting democracy as the only relevant or as the best form of government without critique of its flaws in practice• Presenting Manifest Destiny as a justifiable US ideal rather than critiquing government actions that resulted in harm to Indigenous peoples, Latin American communities, etc.• Presenting American Exceptionalism without critique or assessment. More information on this topic can be found in the Social Studies subject-specific guidelines.
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represented a range of political viewpoints and ideologies• Ensured that materials do not assume the user to have knowledge of a particular national history or culture• Ensured characters of different political identities or communities have both voice and agency• Avoided limiting anyone’s participation in activities (hobbies, work, school, etc.) based on their national identity or affiliation (other than by their own agency)• Considered how members of the nation represented in the materials (or members of other nations) would respond to this representation• Consulted experts or resources to verify the accuracy and respectfulness of the representation of political entities and histories about which I am not an expert	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Physical Characteristics: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Physical features and characteristics are often used to define, explain, or understand people; because they are external representations, they are usually what we first notice about one another. However, we should not assume we know people based on their physicality, as it assumes someone's personhood or identity is solely based on how the outside world perceives them. Other aspects of representation and identity—culture, race, sex, gender, ability, and others—are not always visible, even as they are inextricable from identity. Physical characteristics can be assigned too broadly or too narrowly so that particular groups are excluded or are included in ways that are inaccurate or harmful. To avoid generalizations, stereotypes, and prejudice in representation of physical characteristics in educational materials, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is inappropriate and harmful to associate body size, choice of hairstyle, clothing, tattoos, piercings, makeup, and other ways people express themselves with morals or value systems. It is prejudiced to ascribe whole cultures as having limited and specific facial features, clothing styles, and general physical attributes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is sexist to characterize women by their physical appearance while characterizing men by their interests, profession, or achievements. Use of the word <i>fat</i> and related terms as a physical description is not appropriate—unless someone of higher weight prefers <i>fat</i> in describing their own size. Disability is commonly defined as any factor that affects or restricts a person's daily life activities permanently or for a long period of time. People who are of higher weight may have disabilities that are related to their weight, but people who are of higher weight should not be portrayed as disabled <i>simply because</i> they are overweight. Body type, weight, and general self-expression are attributes, and should not be used to define oneself. One can note a person's body type or weight if it is pertinent and part of a person-centered portrayal. Specificity in word choice and selected qualities can help avoid shallow and stereotypical representations.
Avoid	Use
<p>(In description of people and physicality)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive/Graphic detail re: eating disorders Fat, Chubby, Extra-large, Obese (prescribed standards of obesity per BMI are not indicators of health or ability) Skinny, scrawny, anorexic Metaphors or euphemisms that are offensive, othering of bodies and characteristics, or generally mocking (i.e., "Her face looks like a cabbage.") Images or descriptions that reinforce idealized and unrealistic standards of beauty Descriptions that are inherently tied to gender and/or only used to qualify a person's size/appearance (manly, womanly, feminine, masculine). Description re: appropriated looks (some would consider it inappropriate for a white person to wear dreadlocks and a dashiki as fashion) 	<p>(In description of people and physicality)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Images offering body diversity and difference in self-expression Varied representation in abilities and disabilities, including those of various body types and sizes. Culturally specific style (clothing, hair) that has been properly vetted and is authentic. Literal description rather than potentially harmful similes, metaphors, and aphorisms.
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being overweight is shown as synonymous with disability Body type is assumed to be an indication of overall health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical characteristics are assumed to only involve or relate to members of one group, culture, ethnicity, race, class, gender, etc.



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size/looks as indicator of personality traits: lazy, lacking self-control, unhealthy, etc.• Using the same physical characteristics, clothing or other features to represent entire cultures (stereotyping, lack of representation)• Specific characteristics are idealized in text or images• Physical descriptions are provided to reinforce notions of attractiveness rather than as visual identifiers of individual people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A person with tattoos assumed to be dangerous, provocative, or a social outlier• Content creators show physical self-expression through clothing, gender identity, socio-economic status, etc., but use them as simplistic and incomplete indicators of values or morals• Physical portrayals do not include or adequately represent aspects of specific culture; rather, they further tokenize and simplify representations
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represented a range of body types and physical characteristics• Portrayed all body types or physical characteristics in a neutral or positive manner• Avoided reinforcing stereotypes based in physicality (portraying people in limited contexts/circumstances)• Considered and included elements that make up a person's identity (culture, ethnicity, race, class, gender, interests, ability) and their relevance to representations of physical characteristics	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Racism, Ethnicity, and Cultural Identity: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Traditionally, race referred to a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities generally viewed as distinct. Race is now recognized by sociologists to be a social construct, created to sow difference, legitimize discrimination, and falsely determine that certain races are better than others. The construct of race was developed by the 1700s as a byproduct of slavery, early capitalism, European exploration and colonization, and white supremacy.</p> <p>While it is crucial to understand race as constructed—and that humans’ similarities exceedingly outweigh their differences—we must also understand that today race is commonly used as a way of categorizing people. Governments, schools, organizations, marketers, communities, and individuals use race to distinguish between groups for a variety of purposes. Some of the most common racial categories used in the U.S. are: White, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latin American, Asian/Asian American, Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Alaska Native, and Indigenous/Native Americans.</p> <p>Ethnicity is not the same as race and the two should not be conflated. Ethnicity refers to groups of people that share similar cultural expression, language, or traditions. For example, Latin American people are from one of the largest ethnic groups in the U.S., even as Latin American people come from many countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Belize, and more). Ethnicity is also used to describe people from a similar tribe. For example, the Igbo tribe in Nigeria is also an ethnic group.</p> <p>People can belong to both a race and an ethnic or cultural group (or to multiple races and ethnic groups). For example, a Nigerian American person can identify racially as Black. However, their family’s roots might originate within the Igbo tribe, and Igbo would be their ethnicity. Another example: Jewish people largely have been racialized as White in the U.S.; however, their ethnicity is Jewish. Another important example relates to Afro-Latin Americans (Afro-Cubans, Afro-Dominicans, Afro-Brazilians, etc.). A person can be ethnically Latin Americans and racially Black. However, how they choose to identify may vary. Some may identify solely with their ethnicity, while others may choose to identify based on their race, or both.</p> <p>While race is often inherently placed on people based on phenotype, race is also very much about self-identification.</p>	<p>Racism is a tool of white supremacy. White supremacy is a belief that White people are the superior race and thus deserve to dominate society culturally, politically, economically, and socially. White supremacy is deeply entrenched within Western society and history and takes many shapes and forms, including the overt racism of the KKK, Proud Boys, and Nazis. Within a social context, white supremacy has led to legalized racial segregation and oppression and has been used as a justification for settler colonialism, imperialism, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, westward expansion and manifest destiny, etc.</p> <p>While the concept of <i>white supremacy</i> may feel extremist, in recent years it has become more visible and explicit. The phenomena of police killing unarmed Black people is a function of racism and white supremacy. The unequal treatment of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) vs. White people in the justice system is a form of white supremacy. Consider using/naming “white supremacy” when you can make direct connections as to how the racist action works to benefit white supremacist beliefs and values (i.e., when discussing the Ku Klux Klan).</p> <p>To appropriately represent the range of ethnic, racial, and cultural identities of people, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race is a very complex topic. It is acceptable, today, to use race to self-identify, to classify and categorize—that said, we must both be aware of the potential for generalization and stereotypes. Human beings, across all racial and ethnic backgrounds, share over 99% similar genetic makeup. Today race is relevant in how we come to understand and interact with one another. • Despite major cultural differences, many people of color in the U.S. share similar experiences and struggles as they relate to racism, discrimination, access, environmental factors (wildfires, rising water, pollution, disease), housing, criminalization, etc. Historically, these shared struggles have created moments of solidarity, most notably during the social movements of the 1960s (Black Power, Asian American, American Indian Movement, and the Chicano movements). Conversely, each racial and ethnic population often maintains its distinct culture, language(s), religious/spiritual beliefs and practices, politics, and economy. • When writing about biracial or multiracial people, it is best to conduct research on how they choose to self-



<p>This can be especially true for people of a multiracial background or who are raised in a different culture than that of their racial background. For example, a biracial person (of Black and White ancestry) may be White-presenting (having white phenotypical features) and be read by others as White but identify as Black because they were raised as such.</p> <p>While race is omnipresent within American culture, this is not necessarily the case in other countries. For example, in India, caste, which many would argue includes elements of race and class, is much more significant than race as a social hierarchy. In other countries, like Jamaica, skin color is more significant.</p> <p>Racism is the discrimination and antagonism of a person, often BIPOC, based on their racial or ethnic background. To be racist is to use one's power to oppress, discriminate, or violate a person based on their race. Racism can be interpersonal, meaning occurring between two or more people (e.g., a white supremacist committed a hate crime against an Asian American person), or systemic.</p> <p>Systemic racism, also known as structural racism or institutional racism, is racism embedded within laws, regulations, policies, protocols, etc. of institutions such as colleges and universities, the criminal justice system, banks, and healthcare providers. An example of systemic racism is the history of redlining in the U.S. Historically, the federal government, via the Housing and Urban Development Agency, FHA loans, and other federal programs and offices, created policies that legalized segregation across American communities. These policies limited where Black people could live to areas outlined in red on certain maps. These areas were often dilapidated and underinvested in. Additionally, banks tended to give mortgages to Black families less often than to white families, as homes in redlined communities were systematically undervalued.</p>	<p>identify. If no information is available other than their various racial and ethnic backgrounds, be sure to include all of them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People from racial categories do not operate in a monolith; there is no single Black or Latin American experience. This reemphasizes the need to conduct research on preferred self-identifications. • Racial and ethnic group identification evolves and changes over time and with new generations. For example, African Americans have taken on and have been given various racial names—Negro, Afro-American, Black, African American, etc • In the U.S., racial and ethnic group identification can also differ across region. For example, many Latin American people on the West coast, in particular California, identify as Chicano. This has political and historical connections to the Chicano movement. However, many on the East Coast would not use this terminology and may view it as offensive. In Texas, Tejano is a popular identifier. • Racial and ethnic naming is also deeply political. The use of <i>Black</i>, <i>Chicano</i>, and <i>Asian American</i> come directly from the radical movements of the 1960s where youth activists prioritized naming and self-determination in their activist philosophies. • When writing about a person of color, conduct research to identify how they would like to be addressed and named.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colored • Negro • The _____ (insert racial group). For example, “The Blacks” or “The Asians.” • Mulatto • Racial slurs • Slave, Master, Runaway • Avoid wording, images, or suggestions that lead to the adultification of black children. Black children have historically been treated and viewed as adults rather than as children (which has led to victimizing, victim-blaming, sexualization, and more severe disciplinary punishment). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIPOC- Black, Indigenous, People of Color; or People of Color • Mixed-race, multiracial, biracial • Black/African American (Capitalize “Black”) • Asian American or Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) • Latina/Latino/Latin American • Chicana/Chicano • Middle Eastern South Asian (MESA) • Arab American • Muslim American • Historically marginalized/marginalized/oppressed • Enslaved person, Enslaver, Escaped



<ul style="list-style-type: none">Words and phrases that connote black as “bad” and white as “good” (Blacklisted, Whitelist, Black Market, lily white)Latine, LatinX or other terms that are not yet included in standard style guides, unless the specific person being discussed identifies by that term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Slavery, EnslavementApproved list, safe list, block list, underground economy
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Race is portrayed as biologicalThe false assumption that “reverse racism” exists. Oppressed or historically marginalized people seldom have the power to commit discriminatory acts that create equal levels of harm that marginalized people have experienced historically and contemporarilyWe are commonly inaccurately described as living in a “post-racial” societyThe false assumption that we can be “color-blind.” Race is all around us. We can believe in unity and solidarity; however, to ignore racial and cultural differences is also problematicBlack, Latin American, and Indigenous people have historically been associated with criminality in the media and popular cultureAll Spanish speakers in the U.S. are assumed to be born outside of the U.S., or of Mexican descent.Racist stereotypes and tropes (e.g., The mammy, sapphire, tragic mulatto, Black brute, FOB – “fresh off the boat”, Muslims and South Asians being associated with terrorism, etc.)BIPOC art and culture is often represented as <i>lowbrow</i>. For example, hip-hop is often portrayed as not being art (or artful) or culturally valuable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BIPOC are often associated with living in low-income or urban communities, while white people are presented as living in rural, affluent, or suburban neighborhoods.Black people are often associated with urban and hip-hop cultureBlack and white are portrayed as the default racial categoriesTokenism/Tokenization- when a person from a historically marginalized group is being used in a predominately white space as a symbol (or token) of diversity and inclusion and are often made to represent or answer for their entire raceIt is assumed that people who are not white or have an accent are not from the U.S.Middle Eastern/South Asians represented in media as terrorists (see more on Orientalism). Since 9/11, terrorism (i.e., heinous violence directed towards civilians often for a political or geopolitical purpose) has become synonymous with violence committed by Muslims (and Middle Eastern South Asians more broadly). However, acts of terror are not solely enacted by this group. We are currently witnessing a rise in White (supremacist) domestic terrorism. However, seldom is the word <i>terrorist</i> used to describe White violence. How <i>terrorism</i> is deployed/who gets called a terrorist and who doesn't also feed into racist tropes/narratives
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Included the perspective of people from a different background and experience from myselfNamed people and cultures by specific racial or ethnic group nameEnsured my sources are relevant to or informed directly by BIPOC involvedEmphasized the validity of BIPOC perspectives of the historical event or cultural phenomenon I am writing aboutDetermined whether I am writing for or about BIPOC learnersIncluded resources and/or materials that center and draw from BIPOC knowledge, experiences, and cultures	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented a group through my own lens rather than appropriating the perspective of an outsider• Avoided pitting racial groups against each other (e.g., a model minority versus a problem minority)• Refrained from reproducing racial hierarchies or stereotypes in my work• Used active language in narratives to clarify those who are racist versus those who experience racism	
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Religion and Spirituality: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Religion and spirituality are important facets of life for many individuals and societies. Religion and spirituality are difficult to define because of the diversity of religious and spiritual traditions and how varied believers see themselves. Content creators must work to ensure that religious traditions, beliefs, practices, communities, and symbols are represented accurately and respectfully, centering the perspectives of members of the religious communities in question while also creating content that does not explicitly or implicitly favor one set of beliefs over another.</p> <p>When representing the religious affiliation, identity, belief, denomination or practice of an individual or group, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion/spirituality is a single part of a person's identity, among others. Note a person's religious affiliation or belief if it is relevant and in addition to an already person-centered portrayal. Representation of members of religious communities should go beyond their religious identity and associated tropes. People of the same religious tradition will sometimes practice the religion in different ways or share some beliefs and not others. Include images of people in the USA practicing religions outside of Christianity rather than using only images from history or from foreign countries. People from all backgrounds have different religions, and they celebrate or practice in many different ways. For example, not all Muslim women wear burqas. There are different denominations within each religion. When possible, refer to the specific denomination instead of generalizing the group under one umbrella. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people are religious but do not affiliate with a specific religious group, attend religious services, etc. Others are not religious or do not believe in a god and may identify as atheist, agnostic, nonreligious, etc. When talking about religion and beliefs, specificity in word choice and presented qualities can help avoid shallow and stereotypical representations. Religious traditions, beliefs, practices, communities, and symbols are often the target of mockery, misinformation, prejudice, stereotyping, and outright discrimination, and we must oppose these and be careful not to reproduce them. Materials should not reproduce perspectives of a single culture. It is not the only lens for understanding other traditions, or the standard to which other traditions are compared. We should not assume aspects of varied beliefs will be common knowledge for students from other traditions. It is important to be aware of the role of religion in topics that might seem nonreligious to you (cosmology, psychology, ethics, etc.). Do not create false dichotomies between religion and science, faith and reason, etc. Religion and spirituality are not synonymous. Religion is an organized system of beliefs; spirituality is more about individual practice and beliefs, not necessarily tied to a religious institution.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms with negative connotations based on how a belief system is situated relative to another, and used to ascribe judgement (e.g., <i>radical</i>, <i>extremist</i>, <i>terrorist</i>, <i>dogma</i>, <i>fanatic</i>, <i>heathen</i>, <i>infidel</i>, etc.). Slurs of any kind, including instances where people are identified by their religion in a monolithic, derogatory way. Example: <i>Jews</i> is not an acceptable way to refer to Jewish people. Conflation between <i>traditions/sacred text</i> and <i>mythology</i> to demean or belittle beliefs. For example, while some people read the Bible or Indigenous origin stories as mythology, or symbolism and allegory, some believe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When referring to people, refer to their religion as a separate aspect of their identity. Example: She is Jewish. They are a part the Jewish community. Sometimes opponents of Islam overuse the word <i>Allah</i> when describing Islam to make it seem as if Muslims worship some local deity other than the God of Abraham. If, as described in the section on Judaism, the writer should use <i>God</i> instead of <i>Yahweh</i>, then in analogous context, the writer should use "God" instead of <i>Allah</i>. Religion or Spirituality (allow communities to self-define preference) <i>Islam</i> refers to the religion, community, culture



<p>events in these texts are literal or an integral part of their faith and identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use Islam or Muslim as interchangeable words (see below). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Muslim</i> is a person who practices the religion
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assuming all students have background knowledge of Christianity Assuming that all groups and individuals within a religion have the same beliefs and practices Teaching that the U.S. is a Christian or Judeo-Christian nation and all other religions as “foreign”. Using words that are demeaning or patronizing towards the cosmological or epistemological views of nondominant traditions (myths, folk tales, superstition, etc.) These terms should never be used when discussing religious beliefs. Instead, say “Christians believe...” or “Indigenous people believe...” This only applies to belief systems currently practiced (i.e., its acceptable to discuss Greek myths). <p><i>Atheist/Agnostic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atheists portrayed as having no moral compass because they do not believe in a god Assuming that Agnostics just can’t make up their minds. Atheists/Agnostics are portrayed as selfish and thought to only care about themselves Assumed that Atheists and Agnostics cannot be trusted, as they do not believe in anything <p><i>Indigenous Beliefs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed that all Indigenous people believe that nature is God Indigenous people are portrayed as monolithic in their beliefs Assumed that Indigenous people do magic Assumed that Indigenous people are all animists or “one with nature.” <p><i>Paganism: Wiccans/Druids</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pagans are portrayed as devil worshippers Assumed that people who are Wiccan will curse you Assumed that Druids cast spells and believe in fairies These are not portrayed as real religions These religions are portrayed as evil Assumed that they sacrifice animals <p><i>Christianity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christianity portrayed as primarily a European or White religion 	<p><i>Muslims & Islam</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islam is portrayed as backward and inferior to other faiths Assumed that all Muslims are prejudiced against non-Muslims, women, and LGBTQ individuals Muslims are portrayed as Black or POC only Muslims are assumed to be inherently or disproportionately violent and a security threat Conspiracy theorists often assume Muslims are plotting to take over the world All Muslims are Arabs, or all Arabs are Muslims Allah is a uniquely Islamic deity <i>Islamic</i> and <i>Muslim</i> are synonymous <p><i>Jewish People and Judaism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conspiracy theorists often assume Jewish people are plotting to control the world by promoting capitalism and through Jewish networks in banking and finance Jewish people portrayed as promoting communism to serve Jewish interests Conspiracy theorists often assume Jewish people control the news media The Holocaust is portrayed as a hoax or minimized Jewish people are assumed to be collectively supportive of and responsible for the actions of the modern State of Israel The role of antisemitism in society is minimized <p><i>Hindus and Hinduism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindus portrayed as worshipping idols Hindus are assumed to be polytheistic Hindus are assumed to be atheist All Indians are portrayed as Hindus, or all Hindus are portrayed as Indian All Hindus are ascetics. <p><i>Buddhism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumed that Buddhism is essentially mindfulness and meditation Buddhism is portrayed as a philosophy, not a religion Assumed that all Buddhists believe in reincarnation Buddhists are portrayed solely as monks or as ascetics. Assume all Buddhists worship Buddha as divine.



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Christians are portrayed as anti-LGBTQ+• Assumed that all Christians are against divorce• Assumed that all Christians speak in tongues• The Catholic Church is portrayed as a monolith, and a power-hungry, superstitious institution• Assumed that Catholics worship saints and Mary• Mormons are portrayed as not Christian• All Mormons are assumed to be polygamists• Mormon women are portrayed as only wearing dresses	
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented a range of religious views or communities in the content• Represented people who do not practice any religion• Avoided assumptions that the audience has knowledge of a specific (or any) religious tradition• Created characters of different religious views or communities and allowed all voice and agency• Represented people in activities (hobbies, work, school, etc.) not solely based on their religious belief or affiliation and given them their own agency• Considered the perspective of the religious community represented in the content• Consulted authoritative resources to verify the accuracy and respectfulness of my representation?• Avoided promoting my own beliefs by presenting them with critique and without bias	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Sexism: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Sexism is a negative system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions that targets people based on the assumption that behaviors and identities are innately informed by biological sex and perceptions of gender. Displays of sexist personal bias include any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice, or behavior wherein a person or a group of people is cast as inferior or superior, or characterized simply because of their perceived sex and/or gender.</p> <p>Sexist representation reinforces the idea that biological sex and gender identity are binary—only male or female—though we understand today that both biological sex and gender identity are far more complex and nuanced (see TOPICS). On a global scale, sexism affects women, girls, and nonbinary, genderfluid people disproportionately, but it also affects men and boys, especially when they do not conform to a culture’s traditional male stereotypes or expectations in terms of likes/dislikes, activities, dress, actions, etc.</p>	<p>To avoid sexism in educational materials, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both sex assigned at birth/biological sex and gender identity are separate though related categories. This clarifies sexism—and its prescription of male/female, either/or generalizations to all people—as archaic, false, and only perpetuating harmful stereotypes. It is important to avoid making assumptions about or limiting a portrayal of someone based on their perceived gender. For example, do not assume someone dressed in a feminine manner identifies as a woman. Do not ascribe stereotypical characteristics of womanhood to someone because they identify as or appear to be a woman (“She won’t be as strong as he is because she’s a woman”). It is important to avoid imposing/assuming gender norms or stereotypes when referring to specific cultures or religions. We must use value-free descriptions of cultures. For example, do not assume western ideas of masculinity are true or better than Indigenous or Eastern ideas of masculinity. Provide description, not judgement. Present rather than explain.
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language that promotes an unfair or irrelevant distinction based on gender. Idioms or common phrases rooted in sexism, such as “man up” or <i>He plays like a girl</i>. Unnecessary references to generic <i>man</i>, such as saying <i>mankind</i> when referring to all people. Language that suggests “innateness” of characteristics, especially language that pulls for essentialism of gender, such as “women are inherently gentler than men.” Generic <i>he</i>, <i>him</i>, and other male prototypical language as the norm or standard. Infantilizing language for women. <i>Girls</i> should never be used for adult women or their spaces (e.g., <i>girls room</i>). For comparison, think of the long history in the U.S. of referring to Black men as <i>boys</i> to further disenfranchise them. <i>Lady/ladies</i> (except in situations in which men are also addressed as <i>gentlemen</i>), which forces/assumes conformity to outdated notions of acceptable behavior. Terms that show gender biases in professions, such as <i>policeman</i> or <i>fireman</i>. Do not add <i>male</i> before “<i>nurse</i>” or <i>lady</i> before <i>doctor</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singular they/them/their if gender is unknown Referring to groups as <i>people</i>, <i>folks</i>, or <i>everybody</i> to avoid gender assumption deleting he, his, and him in favor of less represented she, her, or hers; or use plural nouns/specific character names instead <i>A</i> or <i>an</i> in place of <i>his</i>; <i>Who</i> in place of <i>he</i> For generic use of <i>man</i>, substitute <i>person/people</i>, <i>individual(s)</i>, <i>human(s)</i>, <i>human being(s)</i> for <i>mankind</i>, substitute <i>humankind</i> or <i>humanity</i> for <i>manhood</i>, substitute <i>adulthood</i>, <i>maturity</i> <i>Spouse/partner</i> instead of <i>husband</i> or <i>wife</i> <i>Restroom</i> instead of <i>men’s room</i> or <i>ladies’ room</i> For a job/role, use the same term for people of any gender (e.g., department chair or chairperson), or use the corresponding verb (e.g., to chair) Language that embraces and uplifts human experience over science, law, or cultural norm, i.e., <i>Feminine hygiene products</i> should be replaced with <i>menstrual products</i>, VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) protects more than just women so use terms/examples to encompass all those people.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms that convey gender inferiority: Say <i>husband and wife</i> or <i>wife and husband</i>, not “man and wife.” Say “staff in the office,” not “girls in the office.” • Avoid the adultification of girls. Avoid referring to adolescent girls as “young women” particularly since boys of the same age would not be referred to as “young men.” This wording highlights a girl’s gender over her youth, and burdens female children with the assumption of adult maturity, responsibility, morals, and behavior (which, historically, has allowed for victimizing and victim-blaming). • Captions for photos, images, and media, especially those of children, should avoid highlighting gender unnecessarily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In captions for photos, images, and media, especially those of children, should be labeled using context and terms like “student” “athlete” “chess player” “two friends” etc. In place of gendered language like “boy” or “girl”. Some exceptions may exist for world language content, where gender is fundamental to grammar. • Use gender-neutral occupational terms when possible (e.g., police officer instead of policewoman). • Note: Many World Language courses include gender (masculine and feminine) influences on grammar, including gendered nouns (<i>la profesora, el profesor</i>). These concepts (and this type of vocabulary) should generally be included in instruction, but any concerns about these issues should be raised with Product Managers.
Common Misrepresentations	
<p>Female/Woman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrayed as employed in support roles, or in fields in which emotions/nurturing play a large role: nurse, teacher, administrator, assistant, etc. • Assumed to be bad at math, science, engineering • Shown as emotional, hormonal • Portrayed as impulsive, irrational • Assumed to be physically weak/inferior • Portrayed as petty, catty, jealous • Portrayed as materialistic • Assumed to be overly concerned with beauty and appearance • Expected to be maternal, nurturing/caretaking and defined only in relation to how they serve others • Assumed to be incompetent, helpless, subservient • Expected to be sexually reserved or innocent • Portrayed as sexually manipulative or promiscuous • Represented through colors like pink or purple <p>Intersex/Nonbinary/Genderqueer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumed to be confused • Portrayed as depressed, sad, broken • Seen as attention-seeking • Disregarded/invalidated as being <i>In a phase</i> • Portrayed as fragile or sensitive • Assumed to be identifiable by physical appearance • Considered unemployable, “alternative” 	<p>Male/Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrayed as employed solely in professional, leadership, or mechanical roles: doctor, pilot, engineer, scientist, etc. • Expected to be incapable of caretaking • Assumed to be physically strong, athletic, overly aggressive, tough, angry • Expected to be mechanically inclined • Portrayed as single-minded, having tunnel vision • Portrayed as territorial, possessive • Assumed to be messy, unorganized • Portrayed as competent/business-minded • Seen as scientific, rational, level-headed • Expected to be the breadwinner, family head • Portrayed as decision-maker, leader • Portrayed as cold, detached, unemotional • Assumed and expected to be sexually experienced; driven/controlled by an interest in sex • Represented through darker colors like green, black, or blue
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made choices that upend expected or status quo representations of gender and undermine sexist assumptions 	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoided assigning roles, jobs, behaviors, emotions, styles, etc. as predominantly male or female• Avoided double standards in my representation of sex and/or gender• Checked the content for generalizations based on actual or perceived gender• Implemented graphics/images that inform/relate to the content respectfully as it relates to gender• Represented all people with complexity and uniqueness with representation that include people's complete lives instead of reducing people to aspects of their gender identity or gender expression	
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Sexual Orientation and Identity: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>Sexual Orientation is defined as an enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction. Sexual orientation is fluid (LGBT Resource Center, UCSF). Asexuality is also considered a sexual orientation. Some of the most common identities that are used to note one's sexual orientation are: homosexual (more on this term below), heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual, queer (more on this term below), lesbian, gay, and asexual. Some of the most common identities that are used to note one's gender identity are: cisgender, transgender, genderfluid, non-binary, and agender (see <i>Topic: Gender Identity and Expression</i>).</p> <p>Though understandings of sexual orientation and gender are often promoted together, they are not interchangeable. Sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are two separate identity categories that are in conversation and overlap with one another but are not the same. For example, a woman who is attracted to women might identify as heterosexual or a lesbian, dependent on whether they are transgender or cisgender.</p> <p>To appropriately represent the range of sexual orientations, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While heterosexuality is often presented as the default/norm, sexual orientation is quite complex. People's romantic and sexual attraction is not limited to being just <i>straight</i> or <i>gay</i>. Moreover, sexual orientation is not stagnant. A person may identify as heterosexual for a period of their life, and one day realize that they are attracted to multiple genders (i.e., pansexual). How people identify and/or present their sexual orientation intersects with their racial, religious, and cultural background as well as generation (age). Older generations tend to use <i>LGBT</i> while younger generations often use <i>queer</i>. The term <i>queer</i>, used as a slur in the past, has been reclaimed the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ people have a range of social experiences. In the U.S. there is a long history of homophobia-- of LGBTQ+ people being discriminated against and subjected to hate crimes and violence. Historically, LGBTQ+ people have often had their rights restricted or contested. In the U.S. same sex marriage was only made legal at the federal level in 2015. More than half the U.S. has yet to pass legislation protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ families to adopt children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though the literal meaning of <i>homophobia</i> is fear of those who are not heterosexual, the phrase is also used to indicate prejudice and bigotry against the LGBTQ+ community. Identifying as LGBTQ+ or engaging in sexual acts with the same sex is criminalized in many countries, and in some cases, punishable by death. Content creators should investigate the locales included in materials to ensure that location is understood in regard to LGBTQ+ subject matter, so it can be discussed within the proper context. Heteronormativity is the belief that heterosexual relationships are the norm within society, and this belief is often implied/defaulted to in educational materials. Moreover, it also assumes that gender is limited to the binary (see <i>Topic: Gender Identity and Expression</i>). Cissexism/Genderism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders and that one's gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. This system oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of cis-normative constructs. Within cissexism, cisgender people are the dominant group and trans/gender non-conforming people are the oppressed group (LGBT Resource Center, UCSF). Heteronormative and nuclear family (i.e., mother, father, two children) representations surround us. However, family structures are very diverse. Some families include same sex couples. Including more types of families in content allows for student to see themselves and the multiplicity of ways families take shape. Some states have different requirements, so this should be discussed with product managers. In some indigenous communities, the existence of "two-spirit individuals" is recognized and this concept is used to describe their gender, sexual, and spiritual identity.



Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBTQ+ slurs• Homosexual: Try to refrain from using this term other than within a scientific context, as the term can carry a negative connotation based on its historical use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer +)• Heterosexual• Queer: Historically, queer has been used as slur. However, recent generations have reclaimed this term. Queer is often used as an umbrella term for anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or pansexual. The term is especially popular among LGBTQ+ Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities.• Instead of using <i>husband and wife</i> use gender-inclusive language such as “spouses” or “partners.”• Same-Gender-Loving (SGL)- commonly used by generation X/early millennial Black queer men.• Use gender-inclusive familial terms like <i>siblings, parents, guardians, or caretakers</i>.• Identify relationship through a non-gendered phrase, such as <i>couple</i> or <i>partner</i>.• Use <i>transgender</i> as an adjective—that is, “a transgender woman” or “a trans woman” not “she is transgendered” (this notes identity, not a condition).
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portraying gender and sexual orientation as the same.• Portraying sex and gender as the same.• Assuming families have (or should have) a mother and a father.• Presenting heterosexuality as the norm and/or default• Depicting LGBTQ+ individuals as hypersexual or perverse• Assuming a connection between LGBTQ+ sexuality and sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assuming a connection between LGBTQ+ sexuality and mental illness and/or addiction issues• Portraying being LGBTQ+ as a choice and that people who identify as LGBTQ+ can choose to stop being so• Assuming that lesbians who dress in a masculine fashion want to be men or portraying all lesbians as looking masculine• Assuming all gay men are very fashionable and effeminate
Ask Yourself	Quick Link
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written content that doesn’t use heterosexuality as the default• Determined whether I am writing for or about LGBTQ+ people• Confirmed that my sources are relevant to or informed directly by the LGBTQ+ people involved• Included and/or emphasized the validity of LGBTQ+ or nonbinary perspectives in the historical event or cultural phenomenon I am writing about• Included resources and/or materials that center and draw from LGBTQ+ experiences and culture• Presented LGBTQ+ people while monitoring my own lenses and biases• Avoided comparing/contrasting the LGBTQ+ experience with heterosexuality and heteronormativity• Allowed LGBTQ+ experiences to stand as their own valid experiences	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Socioeconomic Status: Overview

[Examples and Non-examples](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Topic Profile	
<p>In the United States, Americans are often taught to consider themselves a society beyond restrictive hierarchical class. This misconception is often based in ideas of the American Dream and Rugged Individualism: we are taught if someone works hard enough, they can overcome their life circumstances, their socioeconomic status (SES). While many people are able to work hard and become wealthy, or at least change their SES trajectory, these ideas also imply that those who have impoverished circumstances lack work ethic or are in poor circumstances due to their own personal failings. The idea that poverty or wealth is solely based in personal choice implies that anyone of a lower socioeconomic status has simply not tried hard enough to stop being poor.</p> <p>Poverty is a condition of one's life informed, predicated, and/or exacerbated by multiple interconnected factors, including: geography, community, race, sexuality, gender, occupation, education, inheritance (financial, social, and emotional), health, power, and more. This state of not having basic needs met, of lacking access, is not often represented in educational materials, even as students and educators have diverse experiences with socioeconomic status/class. Educational materials should aim to teach the historical and contemporary social phenomenon of class and social inequality with accuracy, respect, and inclusiveness and not present a single economic experience as the norm.</p> <p>When representing class/SES of an individual or group, content creators must understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtful and informed portrayals of SES (giving context re differences in access, generational inheritance, etc.) can support students' cultural competence related to issues of wealth and power. Representations of concepts widely understood to be middle class or <i>average</i> are not shared by all people and are not an appropriate alternative to showing the breadth and complexity of SES in America. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class and SES is an important lens for understanding history and Social Studies material and should not be ignored or avoided. For example, when discussing the history of the military there is often representation of unity and a melting pot of identities in service; a more nuanced presentation informs that enlisted people (and those on the front lines) are often of a lower SES while those in leadership have college degrees or come from higher SES. It is important to present economic histories as inquiry-based and open-ended, giving students the tools to think critically about social organization, power, and resulting economic and political philosophies. U.S. materials often offer blanket criticism of economic systems outside of capitalism; nuanced portrayals of all economic systems are required. <p>When discussing a topic, ensure that diversity in SES experience is represented equitably. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note a person's class/SES if it is relevant and in addition to a person-centered portrayal. Representation should go beyond class identity and outside of any tropes associated with it. Class/SES is one part of a person's experience and identity and should not be presented as the sole defining factor of a person's identity. Students with different SES experience the world in varied ways. Do not assume universal experiences with technology, food access, employment, housing, education. For example, using a vacation as the circumstance of a lesson is not relatable for many students. Be aware of the explicit AND implicit ways class is present in materials. For example, not all individuals considered lower SES are in need or want of <i>saving</i> by those of higher SES; those of lower SES are often misrepresented as pitiable or having a lesser life than those of higher SES. Consider how SES affects access to basic needs (including food and healthcare) and efforts to achieve goals (education, career, etc.).
Avoid	Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lionizing elites for the sake of their high SES (e.g., <i>the American millionaire</i> as social ideal) Offering examples that reinforce ideas of rugged individualism and prioritize individual efforts over factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specificity in identifying regions by their preferred names (rather than economic circumstances): rather than inner-city Chicago, name the neighborhood. More-developed countries and less-developed countries



<p>that inform SES such as mental health, inheritance, community, culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depictions recreating consumerism as a value or offering examples based in consumerism unrelatable to those of lower SES (i.e. “How many pairs of shoes do you have?”)• Phrases glorifying financial savior perspectives or terms with negative connotations or problematic histories such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Third World or First World○ Developing world (<i>may be appropriate in certain circumstances when required by standards</i>)○ Impoverished• Perpetuating stereotypes portraying those who receive government assistance benefits as lazy, not wanting to work, etc.• Welfare, food stamps• Broad, pejorative, negative, and generalizing terms to discuss SES that identify or define people by their economic circumstances<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Poverty-stricken/ poverty-ridden (Poverty is not a disease.)○ the homeless○ inner-city○ ghetto○ be careful in using the word “urban”; some uses are perfectly fine, but ensure it does not imply a negative connotation○ the projects○ welfare-reliant○ the poor/poor people○ needy○ White trash○ hobo○ low-class/upper-class○ middle-class (<i>generally avoid, but may be appropriate in some circumstances</i>)○ achievement gap (use opportunity gap instead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terms, words, and names used by the people struggling against inequality, for example, person-first language:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ People whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold○ People whose self-reported income is in the lowest income bracket○ People experiencing homelessness○ Unhoused people○ People without fixed, regular, or adequate income, residence, health care○ People with less than a high school education• People who receive TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, welfare) benefits, or people receiving temporary government assistance
Common Misrepresentations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Casting poverty or SES measures such as income or wealth, education, and occupation as a failing on the part of the one disadvantaged, and ignoring the systemic context• Portraying jobs demanding education as superior to other jobs• Portraying jobs that do not require formal education as <i>unskilled</i> (There is no such thing as unskilled labor.)• Equating conditions of SES with race, education, and other intersectional identities. Presenting an identity category as having a cause/effect relationship to SES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The stereotype that poverty implies a lack of intelligence, poor hygiene, a lack of morals or values, a lack of education, or laziness• The stereotype that wealthy people are entitled, arrogant, stingy• The stereotype that wealth = intelligence, cleanliness, moral superiority, higher education, greater motivation• Shaming or moralizing about poverty, unemployment, housing status, etc.; valorizing wealth and equating it with success and happiness



<p>when in fact they don't define SES but instead inform/are informed by it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explicitly demonizing labor movements, unions, and the like and ignoring the role of business owners/management in the materials• Demonizing business owners/management; assigning all ills of society to this group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representing people experiencing poverty as one of three character types: the victim, the criminal, or the exception• Shaming or moralizing about poverty, unemployment, housing status, etc. <p>Note: Please review the Social Studies guidelines for more information on how to discuss American Exceptionalism and the "Bootstrap Mentality."</p>
Ask Yourself	Quick Links
<p>Have I done the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created materials that will not alienate or trigger children who lack access to food, housing, material goods, health care, and other goods and services informed by SES• Considered how SES affects access to basic needs (including food and health care) and the efforts to achieve goals (education, career, etc.), along with the presence or absence of these concepts in the materials• Ensured that I haven't implied that those receiving government assistance or living in poverty are generally members of BIPOC groups, immigrants, or other stereotypes• Considered how a historical event or period might be perceived by nondominant groups (e.g., What does <i>economic boom</i> mean to a working class that sees no improvement in their living conditions?)• Ensured that materials do not assume a default SES and considered which class experiences are not represented and how they might be• Ensured that a range of experiences relating to class and SES are represented in the text• Shown how events and phenomena affected people of various classes/SES differently• Created materials that do not assume a certain class or SES<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For example, do materials assume knowledge of certain living situations like house structure (mathematical apex of a house); geography ("She flew to Europe"); disposable income ("They have seven pairs of shoes"); or education/career ladder ("Going to college is a necessity")?• Ensured characters of different class or SES experiences have both voice and agency• Considered how members of the class/SES represented in the text might respond to this representation• Consulted experts or resources to check the accuracy and respectfulness of my representation	<p>Examples and Non-examples</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>



Topic Examples and Non-Examples Library

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Ableism Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Misrepresentations: Portrayed as sources of emotions for others and/or framed as the vehicles to teach others about life	You're such an inspiration!	I appreciate our friendship.
	She has truly taught me what it means to be thankful [because of her disability].	She is a good friend and I learn much from her.
	Amanda overcame her speech impediment to become an accomplished public speaker.	Amanda is an accomplished performer and public speaker.
Misrepresentations: Demeaning or simplistic praise	You're able to speak so well.	I enjoyed our conversation.
Misrepresentations: Shown only as physically or mentally infirm and in need of assistance/care	She received disability benefits because she could no longer work.	She is retired and prefers to spend her time reading and birding.
Misrepresentations: Disability shown as having only one root cause or effect	You use a wheelchair. That shouldn't have anything to do with how fast you can write.	How can I help you write this more quickly? [Person-centered; conditions unrelated to perceived abilities/disabilities]
Misrepresentations: Minimization of the disability experience in an attempt to join or bond with others	A person who wears glasses tells a person who has a visual disability "Oh, I wear glasses, so I know what it's like for you."	"We both wear glasses. What is that experience like for you?"
Terminology: Identifying a disability euphemistically or with a general classification.	The two teenagers have special needs.	One teen has cerebral palsy, and the other teen has an intellectual disability.
Terminology: Using idioms or phrases that include reference to a disability	blind as a bat	I am near-sighted.
	deaf as a post	I have some hearing loss.
	That's so lame!	I don't like it.
Ableist Stereotypes: Portrayed in the extreme	People with Down Syndrome are always smiling.	He smiles often [disability not relevant to his demeanor].



Ageism Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: use of <i>elderly</i> , <i>senior/senior citizen</i> , <i>old</i> ; portray only as necessary to context	The old man crossed the street.	The man crossed the street.
	She spoke gently to the elderly woman.	She spoke gently to the woman.
Older people: identifying someone by age rather than including age as a descriptor	Her friend is an old person.	Her friend is older.
Physical/mental: portrayed as infirm or in need of care due to age rather than circumstance	The old woman needs help because she broke her hip.	She has broken her hip and my sister will help her.
Affect (older): older people shown as inflexible, traditional, distant, or always nurturing	He is an old grump.	He is struggling and is not content.
Role/lifestyle/workplace: limited to grandparent or caretaker role; portrayal at socioeconomic extremes; no life outside of family, retirement, or recreation	My grandmother bakes cookies for me and my siblings.	My grandmother works at a hospital and likes to travel in her free time.
History: lives full of hardship due to lack of opportunities	Back in my day, things were harder.	When I was younger, the economy was based on a different model.
Younger people: assumptions made about intellect or capability due to shorter life experience	They're too young to understand.	They're younger than we are and understand differently.
Physical/Mental: lacking competence; invalid skills/lazy or lack of work ethic	Jenny is lazy because she is in her twenties.	Jenny has struggled to get work done.
Affect (younger): sense of entitlement; no sense of value of money; inflated sense of knowledge; emotionally underdeveloped; lacking resilience	Young folks aren't as resilient as they were back in my day.	People who are younger may have different reactions to the world than people who are older.
Role/Lifestyle: lives without hardship due to modern opportunities; attachment to social media or technology	Kids don't know how to talk to people unless they're on a video screen.	Because they use them frequently, young people often excel in use of new technologies.
History: spoiled; unaffected by historical problems and events	Young people are oblivious to history and how it affects them.	Young people may feel far removed from and struggle to connect with the past.
Generational stereotypes: Millennial/Gen Z/Boomer/Gen X	Boomers tip less than Millennials.	People born in different decades may perceive the value of money differently, based on their experiences.



Current Events/Difficult Conversations Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Common Misrepresentations: one person or group presented as the cause of the current situation or the cause of another person or group's difficulties and To Avoid: <i>us</i> versus <i>them</i> point of view	U.S. forces suffered fatalities due to poor planning by foreign governments.	Members of the U.S. military were killed during the international assistance effort.
Common Misrepresentations: portrayed as personally problematic as individuals instead of as people who hold an opposing point of view and To Avoid: generalizations	Democrats will be responsible for making the United States financially dependent on other nations in the future.	Democrats have announced a \$3.5 trillion budget.
	Republicans in Texas are passing laws that limit voting access.	Republicans in Texas have passed a new law reducing the number of hours polling places can remain open and restricting who can vote by mail.
Common Misrepresentations: no presence of empathy toward those who hold an opposing point of view and To Avoid: assumptions about people or the ways that people think	The senator doesn't support the stimulus legislation because she is a millionaire with no empathy for people who struggle to make ends meet.	The senator doesn't support of the stimulus legislation, citing her concerns about its future financial impact on the entire nation.
Common Misrepresentations: portrayed as negatively <i>less than</i> or <i>more than</i> in a particular context and To Avoid: Characteristics that cannot be impartially measured or that create value judgement rather than offer fact-based reality.	"less patriotic"	He appreciates his country but also disapproves of some of the government's policies.
	"more violent"	due to...
	"the bravest"	She has been widely understood as brave.
To Use: information and details that establish common ground and To Avoid: generalizations	The conflict between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East is hopeless because neither side will compromise about Jerusalem.	While there are ongoing conflicts between Jewish and Muslim people in the Middle East, members of both faiths regard Jerusalem as a holy city.
To Avoid: sources that originate on social media; inflammatory tone	According to a popular social media site, rioters attacked police at the demonstration.	According to eyewitnesses, there were some tense exchanges between the police and demonstrators.
		According to eyewitnesses. Demonstrators began to throw bricks at the police, who responded with tear gas.
To Avoid: labeling people or viewpoints as <i>true</i> , <i>false</i> , <i>right</i> , or <i>wrong</i> and To Use: descriptions that identify or clarify the validity of information	Her stances on vaccines are completely wrong and dangerous.	Her stances on vaccines are contradicted by the most recent information from the Centers for Disease Control.



To Avoid: opinion words (e.g., should, ought, must)	People ought to vote in every U.S. election.	Voting in elections is one way to participate in the U.S. political process.
To Avoid: single perspective on an event or issue	Many Republicans in the United States think increased gun control violates the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.	Many Republicans in the United States think increased gun control violates the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Many Democrats believe that easy access to guns leads to increased violence in communities.
To Avoid: loaded or defensive language and name-calling and/or judgmental, demeaning terms	Rural Republicans tend to be uneducated, so it is unsurprising that many of them voted for Donald Trump.	Donald Trump was widely supported by Republicans who live in rural areas.
		In the 2020 election, Republicans without a high school diploma were twice as likely to vote for President Trump than those with a college degree.



Diverse Family Structures: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Common Misrepresentations: Family portrayed only in terms of biological relationships	He has two stepbrothers and three real sisters.	He has five siblings.
	She has two dads, so one of them is not her real dad.	She has two dads.
Common Misrepresentations: representation that stereotypes a family structure across an entire race, culture, or ethnic group	Antonella and her parents live with her <i>abuela</i> (grandmother) in a house in Miami.	Every spring, Antonella and her parents go to visit her <i>abuela</i> (grandmother), who lives in Miami.
Common Misrepresentations: represented as only the people who live together in a particular building	Jon's immediate family includes his mother, his sister, and his younger brother.	Jon lives in an apartment with his mother, his sister, and his younger brother. His father lives close by, and Jon sees him often.
Common Misrepresentations: defined by living in only particular types of buildings	Toby and his family live in a two-story house with a big backyard.	Toby and his family live in a mobile home in a large mobile home park that includes a play area and basketball court.
Common Misrepresentations: lack of representation of family structures that might frequently or repeatedly change	Mari enjoys spending time with her aunt Jennifer.	Mari enjoys spending time with her aunt Jennifer. When Aunt Jennifer returns from her overseas deployment they plan to go camping together.
Common Misrepresentations: stereotypes family structures by socioeconomic status	A single mother, Violet could afford only a small apartment on Maple Street for herself and her daughter.	Violet and her daughter lived in an apartment on Maple Street.
Common Misrepresentations: represents disabled adults in older, <i>grandparent</i> -type roles, not as young parents who are raising children	Since her parents died and her grandfather was blind, Stella often had to read the newspaper to him.	Growing up, Stella always read to her father since her family had many books written in Braille.
Common Misrepresentations: portrayed as always including children	Dr. Caldwell and her husband have a dog but no children.	Dr. Caldwell's family includes her husband and their dog.
To Use: feature cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity within family structures	Their aunt and uncle are both Japanese.	Their aunt grew up in India, and their uncle is originally from Hawai'i, though his heritage is Japanese.
To Avoid: any reference to a family structure that's broken, damaged, or incomplete, and representation of single-parent households as created only as a result of divorce; see also any family alternative existing outside of heteronormative portrayals of parentage or guardianship	The children grew up in a broken home.	The children's parents divorced when the children were five years old.
	The children's family was never the same after their mother died.	After the children's mother died, their father moved the family so they could live closer to their aunts, uncles, and cousins.



To Avoid/To Use: descriptive terms or language that offers a human-centered understanding	Theo has two brothers and two stepbrothers.	Theo has four brothers.
	Her family was homeless for a while, so they lived in a family shelter.	Her family was without housing for a while, so they lived in a community shelter.
Value judgement through language: explicit or implicit references that favor or diminish the status of specific family structures over others	Spencer lives with his two moms who are lesbians. Carly lives in a traditional family with her mother and father	Spencer lives with his two moms. Carly lives with her mother and father.



Gender Identity and Expression Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: The often-generic use of <i>man</i> and <i>he</i> (and <i>his</i> , <i>him</i> , <i>himself</i>) is commonly considered gender-neutral, but should be avoided. Instead, use the broadest language that is inclusive.	The firemen arrived just in time.	The firefighters arrived just in time.
	Any woman who hopes to be a mother should read this book.	Any person who wants to have a baby should read this book.
	Reproductive rights are a women's issue.	Reproductive rights are an issue for anyone who can give birth or make a baby.
	He wasn't born a man.	He is a transgender man.
	Where is the girl's room?	Where is the restroom?
Stereotypes: negative representation through images and communication	He looks like a man to me because he's wearing a suit.	They are wearing a suit. We should ask for their personal gender pronouns.
	Transwomen are not really women.	Transwomen are women.
Terminology: Binary and binary alternatives	We offer his and hers gift bags at every event.	We offer gift bags at every event.
	Hello, ladies and gentlemen!	Hello, friends and colleagues!
Historical Representation: When considering females and males in historical context, transgender men are examples of men and transgender women are examples of women.	Research a pioneer woman – Charley Parkhurst. Charley was a transgender man and identified as male.	Research a pioneer woman – Catherine Haun, Sarah Winnemucca Research a pioneer man – Charley Parkhurst, Davy Crockett



Government and Politics Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: Use of <i>politics</i> limited to partisan issues; framing information as one side or another, without nuance	My politics are Republican.	While my political affiliation lies with the Republican party, my values are complex, and I don't agree with every position taken by the party.
	Who is to blame for the war in Iraq: conservatives or liberals?	How did the U.S. government come to send troops to Iraq, and why did the war last so long?
Stereotypes: Presenting political ideologies which emerge out of social movements as extremist, stagnant, rooted in conspiracy, or offering no tangible or substantive ways forward	The Black Panther Party was too radical in their approach and politics; thus, they did not accomplish meaningful work.	The Black Panther Party were considered among the more radical organizations of the 1960s. Their Free Breakfast Program, which was adopted across the country, was one of their greatest contributions.
Historic Erasure: Intentional avoidance of violent, racist, sexist history and origins of the government and many of its institutions, including the criminal justice system, policing, and the military	Though the enslavement of Africans is a stain on its history, the U.S. is not plagued by this kind of bigotry today.	Black Americans still disproportionately face poverty, incarceration, and violence today, all of which are informed by the long history of racism in America.
Contemporary Erasure: Refusal to acknowledge the importance and nuance of contemporary political issues, especially as they relate to marginalized people, racial politics, and LGBTQIA issues	There is no need to state #blacklivesmatter when #alllivesmatter.	While we aim to live in a society where #alllivesmatter, due to various social inequities and racism, Black people are subjected to state-sanctioned violence at a disproportionate rate in comparison to their white counterparts. It is this reality that informs the #blacklivesmatter movement.
Misrepresentation of culture: More-radical political groups and organizations to emerge out of social movements are often portrayed as extremist dissenters, lazy, anarchists, and anti-establishment	#blacklivesmatter protesters are engaging in anti-police riots.	#blacklivesmatter protestors have organized direct action demonstrations to call attention to the issue of police brutality, and there have sometimes been violent interactions between police and demonstrators.
	Occupy Wall Street was a block party.	Occupy Wall Street was a live-in protest against income inequality.



Immigration Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology (use of pronouns): Do not use <i>we</i> , <i>us</i> , or <i>our</i> when describing historical events in a way that betrays the author's bias or allegiance towards a political identity. Not all students will identify the same way.	We should welcome immigrants into our communities.	This community includes people from many cultural backgrounds.
	All Hispanics and Latin Americans come across the border from Mexico.	Latin Americans represent 20 countries, many of which speak Spanish. Latino/a/e is not interchangeable with <i>Hispanic</i> , as the word notes those who speak Spanish, but not their region of origin.
Avoid identifying people only with their immigration status.	She is an immigrant who came here last year.	She immigrated from Somalia and has lived in this country for a year.
	Americans have been fascist in their approach to immigration policy.	The U.S. government has been unable to reform its immigration policies.
Don't repeat negative myths and stereotypes (even to counter them): Repeating misinformation seems to result in it being accepted and reinforced. Talk about immigration in positive ways to convey an inclusive worldview. Push back on attitudes (e.g., "They are going to take our jobs!") as many immigrants have degrees and professional backgrounds, and their reasons for immigration vary.	Some Americans worried that the new immigrants would take jobs that Americans needed.	Some US citizens tried to exclude other people from immigration due to xenophobia and mistaken ideas of scarcity, ignoring those people's own rights and potential contributions.
On Language Proficiency: "She speaks English as a second language" is not preferred, because people may speak more than two languages. "Non-native" allows inference for quality of language use/prioritizes language use of native speakers of a language	She speaks English as a second language.	She speaks English in addition to other languages. She is learning English.
	They are non-native English speakers.	They speak multiple languages. They speak English as well as... They are bilingual or multilingual.
	This course is for English language learners/second-language learners.	This course is English Language Acquisition.
Don't hyphenate: Do not hyphenate national origins, even if they are used as adjectives. African American, Native American, Asian American, and the like are never hyphenated—even if they are used as adjectives. Dropping hyphens when describing ethnicity was also added to the 2019 APA style guide.	Japanese-American (Rather than allowing racial identity to be flexible, individualized, and nuanced, the hyphen implies a universality to being a person of Japanese descent in America, or a person	Japanese American, American who immigrated from Japan, or American child of Japanese parents, depending on context



	who has family from both countries.)	
Cultural Knowledge Assumptions: Don't assume any components of American culture to be common knowledge for all students.	I love winter because Christmas is the best holiday!	I love winter because there are many holidays—like Hannukah, Kwanzaa, New Years—for people to celebrate.
	He is an immigrant from a third-world country.	He is a refugee because his country is at war.
Be careful about discussion around American Exceptionalism (the idea that the US or the West is inherently different or superior to the rest of the world: Connected to this is the triumphalist historical narrative of the U.S. as a “nation of immigrants,” a narrative that ignores the continent’s native peoples and the millions of people enslaved to build the United States	One thing that makes the US great is that it is a melting pot for immigrants from around the world. Here they have opportunities they wouldn't have in their native countries.	The US has benefited tremendously from the contributions of people who immigrated from around the world. Still, immigrants often struggle for their dignity and full rights within the US system.
	In America, you will learn how to work hard and be self-reliant.	In the U.S., there is much focus on individual motivations and actions rather than collective or community-based support.



Imperialism, Colonialization, and Global Majority Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: Lack of specificity when describing the actors and actions within colonization	European settlers arrived in what would later be named America.	European colonists settled in present-day Massachusetts and failed to respect the rights and cultures of Indigenous peoples living on those lands.
	Spanish explorers	The Spanish government paid for explorations to the Americas to seize territory and colonize it for Spain.
	Spanish conquistadors claimed lands in Central and South America for Spain.	Spanish conquistadors seized territory by force, resulting in the deaths of millions of Indigenous people.
Stereotypes/Assumptions: Formerly colonized nations and those being subjected to imperialism are often characterized as corrupt, uncivilized/lacking modernity, solely responsible for their underdevelopment, seen as violent/terroristic, lacking democracy or values (especially as they relate to marriage, family, treatment of women and LGBTQIA), impoverished; portrayed without nuance or necessary context	Haiti has an incredibly corrupt government and a weak infrastructure. The people of Haiti live in poverty.	Haiti is economically depressed and lacks the infrastructure and government needed to help Haitian citizens.
Historic Erasure: Intentional avoidance of violent history (i.e., settler colonialism) that depicts the harsh realities of global European colonization	Belgium gained control of the Congo, as the region was rich in resources like ivory and rubber.	King Leopold II of Belgium declared a wide swath of the Congo River basin as his personal property and authorized the colonization of the region. Leopold gained much of his personal wealth and fortune by extracting ivory and later rubber from the region. Under his reign, colonizers and military officials enslaved thousands of people and chopped off the hands and feet of Congolese that failed to meet their work quotas. As few adults were available to farm or hunt, millions more died of starvation. Because the use of enslaved labor was so successful for Belgium, other European powers soon followed suit.
Contemporary Erasure: Intentional dismissal of the enduring legacy of colonization and imperialism	African and Latin American governments are corrupt.	Because many African and Latin American governments have spent much time under colonial and imperial rule, they have not had the autonomy to develop stable institutions like many European counterparts.



Terminology: Continued use of historicized language though language reinforces history as beginning/ending at colonization	The Aztec are an ancient, pre-Columbian tribe.	The Aztecs, who inhabited the land known today as Mexico, had a complex society, with schools, marketplaces, and more.
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Indigenous People – Global Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: Lack of specificity in use or identification of names, ethnic groups, tribes, etc.	There are more than 800,000 Indigenous people in New Zealand.	The Indigenous people of New Zealand are called the Māori.
Stereotypes: often characterized in shallow, simplistic, and mythologized ways or seen as violent, animalistic, or unwilling to engage mainstream civilization; portrayed without nuance or necessary context	In the early 1900s, Ota Benga, a Pygmy, was put on display at the 1906 Bronx Zoo in the human zoo exhibit.	Ota Benga, an Mbuti man from the Congo, was taken from his home country and put on display in the human zoo exhibit at the 1906 Bronx Zoo.
	Ota Benga's teeth were chiseled into points to make him appear more animalistic and cannibalistic.	The men who took him chiseled his teeth into points to make him appear animalistic and cannibalistic.
Historic Erasure: Intentional avoidance of violent Indigenous history (i.e., settler colonialism) that depicts the harsh realities of global European colonization	In recent years Canada has increasingly begun to recognize the contemporary issues of First Nations People. [Western perspective]	For decades Canada has suppressed its role in the death and cultural genocide of First Nations people. [First Nation's perspective]
Contemporary Erasure: Intentional dismissal of Indigenous experiences, cultures, languages, etc.	Afrikaans is the official language of South Africa.	Afrikaans, known as a <i>white language</i> , has historically been recognized as the default language even though South Africa is a majority Black and Indigenous country.
Misrepresentation of culture: Indigenous people are often depicted as artifacts of the past, not recognizing their current lived experiences	Eskimos once lived in igloos.	Some Inuit people still reside in igloos in parts of northern Canada and Greenland.
Appropriation of culture: Indigenous cultural elements such as textiles, music, hair styles, and clothing have been commodified and appropriated often with little recognition of the Indigenous people from which they originate. To avoid this, always offer context of cultural origin	Over the years kitenge, ankara fabric, and Kente cloth have gained popularity in the mainstream fashion industry.	Over the years, African textiles like kitenge, ankara fabric, and Kente cloth have gained popularity in the mainstream fashion industry.



Indigenous People - US Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: Lack of specificity in use or identification of names, nations, and groups	The Apache lived in the Southwestern part of the United States.	There are 6 Apache nations: the Chiricahua, Jicarillo, Lipan, Mescalero, Western Apache, and Kiowa Apaches.
Stereotypes: Characterizing Indigenous people in shallow, simplistic, and mythologized ways	Pocahontas fell in love with John Smith and taught him about survival in nature.	Pocahontas, as she was known by the British colonizers, was the young child of Chief Powhatan. She assisted her father in diplomatic relations.
Historic Monoliths: Identifying all indigenous nations and peoples as having the same myths, concepts, and cultures	Indigenous people have feather headdresses and sleep in tipis.	Feather headdresses, called warbonnets, were worn specifically by Indigenous nations of the Great Plains, such as the Lakota.
Historic Disconnect: Discussing Indigenous people as a relic of the past; not giving the full scope of Indigenous history outside of a White, Eurocentric perspective	Residential schools were opened so Indigenous children could receive an education.	Government agents forcibly took Indigenous children from their families and forced them to attend Residential schools. Teachers forced children to assimilate to European culture. Teachers and staff abused and sometimes killed children in residential schools.
Historic Erasure: Purposeful avoidance of difficult or traumatic Indigenous history in favor of a kinder portrayal of European colonizers; US history presented as only beginning when Pilgrims landed	When the Pilgrims first arrived, friendly Indians shared corn and produce from their crops with the Pilgrims. They taught them how to farm, and this helped the Pilgrims flourish.	The Wampanoag people made an alliance with the Pilgrims to avoid conflict. Already exposed to disease and war by prior colonizers from Europe, the Wampanoag hoped to avoid these with the Pilgrims.
	Spanish priests taught Indians Catholicism.	Spanish priests used violence, displacement, and other traumas to force the Pueblo people to convert to Catholicism and disavow their own traditions. This led to the Pueblo Uprising of 1680.
Misrepresentation of culture: Indigenous people identified as simplistic, without technology, invention, or complexity in lifestyle	Most tribes have a very special relationship with nature and animals.	Intercropping, also called The Three Sisters, is a system of farming in which multiple crops are grown together. This practice usually involves corn, beans, and squash, and yields higher crop produce.
	Native Americans are silent and stoic. They are of few words and prefer to keep to themselves.	Indigenous people are not monolithic culturally and cannot be generalized as having one quality of demeanor or personhood. All cultures also have different methods of communication.



Contemporary Erasure: Indigenous people are shown as artifacts of the past or are entirely erased from history; portrayals do not connect to modern concerns as they are informed by history	Today, the Navajo live on reservations provided by the US government.	Many of the Navajo Nation, also called Dine, live on reservations. A reservation consists of land that the Navajo people occupied long before the US government took it from them. In the mid-1800's, after much war, famine, and death, the government signed a treaty that allowed the Navajo to return to their own land.
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Intelligences Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Common Misrepresentations: a person's gender, race, culture, or sexual orientation determines the areas in which that person is intelligent	Asian students excel at math or science.	[Do not link the concept of intelligence with any characteristics which identifies or describes members of diverse or marginalized communities.]
	Girls are better at language arts or history than math or science.	
	People from the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to be creative than analytical.	
Common Misrepresentations: students with disabilities are unable to meet or exceed the academic performance of their non-disabled peers, and students with disabilities always have low levels of intelligence	She uses a wheelchair; she must be a student in special education.	Since she will be attending college in two years, she will be looking for a flat campus that is wheelchair accessible.
Common Misrepresentations: an individual's ability to communicate in spoken or written form is an accurate indicator of intelligence and Terminology to Use: specific names of disabilities	His writing is illegible, so it's clear he's not very smart/he didn't understand the assignment.	Since he has dysgraphia, he will type his essay on his laptop.
	She isn't very smart; she never uses <i>correct</i> English.	[The presence or use of dialect, nonconventional linguistic structures, etc. should not suggest or imply any link to an individual's intelligence.]
Common Misrepresentations: extending an activity or task (i.e., giving a student more time to complete a task) will increase an individual's likelihood of cognitive success	Kara had extra time to complete her exam, so it's no wonder that she did so well.	Extended time gave Kara the opportunity to show what she knows, but it didn't increase what she does know.
Common Misrepresentations: All students with intellectual disabilities are considered to be <i>dumb</i> while all neurodiverse students are considered to be <i>brilliant</i> Academically successful students are nerdy or socially awkward	Since Tina has Down Syndrome, I bet she sits at home and watches television all day.	Tina, who has Down Syndrome, works in the bakery department of our local grocery store.
	Trevor has autism; he's probably a science nerd with no friends.	Tyler helped his team win the basketball championship and also participated in the Science Fair.
Terminology to Avoid: smart/dumb subjective words that suggest opinion or imply judgement	If she can't follow these simple instructions, how is she ever going to be smart enough to work in a restaurant as a chef?	She will have to become more familiar with multistep instructions if she wants to work as a restaurant chef.
Terminology to Use: Giftedness or high potential	Only a few children qualify for the gifted program.	We have programs to serve children who show giftedness or high potential in math science, or language arts.



Nationalism and Patriotism Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview / Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Pronoun Use: Avoid plural pronouns in order to maintain delineation between a government and its people; ascribing government actions to state powers/institutions rather than the populace as a whole. Do not use <i>we</i> , <i>us</i> , or <i>our</i> when describing historical events in a way that betrays the author's bias or allegiance towards a political identity	Our nation was attacked on September 11, 2001.	Several locations in the United States were targeted by terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.
	Our government represents us.	The US government is constitutionally a representative government. People might disagree how well it represents the will of its citizens.
Western/American Exceptionalism: the idea that the US or the West is inherently different or superior to the rest of the world. Connected to this is the idea the US or the West has a mission to spread its own values or ideas about civility, liberty, good governance, etc. Also connected to this is the triumphalist historical narrative of the US as a "nation of immigrants," a narrative that ignores the continent's native peoples and the millions of people enslaved to build the United States	The US is a great <i>melting pot</i> for immigrants from around the world, offering these immigrants opportunities they did not have in their native countries.	The US has benefited tremendously from the contributions of immigrants from around the world, though many individuals who have immigrated continue to struggle for their dignity and rights within the US system.
	Because America is home to many people from many countries, American culture is a melting pot of traditions and values shared among all citizens.	America is often referred to as a <i>melting pot</i> because of its wide variety of world cultures and ethnicities; that said, "melting pot" indicates that these cultures co-exist peacefully or complement one another, and that is not often the case in the USA.
Framing History: <i>Us vs. them.</i> Avoid discussing relations between Western/European peoples and the peoples of other parts of the world (the Muslim World, China, etc.) as a conflict between two hermetically sealed entities	After 9/11, the US government declared a <i>War on Terror</i> , supported by Western Allies like Germany, France, and the UK.	After 9/11, the US government declared a <i>Global War on Terror</i> , targeting Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of people from all countries involved have died due to the long-lasting combat.
Ethnocentrism: The West is portrayed as more civilized and knowledgeable about all things, including the non-West itself	The history of this Indigenous South American tribe was completely unknown until an archaeological artifact was found by a college student ten years ago.	Because Western archaeology studies have neglected to consult living sources and Native oral traditions for knowledge about the past, the history of this Indigenous South American tribe was unstudied until a college student found an artifact ten years ago.
Othering or Dehumanizing Terminology: The <i>Oriental</i> is portrayed as the irrational, psychologically weak, and feminized non-European <i>Other</i> , which is negatively contrasted with the rational, psychologically strong, and masculine West. Perspectives outside of Western	The Middle East has been divided by war for centuries.	The Muslim World was a stable and vibrant academic and cultural center for centuries, but it has been divided by war since colonizing European powers divided it during World War I.



are criticized or disregarded and lack context		
Geographical classifications: terms with historical and ideological baggage include <i>the Indian subcontinent</i> , <i>Third World</i> , <i>banana republic</i> , <i>developed nations</i> , etc. Some terms, including <i>The Third World</i> , were adopted by some national governments to identify themselves, and this would be fine—using “third-world country” would not.	Generous Americans send millions of dollars in charity to the third world.	Some Americans donate to charities serving disadvantaged populations in other nations.



Physical Characteristics Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Common Misrepresentations: Body type presented as an indication of overall health	He is fat and unhealthy.	He is a large man. (If health is to be addressed, do not connect to size.)
Stereotypes: Characteristics are portrayed or shown only in absolutes (via image and text)	Only thin people play sports and be athletes.	People of all sizes and shapes can be athletic.
	All Latin American people have brown eyes.	Eye color is based on genetics, and Latin American people display the entire range of eye colors possible.
Generalizations: Specific characteristics are idealized in text or images	She is beautiful because of her blonde hair and blue eyes—she looks like a movie star!	She is a kind and generous person, and I find that beautiful.
Intersectional concerns: Assumed to only involve or relate to members of one group, culture, ethnicity, race, class, gender, etc.	White, heterosexual females are the only people who develop eating disorders.	Disordered eating and eating disorders occur across all identity categories.
Common Misrepresentations: Conflation between self-expression and identity. Making assumptions about identity based on appearance and choices in self-expression	Only girls wear pink.	Many different kinds of people like the color pink and wear it in their clothing.
	Tattoos are for hipsters and gang members.	He is my grandpa, and he likes to garden. He also has tattoos that he got in the army.
	She is too fat to play tag.	She enjoys playing tag, like other children.
	Boys don't wear skirts.	There are many cultures in which men wear loose-fitting or draped garments such as the sarong, the dhoti, and the kilt.
Common Misrepresentations: Portrayal does not include or adequately represent aspects of culture	Muslim girls can only watch soccer in those outfits.	Muslim athletes who identify as female compete while wearing hijabs.



Racism, Ethnicity, and Cultural Identity Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: Do not use <i>the</i> prior to naming a racial group. Use people first/centered language	The Blacks are the fastest growing group of homeowners in the nation.	Black people are among the fastest growing group of homeowners in the nation.
Stereotypes: Engaging racial stereotypes and tropes that often depict BIPOC as lazy, violent, hypersexual, expected to be super smart (East Asian stereotype), model minority myth, angry, loud, dirty, etc.	Tamara is pretty for a Black girl. Tamara is a pretty Black girl.	Tamara is pretty. Tamara is a pretty girl.
	Simu Liu is good at math because he comes from a strict traditional Asian family.	Simu Liu is good at math because he works and studies hard.
	[Images portraying all-Black athletes and all-White academics.]	Image portraying diverse groups as athletes and academics (avoid reinforcement of stereotypes even when considered positive).
Historic Erasure: Intentional avoidance of violent history (i.e., settler colonialism, slavery, coolie labor, native American genocide, etc.) that depicts the harsh realities of white supremacy	Slavery in the U.S. was over four hundred years ago and has nothing to do with the present.	While lawful slavery in the U.S. ended over a hundred and fifty years ago, the consequences of that system continue to impact Black Americans today.
Terminology: Passive or re-directive language is often used to soften racial realities. Use active, direct, and precise language to describe history	Slaves, after tending the fields, often went to Sunday church with their masters.	Enslaved Africans faced grueling working and living conditions on farms and received no benefit for their labor. Enslavers also forced those enslaved to abandon their own spiritual beliefs for Christianity.
Contemporary Erasure: Intentional dismissal of BIPOC experiences, cultures, languages, traditions, etc.	Since the passage of the civil rights act, people of color no longer experience discrimination in the workplace.	While the civil rights act rendered racial discrimination illegal, many BIPOC continue to experience forms of racism in the workplace, from microaggressions to forms of systemic racism, like pay inequality.
Misrepresentation of culture: BIPOC are often associated with urban culture, criminality, and low-income communities	Black neighborhoods are blighted.	Many Black neighborhoods have historically been underinvested/divested from and consequently can lack certain resources in comparison to White neighborhoods.
Appropriation of culture: BIPOC cultural elements such as textiles, music, hair styles, and clothing have been commodified and appropriated	Hip-Hop is an African American musical genre.	While hip-hop has grown to be an American and global music staple, because of the genre's origins within Black and Latin American culture, hip-



often with little recognition of the people from which they originate. To avoid this, always offer context of cultural origin		hop historically, and even still, has been demonized, rejected, and viewed as a form of low-brow culture. Only in its popularity and profitability is it accepted as American popular culture.
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Religion and Spirituality Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Assumptions: Everyone possesses background knowledge of the dominant religious tradition (in the U.S.: Christianity)	The Christmas holidays are one of the most joyful times of the year.	Several religious communities celebrate holidays in the winter.
Generalizations: All groups and individuals within a religion have the same beliefs and practices	All Christians are against the LGBTQ community.	Many LGBTQ people are Christian.
Assumptions: Teaching one or more religions as normative to the exclusion of others (the U.S. as a Christian or Judeo-Christian nation; Islam as a foreign tradition or the religion of immigrants)	The United States was founded as a Christian nation, but the founding fathers wrote the constitution to welcome practitioners of all the world's religions.	The United States was founded as a nation by men of mostly Christian European backgrounds, but the population of the land always reflected tremendous diversity of religious belief and practice.
Terminology to avoid: Using words that are demeaning or patronizing towards the cosmological or epistemological views of nondominant traditions (myths, folk tales, superstition, etc.)	Native Americans used folk tales to explain the world around them.	The [specific group of Native Americans relevant to the discussion] have a number of beliefs explaining their understanding of the origins of the universe and their place within it.
Misrepresentation: <i>Hindus & Hinduism</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hindus worship idols.All Indians are Hindus, or all Hindus are Indian	Hindus worship idols.	Hinduism includes several different conceptions and understandings of Brahma and Brahma's relationship to the physical world.
Contemporary erasure: Using language that implies antisemitism is a problem of the past	In the past, Jewish people faced discrimination.	Since the Hamas attacks on Israeli settlements on October 7, 2023, antisemitism has increased in the US.



Sexism Topic: Examples and Non-examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Terminology: The often-generic use of <i>man</i> and <i>he</i> (and <i>his</i> , <i>him</i> , 'himself') is commonly considered gender-neutral, but should be avoided. Instead, use the broadest language that is inclusive	The department chair must submit his budget in a timely fashion.	The department chair must submit a budget in a timely fashion. Or The department chair must submit their budget in a timely fashion.
	There are significant manpower shortages to deal with the wildfires, and we need more firemen .	There are significant staffing/volunteer/personnel shortages to deal with the wildfires and we need more firefighters .
	The device is man-made .	The device is artificial/human-caused/human-produced/made by humans .
	She is a female hockey player.	She is a hockey player. / She plays hockey.
Stereotypes: negative representation through images and communication	Using an image of a woman in a short and form-fitting dress to advertise a car.	Using a car to advertise a car.
	Only men as construction workers; only women are preparing meals in the kitchen; girls only play with dolls.	Image of a woman or non-binary person in construction; a different family member in the kitchen; children playing with dolls.
	Work situations: I love working with Sarah; she's so nice.	I love working with Sarah; she is smart and motivated.
Terminology: Binary and binary alternatives	Every cast member should know his or her lines by Friday.	Every cast member should know their lines by Friday
	Hello, boys and girls!	Hello, everyone!
Gendered Stereotypes: Through description or contextually inappropriate details	You throw like a girl . (Implying weak or inferior performance)	You are terrible at throwing the ball.
	When describing an employee: She's hardworking and is also very pretty.	She's hardworking.



Sexual Orientation and Identity Topic: Examples and Nonexamples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
Stereotypes: LGBTQ+ people are often characterized as being hypersexual, engaged in sexual activity, or being sexually promiscuous	New York Pride is full of naked and scantily clad people.	New York Pride is full of people celebrating their identities and history.
	Gay men have a higher chance of contracting HIV/AIDS.	People that do not practice safe sex have a higher chance of contracting an STD or STI.
Historic Erasure: Intentional avoidance of violent anti-gay and anti-trans history that depicts the harsh realities of homophobia	Law enforcement is very supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. To show their commitment to gay rights, they often participate in Pride celebrations.	Pride was founded as a response to police violence that queer and trans people experienced in the 1970s.
Contemporary Erasure: Intentional dismissal of LGBTQ+ experiences	Since the passage of marriage equality, LGBTQ+ people have full rights and seldom experience discrimination.	While the passage of marriage equality brought additional rights for many, trans people still experience higher rates of homelessness and joblessness and are subjected to various forms of anti-trans violence.
Appropriation of culture: LGBTQ+ culture, colloquialism, slang, dance, and music have been appropriated and used within mainstream culture, particularly those specific to Black/POC queer culture. Recognize origins when possible	The gym offers a beginners voguing class, and the teacher was one of the few women dancers that worked with Madonna.	The gym is offering a beginners voguing class based on Madonna's style of vogue. I'm also very excited to learn more about the LGBTQ+ origins of voguing and ballroom culture.



Socioeconomic Status Topic: Examples and Non-Examples

[Topic Overview](#) / [Additional Resources](#)

Issues to Avoid	Non-Examples	Examples
When reporting SES: Provide as much detailed information as possible to clarify why and how an SES classification was assigned	A poor person on the brink of homelessness.	A homeowner at risk of foreclosure.
	They are homeless and on the streets.	This family is unhoused and looking for shelter.
Othering or Dehumanizing Terminology: Avoid using pejorative or generalizing terms to discuss SES. Use people-first language	The homeless; ghetto; inner-city; the projects; poverty stricken; welfare reliant.	People without housing; with insufficient housing; people experiencing homelessness; people who are unhoused; people in an emergency shelter, etc.
	High school dropouts; poorly educated; having little education.	People who do not have a high school diploma; people who have not had access to education, etc.
Rather than naming someone by their circumstances, describe the reality separate of their personhood	Achievement gap	Opportunity gap
	The poor, low-class people, poor people	People with incomes below the (regional) poverty threshold
Avoid deficit-based language, language that focuses on what people lack rather than on what they possess	Inner-city, slums, favelas, bidonvilles, shantytowns	Informal settlements (or identify/name location without judgment of location)
	Food deserts*; the hungry (*desert implies that the lack of healthy and affordable food is somehow naturally occurring and obscures that it is the direct result of racially discriminatory policies and systematic disinvestment in communities)	Food apartheid, food insecurity, low-access communities, worker welfare, hunger, areas where healthy, quality, and affordable food options are not readily available
	Food stamps recipients (this identifies people based on their circumstance rather than selfhood)	Those in need of assistance; those with access to food stamps; those who use food stamps.
Misusing or conflating terminologies: Sometimes language related to <i>minorities</i> is used to describe underserved populations and vice versa, but these categories are different and only sometimes overlap	Minorities have struggled to bridge the wealth gap.	Many struggle to bridge the wealth gap. Legislation and policy have made this even more difficult for some members of historically marginalized groups. (Give context and be specific.)
Taking away agency: Don't speak about underserved people as being without agency. Identify the systems that create inequalities. Who perpetrated the policies and practices that harmed people?	Employees were forced to work long hours in dangerous conditions.	Employers compelled employees to work long hours in dangerous conditions.



Implicit/explicit demonization of labor movements, unions, the like, and ignoring role of business owners/management	Labor-related violence increased during the union uprising of 1934.	Labor unions fought for civil rights and protective laws but often faced physical resistance from factory owners.
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Additional Resources

1. [Ableism](#)
2. [Ageism](#)
3. [Current Events/Difficult Conversations](#)
4. [Diverse Family Structures](#)
5. [Gender Identity and Expression](#)
6. [Government and Politics](#)
7. [Immigration](#)
8. [Imperialism, Colonization, and Global Majority](#)
9. [Indigenous People - Global](#)
10. [Indigenous People - US](#)
11. [Intelligences](#)
12. [Nationalism and Patriotism](#)
13. [Physical Characteristics](#)
14. [Racism, Ethnicity, and Cultural Identity](#)
15. [Religion and Spirituality](#)
16. [Sexism](#)
17. [Sexual Orientation and Identity](#)
18. [Socioeconomic Status](#)



Ableism Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-examples](#)

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Ableism (National Conference for Community and Justice)

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Disability Language Style Guide (National Center on Disability and Journalism)

<https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>

What is Ableism? (Disability and Philanthropy Forum)

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Confronting Ableism

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Ageism Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Let's become anti-ageist together to build an age-positive Maine! (Maine Council on Aging)
https://mainecouncilonaging.org/power_in_aging_project/

We Can't Combat Ageism By Directing It Against Younger People (Next Avenue)
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Ageism in an Aging Society: The Role of Knowledge, Anxiety About Aging, and Stereotypes in Young People and Adults
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Current Events/Difficult Conversations Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Diverse Family Structures Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Gender Identity and Expression Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Government and Politics Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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The Economist: Are identity politics dangerous? (video)

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Immigration Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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<p>An Educator's Guide to the Immigration Debate https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2014/an-educators-guide-to-the-immigration-debate</p> <p>The Pros and Cons of America's (Extreme) Individualism (podcast) https://freakonomics.com/podcast/american-culture-2/</p>



Imperialism, Colonization, and Global Majority Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Decolonization (United Nations)

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American Imperialism: This Is When It All Began

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Indigenous People - Global Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Indigenous People - US Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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Intelligences Topic: Additional Resources

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10 Damaging Myths About Learning Disabilities
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Nationalism and Patriotism Topic: Additional Resources

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Physical Characteristics Topic: Additional Resources

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References

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Racism, Ethnicity, and Cultural Identity Topic: Additional Resources

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Religion and Spirituality Topic: Additional Resources

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References

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Anti-Muslim Hatred: A Resource for Teachers

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Sexism Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

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- Understanding Gender
<https://genderspectrum.org/articles/understanding-gender>



Watching Gender: How Stereotypes in Movies and on TV Impact Kids' Development

https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/2017_commonsense_watchinggender_executivesummary_0620_1.pdf



Sexual Orientation and Identity Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

References

Good Practices: Inclusive Language (LGBTQ+ Equity Center, University of Maryland)
<https://lgbtq.umd.edu/good-practices-inclusive-language>

LGBTQ Resource List (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
<https://www.glaad.org/resourcelist>

LGBTQ+ Resources (Library of Congress)
<https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/resources/>

The Trevor Project
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

The LGBTQIA Resource Center (UC Davis)
<https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary>

Recommended Readings

Breaking the Silence: Toward Improving LGBTQ Representation in Composition Readers
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1021995>

The Heterogeneity of Family: Responses to Representational Invisibility by LGBTQ Parents
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192513X18810952>

Meaningful LGBTQ Inclusion in Schools: The Importance of Diversity Representation and Counterspaces
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15538605.2013.839341>

The Overlooked LGBTQ+ History of the Harlem Renaissance
https://time.com/6104381/lgbtq-history-harlem-renaissance/?utm_source=pocket-newtab

Primary Source Set: Policing and Resistance
<https://www.glbthistory.org/primary-source-set-policing-and-resistance>



Socioeconomic Status Topic: Additional Resources

[Topic Overview](#) / [Examples and Non-Examples](#)

References

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms (Chronic Poverty)

http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/CPR1_appendices.pdf

Awareness of Socioeconomic Diversity (Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, Yale University)

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/SocioeconomicDiversityAwareness>

Education and Socioeconomic Status (American Psychological Association)

<https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/education>

Socioeconomic Status APA Style Guide (American Psychological Association)

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/socioeconomic-status>

Style Guide: Students with Low Income Backgrounds. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (University of Iowa)

<https://diversity.uiowa.edu/programs/dei-style-guide/style-guide-students-low-income-backgrounds>

Recommended Readings

8 Ways Parents Reinforce Class Stigma Without Realizing It

<https://www.romper.com/p/parents-reinforce-class-stigma-in-these-8-subtle-ways-18753227>

American Labor in U.S. History Textbooks

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524273.pdf>

Covering college student homelessness and food insecurity: 7 tips from Sara Goldrick-Rab

<https://journalistsresource.org/environment/college-homelessness-food-insecurity/>

What is Classism (from Class Action: Building Bridges Across the Class Divide)

<https://www.hungercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/What-is-Classism.pdf>

What is food insecurity?

<https://theconversation.com/what-is-food-insecurity-152746>

Why Is It Still OK To 'Trash' Poor White People?

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/08/01/605084163/why-its-still-ok-to-trash-poor-white-people>



Change Log

Change date	Made by	Section/Topic	Description of change
3/24/2022	Kedre Allred	Socioeconomic Status	Added “middle class” to terms to avoid
4/19/22	Kirsten Pittman	Indigenous Peoples topic	Clarified use of term <i>American Indian</i>
11/17/22	Julie Hoover	Sexual Orientation and Identity	Removed single errant use of LGBTQIA+ where LGBTQ+ was intended.
11/17/22	Kirsten Pittman	Settler colonialism	Clarified this term is provided for context, but generally should not be used in IL K-12 content.
11/17/22	Kirsten Pittman	Term “American”	Clarification added to the “nationalism” section.
12/8/22	Kirsten Pittman	Added term “antisemitism” to religion topic	Added term to clarify spelling for IL content, in lieu of “anti-Semitism”.
5/24/23	Kirsten Pittman	Settler colonialism	Clarified use of the term “colonizer” and “explorer”.
9/25/23	Kirsten Pittman	Introduction Section, topic sections	Revised, removing information related to Culturally Responsive Education, critical consciousness, etc. Added disclaimer.
10/31/23	Kirsten Pittman	Topic Sections 1-10	Finalized revisions recommended by DEI steering committee. Remove all “intersections to consider” sections in all topics.
12/21/23	Kirsten Pittman	Topic Sections 11-18	Finalized revisions recommended by DEI steering committee
1/18/24	Kirsten Pittman	Content Creation Framework section	Edited the section to make it easier for users to understand. Reduced the number of questions and sections. Created a separate document here that includes the original content and organization.
1/31/24	Kirsten Pittman	Introduction	Added a link the IL DEI Review rubric document found here .
4/26/24	Kirsten Pittman	Gender identify and expression	Added a definition of gender, clarified the discussion on gender norms.