



Content and Materials Best Practices – U.S. Department of State, Office of English Language Programs

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State strives to ensure that its efforts reflect the diversity of U.S. society and societies abroad. In addition, the Office of English Language Programs strives to create a more equitable, fair, and inclusive world by using language education and cultural exchange as an empowering tool that opens doors to new opportunities, ideas, and connections. We hope to foster a sense of shared community that makes the world a better place for generations to come.

Content created for the Online Professional English Network (OPEN) courses and programs, as well as social media for the Office of English Language Programs is, accessed and used by a global audience, and should be sensitive to a wide variety of cultural customs and perspectives. At the same time, content should promote and depict U.S. values and customs. By depicting a democratic and inclusive society, content should recognize the contributions of all members of society and provide positive role models that depict diverse populations, perspectives, and norms.

What should be included in images or videos?

- Depictions of the full spectrum of U.S. and global society. Women and girls, men and boys, and people with disabilities, different religions, different sexual orientations, different gender affiliations, and different ethnic backgrounds, etc., should be equally represented performing all occupations and activities.

What should not be included in images or videos?

- Depictions of activities or images that are unacceptable in certain cultures. Examples include, but are not limited to, alcohol, drugs, weapons, intimate contact, and sex.
- Revealing clothing. Both men and women should be modestly covered. Avoid images or videos of people in revealing clothing, such as swimwear, tank tops, low-cut tops, midriffs, very short pants, etc.
- Stereotypes. Stock photos can be a good source of high-quality images. However, be careful to avoid stereotypes, which do not reflect U.S. values of a democratic and inclusive society.
- Depictions of violence.
- Negative depictions of individuals or groups (ethnic, religious, political, etc.).
- Controversial or provocative events, activities, or images.