

Is your use of pictures diversity-aware? Take the test

What effect do you want the picture to have?

Do you want to appeal to groups of people who are currently underrepresented in the relevant area or field? Are there people that belong to these groups in the picture?

Which people in the photo are active, which are in passive positions?

People shown in photographs as being in active roles tend to draw the viewer's attention as being the strong, relevant, powerful figures in the image. It's often the case that photos show men as active and women in more passive or 'supporting' roles.

Who's the explainer – and who's the explained-to?

If the picture shows someone explaining something to someone else, the choice of 'explainer' may make a statement about power relations. Try and make sure that – for instance – you don't only use pictures in which white people are always the 'explainers'.

Who's in or out of focus?

The degree of focus on photographic subjects may support or undermine hierarchical relationships depicted in the photo. Someone who appears out of focus is less 'present' in the image and may seem less important, in the specific context, than those who are in focus.

A matter of perspective

A photo or film taken from an eye-level perspective presents a largely neutral view. By contrast, a low-angle perspective (camera looks up at the

subject) gives the subject an aura of confidence and power, while a high-angle shot, looking down on the subject and often making them appear smaller, may connote powerlessness and passivity.

Do the roles shown in your pictures meet people's expectations – or disrupt them?

Images can reproduce prejudices and stereotypes. Try and use pictures which don't show men, women, people of colour and others in the typical, usual, expected roles. How about showing a woman of colour fixing a car, or a white man doing the housework?

What happens when you crop the picture? Who ends up in it – and who's out? Why this crop in particular?

Sometimes pictures may get cropped, removing part of some of the subjects. These may be non-white people and/or people with non-majority heritages. If someone's not shown in full in a picture, they appear irrelevant and unimportant to the image's context.

Do the pictures you use strengthen or undermine existing societal hierarchies and stereotypes

Don't forget that images can generate and reproduce power relations and discrimination – or help change them by presenting a diverse view of our diverse world.