

The Eurovision Song Contest and Pride Month

1) Pre-listening task

a) Work in pairs or small groups. Go online and search for “Eurovision hosts Victoria Swarovski Michael Ostrowski photo” to find one of the official promotional images of the hosts and discuss the following questions.

- What is your first impression of the photo?
- How are the two people positioned? Describe their body language.
- Who seems more confident or powerful? Why?
- What kind of relationship do they appear to have?
- Does the image feel modern or old-fashioned? Explain your opinion.
- What message do you think the photo is trying to send?

b) Share your ideas with the rest of the class.



2) Listening task: Eurovision Song Contest and gender

You are going to listen to a discussion about an image of the two hosts of this year’s Eurovision Song Contest. First you will have 45 seconds to study the task below, then you will hear the recording twice. While listening, match the beginnings of the sentences (1–8) with the sentence endings (A–K). There are two extra sentence endings that you should not use. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

0	Eurovision is known for _____ .	F
1	Recently, people have started to criticise _____ .	
2	The photos of the hosts show _____ .	
3	Body language can _____ .	
4	In the images, the woman appears _____ .	
5	Events like Pride promote _____ .	
6	A former ESC winner _____ .	
7	A problem about images portraying stereotypes is _____ .	
8	Some people think Eurovision should be _____ .	

A	equality and challenge traditional stereotypes.
B	communicate ideas about power and roles.
C	the way gender stereotypes are presented in the ESC context.
D	was shown in a hyper-masculine manner.
E	that sexist behaviour can become normalised.
F	both music performances and unusual acts.
G	more passive and in need of help.
H	that gender includes more than woman and man.
I	more careful about the messages it sends.
J	body language that reflects traditional gender roles.
K	was presented in a way that showed how diverse gender is.

Info box

The Austrian public broadcaster ORF, which will host the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest, has issued the dos and don'ts for this year's event. While the performers are only allowed to use the official national flag of the country they represent, ORF will not ban any flags (as long as they are not used for prohibited political statements) in the audience and will not censor booing during any performance.

The show's executive producer, Michael Kroen, explained that all official flags are allowed. However, they must follow certain rules, such as size and safety requirements. He also said that the organisers want to present the event honestly and show what is really happening. In addition, Stefanie Groiss-Horowitz, the director of programming, confirmed that any negative reactions from the audience will be heard. Unlike in previous shows, the broadcaster will not cover up booing with artificial applause.

Since the ESC has traditionally been closely linked to Pride, the public celebration in June that supports the rights, visibility and equality of people of all genders, viewers might spot quite a big variety of flags in this year's ESC audience.

3) Reading task

Read the descriptions (1–6) and match each one with a flag (A–F).

1. _____

Non-binary is a term used for people whose gender identity is not only male or female.

The non-binary flag was created in 2014 by Kye Rowan and has four colours. The yellow stripe stands for people outside the traditional gender categories. The white stripe represents those who have many or all genders. The purple stripe shows a mix of male and female, as well as gender fluidity. The black stripe stands for people who feel they have no gender. International Non-Binary People's Day is celebrated on 14 July.

2. _____

Intersex is a term for people who are born with physical sex characteristics that are not clearly male or female. This can include differences in the body that are sometimes not visible and may never be noticed.

The intersex flag was introduced in 2013 by Intersex Human Rights Australia as a symbol for the community. It uses yellow and purple, which are seen as gender-neutral colours. It also shows a purple circle on a yellow background. The circle represents wholeness and completeness.

3. _____

Genderfluid is a term for people whose gender identity is not fixed. It can change over time or in different situations. Some people may describe their experience as genderfluid while identifying as non-binary, trans, agender, genderqueer or cisgender.

The genderfluid flag was created in 2012 by JJ Poole and has become widely used since then. It has five horizontal stripes with different meanings. The pink stripe represents femininity. The white stripe stands for a lack of gender. The purple stripe represents androgyny, or a mix of genders. The black stripe stands for non-binary identities. The blue stripe represents masculinity.

4. _____

Genderqueer is a term for people who do not identify strictly as male or female. It can include non-binary identities, but also represents a challenge to traditional ideas of gender. Genderqueer can describe anyone whose gender does not fit the usual male/female categories.

The genderqueer flag was created in 2011 by Marilyn Roxie. It has three stripes: lavender (a mix of pink and blue) represents queer identity, white stands for gender neutrality or agender identity, and green represents people outside the binary.

5. _____

Trans people are people whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

The trans Pride flag was created in 1999 by Monica Helms, a trans woman. The flag has five horizontal stripes: light-blue, pink and white. The blue and pink stripes represent traditional colours for boys and girls, while the white stripe in the middle stands for people who are gender-neutral or identify with other genders. The design is also symmetrical, which means the flag looks the same even if it is turned around. This symbolises that there is no “wrong” way for a trans person to be themselves. International Trans Day of Visibility is celebrated on 31 March.

6. _____

In 2017, the city of Philadelphia updated the Pride flag by adding black and brown stripes at the top. These colours represent LGBTQIA+ people of colour and their experiences.

This connects to the idea of **intersectionality**, which means that a person can have more than one identity or background, which can affect how they experience discrimination. For example, someone can be part of the LGBTQIA+ community and also belong to a racial or ethnic minority group.

The added stripes on the flag highlight these different experiences and show that the LGBTQIA+ community is diverse, with many different voices and perspectives.



4) Speaking task

a) After reading, work in small groups. Discuss the following questions.

- What is the most important information for you?
- Which flag do you think is the most visually effective? Why?
- What do all these flags have in common?
- Why is it important for different identities to have their own symbols and flags?
- Can flags change how people think about identity and gender?

b) Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

5) Creative task

Design your own flag to represent your identity, personality, values or experiences. Think about the flags you have read about. Each flag uses colours and shapes to communicate meaning. Now it is your turn.

a) Design your flag.

Create a flag that represents you. You can include:

- colours (What do they represent?)
- shapes or symbols (What do they mean?)
- a layout (stripes, circles, patterns, etc.)

Your flag should tell a story about who you are or what is important to you.

b) Prepare a short presentation (1–2 minutes).

In your presentation, you should:

- describe your flag
- explain the meaning of the colours and symbols
- explain what your flag says about you

6) Writing task: An article

A youth magazine is preparing a special issue about music, culture and social messages. They invite young readers to write an article about the Eurovision Song Contest. You have decided to contribute an article.

In your article you should:

- describe what the Eurovision Song Contest is and why it is popular
- explain how Eurovision can promote values such as diversity and inclusion
- discuss what it means to you that this year's ESC will be held in Austria

Give your article a title. Write around 250 words.

The Eurovision Song Contest and Pride Month: Key

2) Listening task: Eurovision Song Contest and gender

The audio refers to this picture: https://storage.googleapis.com/eurovision-com.appspot.com/renditions/public/cms/esc_moderatoren_tr_05jpg/ESC_Moderatoren_TR_05-width%3D800-width%3D800.jpg

Please note that for copyright reasons we cannot include the original here.

Transcript

Host: Welcome to today's discussion about the Eurovision Song Contest. It'll take place in Vienna this year and is famous for music, spectacle, and sometimes quite quirky performances. But recently, there has also been criticism – let's talk about it!

Speaker A: Yes, Eurovision has always had a mix of styles, from serious songs to very unusual to downright ridiculous acts like Dustin the Turkey. The singer entered the stage in a rubber turkey costume, if you can remember. But now the focus is also on how people involved in the event are presented in the media and what kind of message that sends.

Speaker B: Exactly. Especially the official photos of the hosts. Some people say they look like something from the 1990s. Not just in fashion, but in terms of gender stereotypes.

Host: What do you mean by that?

Speaker B: Well, it's about body language and gender performance. The woman is shown with a slightly bent posture, her arms close to her body, almost as if she wants to appear small or shy. She looks as though she needs a man to do the job!

Speaker A: And in contrast, the man stands behind her in a very confident way. His posture is strong, almost protective – but also controlling. He even places his hand on her waist, which is quite an intimate gesture.

Host: So the image tells a story without words?

Speaker A: Exactly. Body language can communicate power and roles. Here, the woman appears passive, while the man looks dominant and in control. He is supporting her, or, if you want to be very critical, it looks as if he owns her.

Speaker B: And that's where the criticism comes in. These kinds of images reflect traditional gender roles that many people today question. We have come so far. We have realised there are not just two sexes, two genders. There's so much more!

Host: Especially considering events like Pride Month, which is also coming up soon, to be exact in June, which promote equality and challenge stereotypes.

Speaker B: Yes, that's the point. Eurovision is often seen as a symbol of diversity and inclusion. For instance, the Austrian singer Conchita Wurst, who won the ESC back in 2015, challenged this black-and-white idea of "there is man and there is woman".

Host: Yes, I remember Conchita sporting both a glamorous dress and a beard!

Speaker B: Exactly, this was such a clever comment on gender diversity. Or last year's winner, JJ, who uses the countertenor technique in his singing. This singing technique



goes against the idea that high voices belong to women, and low voices belong to men. But when the visual message feels old-fashioned, like in this picture, it contradicts what the ESC stands for.

Speaker A: Also, repeated images like this can make certain behaviours appear normal.

For example, when a man touches a woman in a familiar or possessive way, it can suggest that this is acceptable or normal.

Host: Even if that's not the intention?

Speaker A: Yes. That's why representation matters. Small details, like posture or touch, can influence how we understand relationships and power.

Speaker B: So the question is: Should a modern event like Eurovision be more careful about the messages it sends?


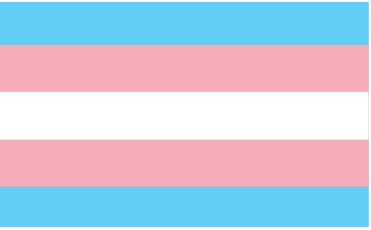




Host: A good question to end on. Thank you both for the discussion.

0 F, 1 C, 2 J, 3 B, 4 G, 5 A, 6 K, 7 E, 8 I

Distractors: D, H

3) Reading task

1 E, 2 D, 3 A, 4 C, 5 B, 6 F

<p>A: Genderfluid</p> 	<p>B: Trans</p> 	<p>C: Genderqueer</p> 
<p>D: Intersex</p> 	<p>E: Non-binary</p> 	<p>F: Intersectionality</p> 

6) Writing task: An article

Sample text

The ESC – As colourful as a rainbow flag

Have you ever wondered why the Eurovision Song Contest is so popular? One reason might be that it is as colourful and surprising as a rainbow flag. From singers in rubber turkey costumes to professionally trained performers, the show offers a wide variety of acts. At the same time, it presents ideas that go beyond traditional views of gender.

One of the reasons for the ESC's success is its global reach. It is watched by millions of fans around the world, and even countries that do not take part often follow the event. Because of this large audience, Eurovision can influence attitudes and promote more open-minded thinking.

In fact, many performances highlight diversity and inclusion. They use visual elements and symbols to question traditional ideas while still entertaining the audience. A famous example is Conchita Wurst, who won in 2014. With a glamorous dress and a beard, she showed that gender can be expressive and does not have to follow strict rules.

This year, the ESC will take place in Vienna. Let me tell you, I am excited! The city will welcome visitors from all over the world and become a lively place full of music. As it happens shortly before Pride Month, it will likely attract a very diverse audience. Sadly, I wasn't able to get tickets for the live show. But there will be public viewing areas across the city.

In the end, Eurovision is not just about music – it is about diversity, creativity, and having fun.