Fairness in Item Development: Abridged Guidelines

There are three primary ways in which we ensure the fairness of our tests:
1. by testing only construct-relevant knowledge
2. by avoiding content (including vocabulary, situations, and practices) that shows bias towards or against certain groups
3. by writing content in a manner that demonstrates sensitivity to our diverse test-taking population

Knowledge and processes that are *not* relevant to the construct of language proficiency and, thus, must *not* be essential to a Paragon test taker's success include (but are not limited to):
- attention to detail
- background knowledge
- cleverness
- math
- memory

Creating content that is free from bias provides equal opportunity for all test takers. Biased *language* may create feelings of exclusion or alienation, the emotional burden of which may negatively impact a test taker's performance. Biased *content* may unfairly assume test takers' familiarity with topics like Canadian culture, norms, and practices.

Avoid biased language by steering clear of:
- over-generalisations
- colloquialisms, idioms, and slang
- esoteric terminology
- gendered terminology
- stereotypes

Avoid biased content by steering clear of:
- brands (products, programs, regional names) (e.g. Kleenex)
- holidays and practices (religious holidays, birthdays)
- religion

Demonstrate respect for all members of our test-taking population, who show diversity in a number of areas including (but not limited to):
- age
- citizenship status
- disability
- educational background
- ethnicity
- gender
- nationality or national origin
- native language
- political affiliation
- race
- religion
- sexual orientation
- socioeconomic status

Avoid discussion of: horrors and suffering, personal matters, and partisan issues.