



# Introduction

Increasingly global economies, a heightened need for national security, and changing demographics in the U.S. have increased attention to our country's lack of language capability. Every call to action to prepare our students for the 21st Century includes offering them the opportunity to learn languages other than English and increase their knowledge of other cultures. Yet the latest enrollment figures indicate that in 2007-08 only 18.5% of students in U.S. public schools K-12 were enrolled in a language class.

Clearly, language education is critical to our students' success in the world of the future: a world that will insist upon their need to interact effectively with others who do not speak English. It is critically important that schools, elementary through post-secondary, offer our students that opportunity to develop those skills.

Learning other languages and understanding the culture of the people who speak them is a 21st Century skill that is vital to success in the global environment in which our students will live and work. In a 2006 report entitled, *Learning to Succeed in a Global Economy*, the Committee for Economic Development (CED) stated "To confront the twenty-first century challenges to our economy and national security, our education system must be strengthened to increase the foreign language skills and cultural awareness of our students. America's continued global leadership will depend on our students' abilities to interact with the world community both inside and outside our borders." For college and career readiness, our students need to be proficient in other languages, regardless of whether they choose to transition directly to the workforce or to post-secondary education.

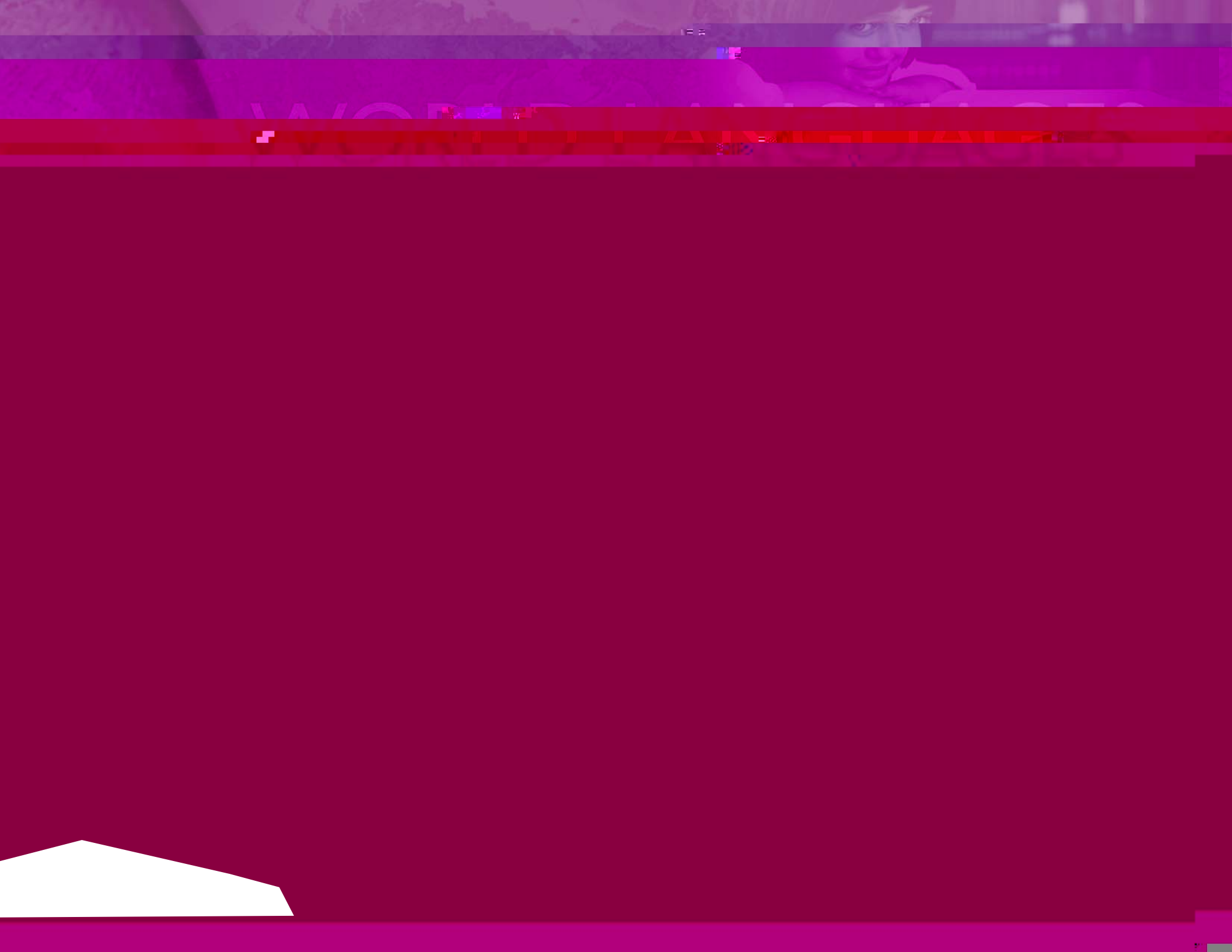
The language teaching community has reached strong consensus regarding the goals of a language program to develop students' language proficiency\* around modes of communicative competence reflecting real life communication. This is reflected in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century in the opening statement, "Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience." The national standards are undergirded by five goals (the 5 Cs) that focus language learning on:

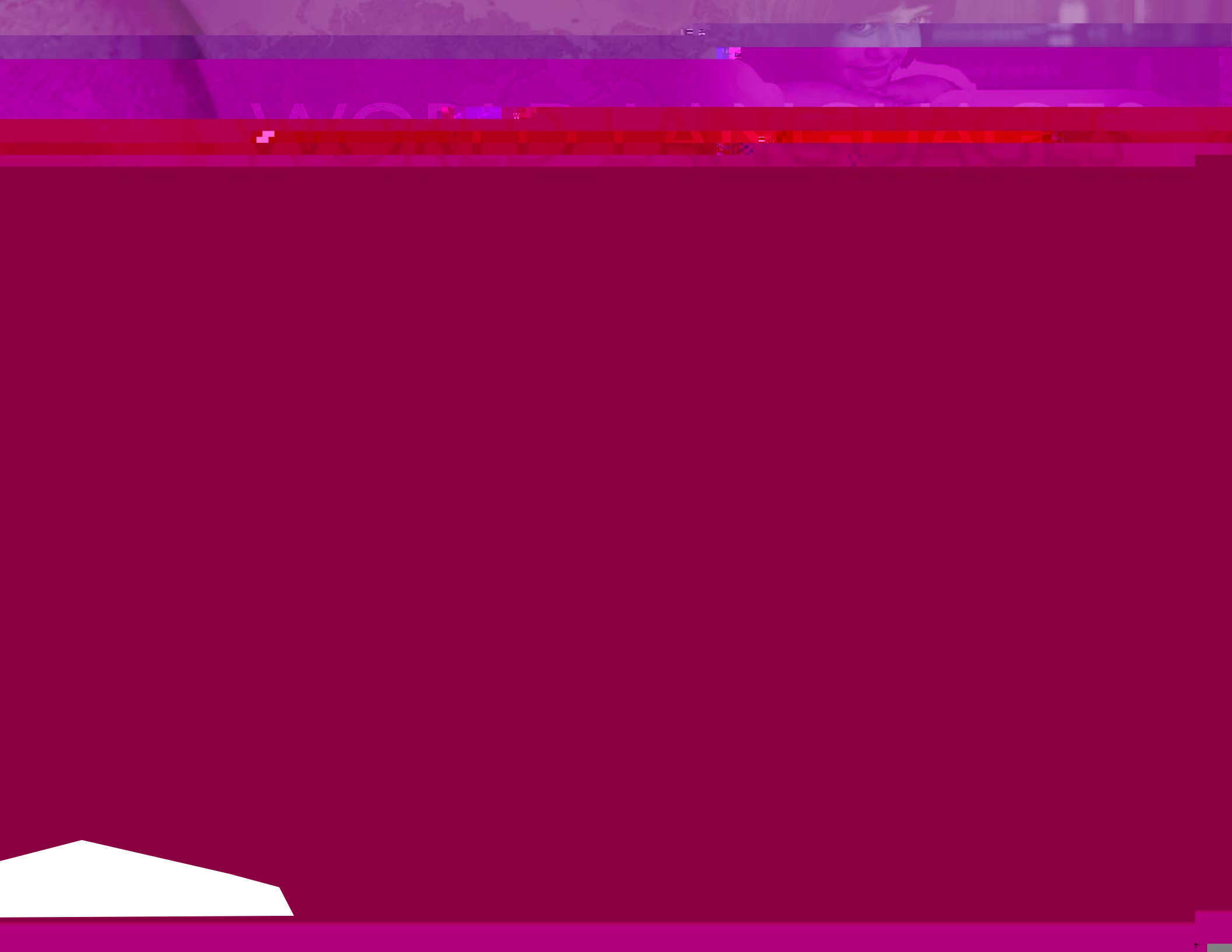
**Communication:** The ability to convey and receive messages based on the three modes of communication; interpersonal, or two-way interaction with someone else; interpretive, the ability to understand and interpret a one-way aural or written text; and presentational, the ability to present information in either a written or oral format. These modes reflect how people communicate in real life. The examples included in the World Language Skills map reflect these modes of communication.

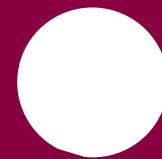
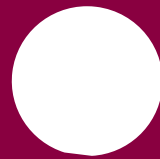
**Cultures:** As the teaching of language and culture are inextricably intertwined, students learn to understand the culture of the people who speak the target language through learning about the products and practices of the culture and how those relate to the perspectives of the people of that culture.

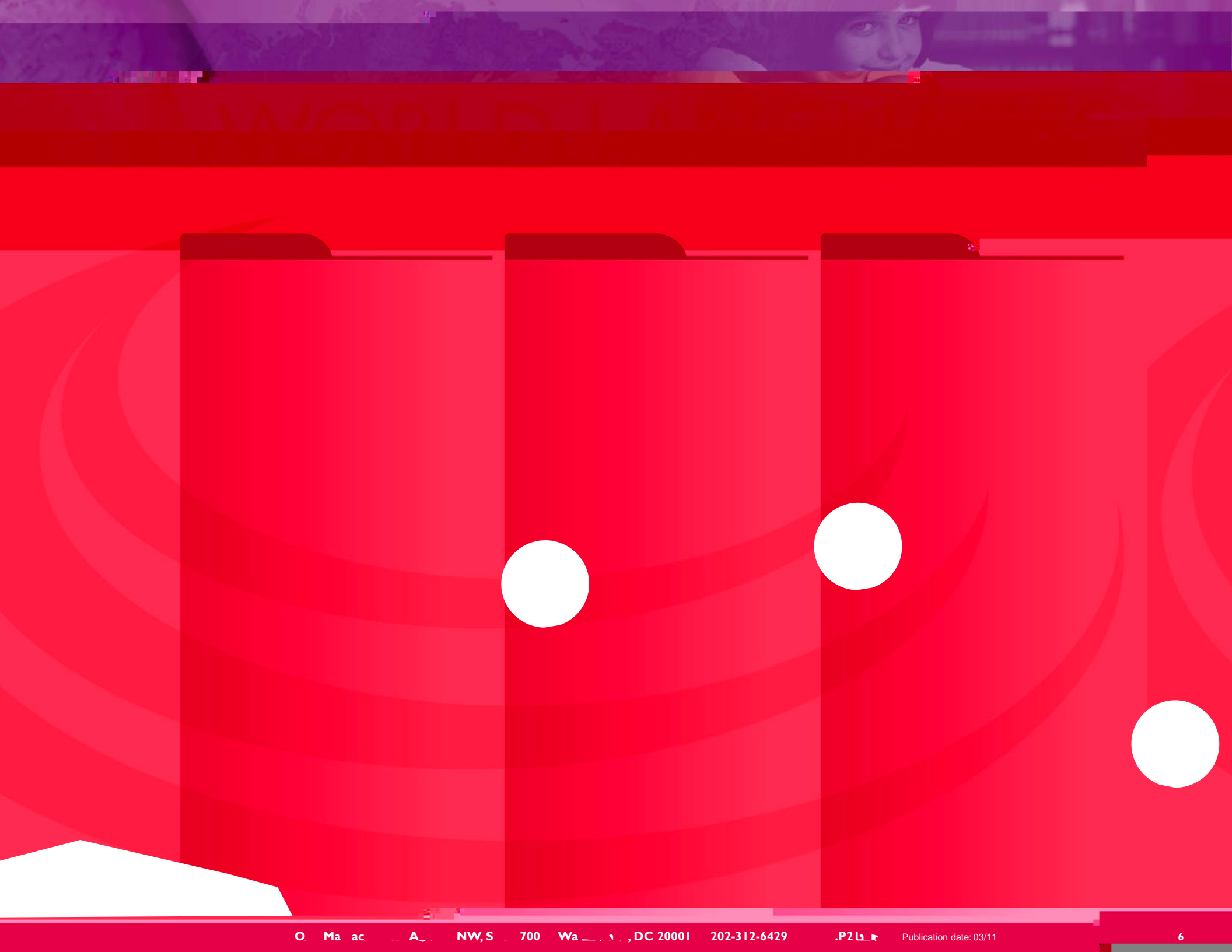
\* Language proficiency in a Latin program emphasizes the ability to interpret written Latin but uses the aural/oral skills to promote the interpretive ability. For American Sign Language classes, communicative competence focuses on signed communication ability.













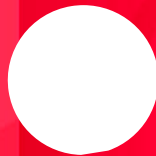




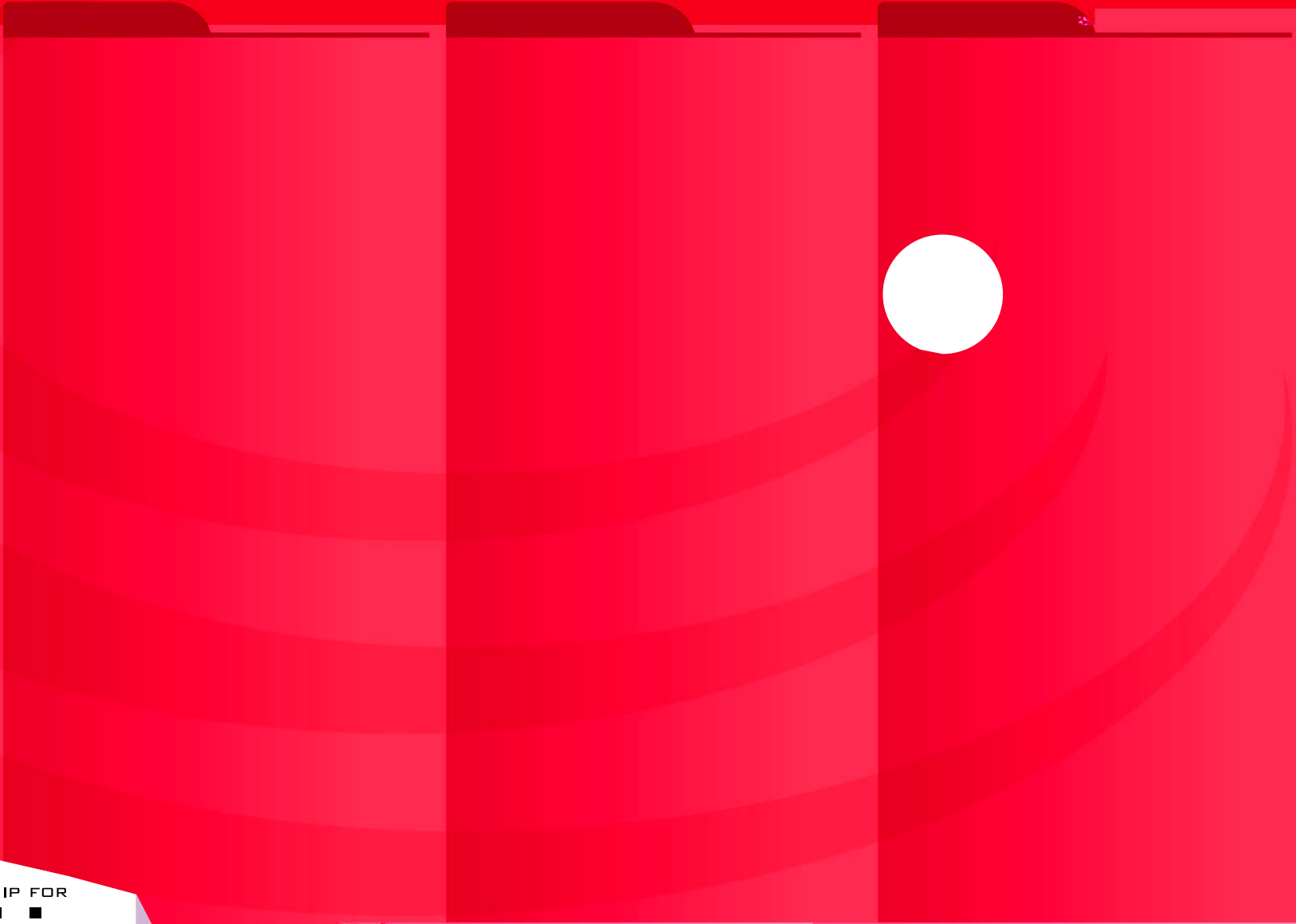










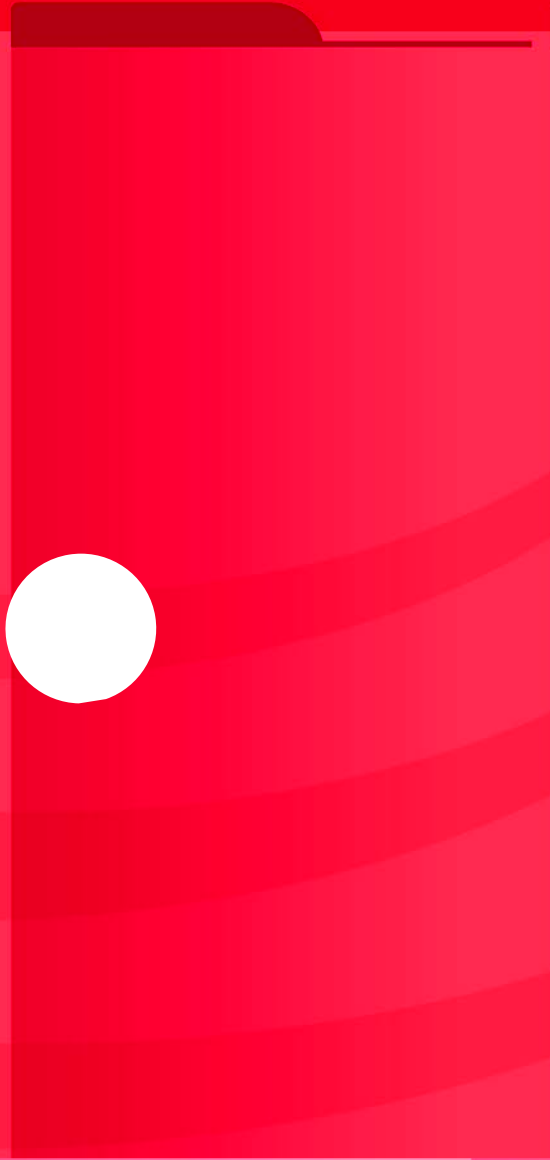


PARTNERSHIP FOR  
21ST CENTURY LEARNING



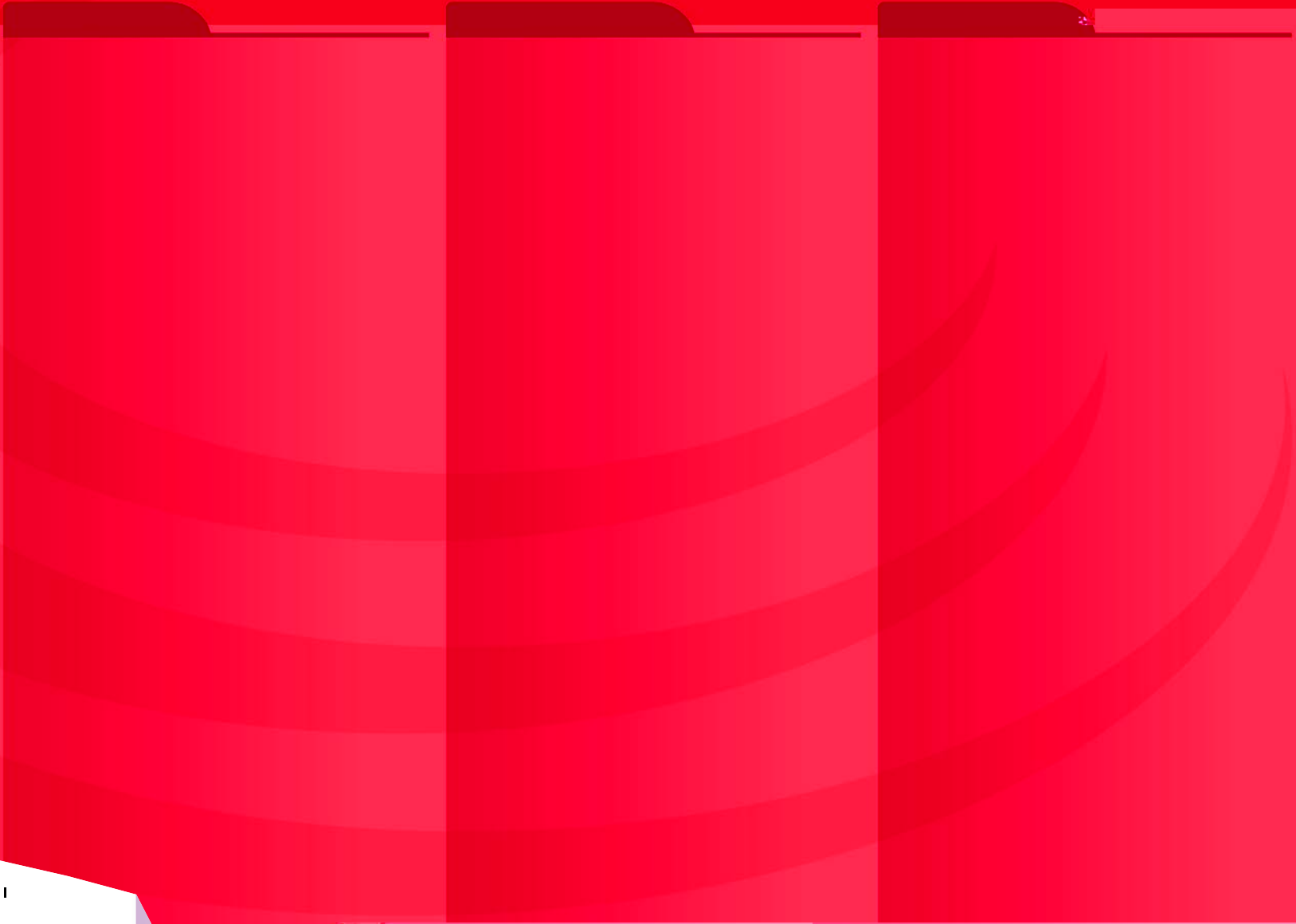












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