

Administering the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

March 2008

A Guide for Teachers and Principals



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Section 1: New and Important

Purpose of This Guide

This guide has been developed to provide direction and information to principals and teachers administering the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in March 2008. Administering the test according to the guidelines in this document will ensure province-wide consistency before, during and after the administration.

This guide is available electronically on the EQAO Web site, www.eqao.com. So are the *Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions* and *A Guide for Principals Preparing for the Administration of EQAO Tests* (the latter is available on the secure section).

What's New for the 2008 Test

- The OSSLT will be completed in two 75-minute sessions on the morning of Thursday, March 27, 2008. Your test materials will arrive between March 20 and 26.
- Students using large-print booklets will receive a large-print version of the Student Answer Sheet, which they must complete for the multiple-choice components of the test and for the Student Questionnaire.
- After the completion of the test, **all** electronic versions of the test must be deleted. Electronic copies are **not** to be retained after April 25, 2008. Please ensure that all computer- or assistive-technology-generated student responses are printed correctly and completely, with the final 12 digits of the student's package ID number at the top of each page. All student work must be stapled to the inside front cover of the student's corresponding booklet.
- There is now a **Special Versions Envelope** in which to place all special versions using the following response formats: computer, assistive technology, scribed and audiotape.
- Pencil can now be used on the Student Answer Sheet. The student must use pencil or blue or black ink.
- No cellphones, pagers, digital music players or any e-mail or text-messaging devices will be permitted during the test.
- Language used in EQAO test questions is representative of language used in *The Ontario Curriculum*. The "Key Words" document posted on EQAO's Web site is not an exhaustive list, but may be posted or distributed during the 2008 test. EQAO will no longer update the "Key Words" and will not post this document for the administration of the 2009 test.

Important Information

- The section of this guide “Professional Responsibilities for the Administration of the OSSLT” outlines the responsibilities of principals and teachers administering the test.
- This guide includes separate sets of detailed steps for principals and for teachers. The steps outline responsibilities before, during and after the test materials arrive in the school.
- An electronic version of the test, downloadable by the school for use with assistive technology (for example, Kurzweil [3000 and 1000], Premier, PDF, Word, HTML, WYNN and WordPerfect), will be posted on the secure section of the EQAO Web site on Tuesday, March 25 at 9:00 a.m. Only those schools that indicated in EQAO’s online Student Data Collection (SDC) system that one or more students will be accommodated with the “assistive technology” presentation format will have access.
- The *Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions* is a companion document that provides information and outlines the required documentation for English-language learners, students with special education needs and students with special circumstances.
- Upon receipt of the tote boxes, test materials should be verified using an up-to-date version of the Student Tracking Sheet (STS) printed from EQAO’s online SDC system. The materials **must not be distributed** until the morning of the administration day.
- Student packages **must not be opened** until the students start the test.

- **Package ID Numbers**

A 22-digit package ID number is printed on all student test materials. The **final 12 digits** are identical on all test materials in a student package. When distributing packages to students, teachers must ensure that the **final 12 digits** on each student’s booklets match the ID number assigned to the student on the STS.

Mismatched or Damaged Package IDs and Incomplete Packages

- If a student has not started writing the test and finds that the **final 12 digits** of the ID number on any item in his or her package do not match or if his or her package is incomplete, call EQAO at 1-888-327-7377 for instructions.
- If the student has already worked on some components of the package and finds material with different ID numbers, instruct the student to continue with the material set. When the student has finished writing, place all of the student’s materials in the **Issues Envelope** and document the issue on the outside of the envelope.
- If a student has already worked on some components of the package and finds that the package is incomplete (e.g., a Student Answer Sheet or booklet pages are missing), call EQAO at 1-888-327-7377 for instructions.
- If the package ID has been damaged on any of the student’s materials, clearly write the 22-digit package ID number on the cover of the affected material. Place all of the student’s materials in the **Issues Envelope**, and document the issue on the outside of the envelope.
- Do not use the package of an absent student without EQAO’s permission.

Note: The alteration of ID numbers may affect the accuracy of the student’s Individual Student Report.

Section 2: Professional Responsibilities for the Administration of the OSSLT

EQAO relies on principals and teachers in the development, administration, scoring and reporting of the OSSLT.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that

- they and the teachers administering the test have read the 2007–2008 administration guide and board direction/policy.
- all students eligible for the test are accounted for, including those writing with accommodations and special provisions, and those deferred or exempted.
- **any student receiving an accommodation has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that outlines the accommodations that are necessary for and consistent with regular classroom assessment practices used for the student. The student must normally receive the accommodation for all forms of assessment, including summative assessment work.**
- complete and accurate information is provided to EQAO for each student eligible to write the test, including those writing with accommodations or special provisions, and those deferred or exempted.
- complete and appropriate test materials are ordered for each student, using the EQAO SDC system, including, if necessary, additional materials requested after receipt of the initial shipment.
- all material necessary for the preparation for and administration of the test is provided to all participating teachers and support staff.
- all teachers and other personnel (e.g., scribes, prompters and principals themselves) participating in, preparing for and administering the test have received training this year and follow this year's administration guide and the *Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions*.
- all test materials are kept secure prior to, during and after the administration.

- the locations and conditions for writing the test allow each student to work independently of every other student and conform to EQAO requirements as defined in the administration guide and the *Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions*.
- there is no deviation from EQAO guidelines and instructions without explicit written direction from the relevant supervisory officer and EQAO's Chief Assessment Officer.
- any breach or suspected breach of security is reported to EQAO immediately.

Principals and **teachers** are responsible to ensure the fair and consistent administration of the test as outlined in the administration guide. These procedures must be followed:

Before the Administration

- Ensure that all materials and types of materials ordered have been received.
- Student test packages **must not** be opened prior to the administration of the first test session.
- Only staff members administering the test may have access to test materials.
- Teachers administering the test may receive the student test materials no earlier than the morning of the day the administration begins.
- Scribes and prompters may have access to the test materials only during the administration sessions.
- Staff preparing test materials for assistive technologies may have access to the materials no earlier than 48 hours prior to the start of the administration.
- Test materials must not be copied in any way for any reason. The only exception is for the preparation of test materials for students using assistive technologies (no earlier than 48 hours prior to the start of the administration).

During and After the Administration

- Only staff members administering the test may have access to test materials.
- Unused test packages (e.g., for absent students) must not be opened for any reason, except with EQAO's permission.
- Student test materials must not be removed from the classrooms during the administration.
- All classroom materials containing reading or writing content of an instructional nature must be removed from view or covered. The "Key Words" document available at www.eqao.com may be posted or distributed to students. No additional tips or reminders may be posted in the classroom, written on the blackboard or handed out to students.
- Only those individuals directly involved in the administration and testing activities (e.g., scribes and prompters) may enter the testing room.
- Students must be supervised at all times during the administration. This includes students with accommodations or special provisions and students who are permitted additional time to complete the test.
- Once the test materials have been opened, no one may use information from the test to provide instruction on any concept or item being tested prior to, during or after the administration of the test.
- During the test, no one may explain, define or provide examples of reading vocabulary or writing terminology to students, including those with accommodations.
- During the test, nothing may be said or done to influence student responses, including, but not limited to, actions such as drawing a student's attention to an unanswered question.
- At no point during or after the test may anything be said or done to encourage students to alter or revise their responses.
- No one may read, review or correct student work during or after the administration. This includes darkening, rewriting, editing, erasing or altering student work in any way.
- Each test booklet must be completed in one continuous session. A session may not be interrupted by lunch or by any other school programming. A session may include water-fountain, stretch and washroom breaks.
- At the end of each session, the test booklets must be collected and stored in a secure place without review.
- After a test session has ended, booklets must **not** be returned to students for further review, correction or completion.
- Once both booklets are completed, they must be collected and stored securely, without review, prior to the return of materials to EQAO.
- All test materials, used or unused, must be returned to EQAO.
- Student responses must not be copied in any way for any reason. The only exception is for the recommended photocopying of the Student Answer Sheets prior to returning them to EQAO.
- Any circumstances that may affect the scoring of student work (e.g., package ID number issues) or may have affected the validity of any student performance (e.g., a discussion between two students during the test) must be documented and reported to EQAO on the **Issues Envelope**.

The Test at a Glance

Activity	Allotted Time
<i>Booklet 1</i> (Reading and Writing)	75 minutes
Break	15 minutes
<i>Booklet 2</i> (Reading and Writing)	75 minutes
Questionnaire (<i>Booklet 2</i>)	10 minutes

Section 3: Detailed Steps for the Principal

A Guide for Principals Preparing for the Administration of EQAO Tests describes the steps for ordering test materials and ensuring that complete and accurate information is collected for each student.

Follow the steps below for the administration of the test and the return of all test materials to EQAO.

Step	Action
STEP 1 Prior to receipt of test materials	• Send letters to adult students or parents of students receiving accommodations, special provisions, deferrals or exemptions as documented in the SDC system. (Sample letters are available on the secure section of EQAO's Web site.) • Determine the administration schedule. Include a break with a maximum length of 15 minutes between the two sessions. (See the <i>Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions</i> for information about breaks for students being accommodated with additional time.) • Meet with the staff administering the test to review the "Professional Responsibilities," the administration schedule, the accommodations and special provisions to be provided, the school's policy for students who are late and other details. • Ensure that the rooms for writing the test are appropriate and meet the requirements outlined in the "Professional Responsibilities" in Section 2 of this guide. • Identify a secure location for the test materials.
STEP 2 Information Session	• Inform students about – the test presentation (number of booklets, Student Answer Sheet) and – the schedule (date and time of test, break, location, etc.). • Read to students – the instructions on the inside front cover of the booklets (see Appendix C of this guide).
STEP 3 Receipt of test materials	• The shipment will arrive between March 20 and 26, 2008. • As soon as the shipment arrives, use the Packing/Return List and print the STSs from the SDC system to ensure that the required materials have been received, including all special versions ordered. (Do not open individual student packages.) • Use the SDC system to immediately order any missing or additional materials and to advise of any changes to student information. Please refer to <i>A Guide for Principals Preparing for the Administration of EQAO Tests</i>. • Distribute a copy of this guide to each teacher administering the test.

Step	Action
STEP 4 Security	• Store the test materials in a secure location until their distribution to the teachers administering the test the morning of March 27, 2008.
STEP 5 Distribution of STS and test packages to teachers	• From the SDC system, print an up-to-date STS for each class. • On the morning of March 27, 2008, distribute the test materials and a copy of the STSs to the teachers administering the test. • If there is a package ID problem or if a package is incomplete, follow the directions under “Package ID Numbers” in Section 1 of this guide. <i>Note:</i> Ensure necessary arrangements have been made for students who are – receiving accommodations or special provisions and/or – receiving special versions of the test. <i>Note:</i> The start time of the test may be delayed for up to one hour due to unforeseen circumstances affecting a group of students (e.g., bus delay, weather conditions) at the principal’s discretion. For delays longer than one hour that would affect provisions for accommodated students on March 27, the principal must consult EQAO at 1-888-327-7377.
STEP 6 Receipt of test materials from teachers	• Use the STSs to check that all student test materials have been returned by all teachers.

Step	Action
STEP 7 Return of test materials to EQAO	• Review the data in the SDC system to ensure that the student information is complete and accurate. • To help resolve potential issues in the future, EQAO recommends that you photocopy the following and keep the copies on file: – the completed Packing/Return List – all completed Student Answer Sheets • Keep the following on file and do not send them to EQAO: – the STS and student information for each class, printed from the SDC system – all documentation for students with accommodations, special provisions or deferrals – the signed consent forms for exempted students • Bundle the following: – all original Student Answer Sheets (put them in the Student Answer Sheet Envelope) – all <i>Booklet 1s</i> and <i>Booklet 2s</i> together – all unused, sealed student packages together • In the Issues Envelope, place all materials that require EQAO’s attention (e.g., materials with student package ID problems, booklets with missing pages and any notes addressed to EQAO representatives). Provide a detailed explanation of the problem on the outside of the envelope. • Place all special versions using the following response formats in the Special Versions Envelope: computer, assistive technology, scribed and audiotape. Refer to the <i>Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions</i> for further instructions on submitting student responses to special versions (page 8). • Place all test materials, including unused student packages, in the tote boxes. Fill any free space with the original packing material. • Indicate on the Packing/Return List the total quantity of each item being returned. (The quantities returned must equal the quantities received by the school.) • Include the original Packing/Return List. • Affix the Return Service labels to the tote boxes, ensuring that the ID number on each label matches the one on the tote box. • Seal the tote boxes as indicated on the UPS Return Shipping Instructions. • A pre-scheduled pickup has been arranged for Friday, March 28, 2008. • Record the date of the pickup and the shipment tracking number.

Section 4: Detailed Steps for Teachers

Follow the steps below for the administration of the test and the return of all test materials to the principal (for return to EQAO).

Step	Action
STEP 1 Preparation for the test	• Meet with the principal and staff administering the test to review the “Professional Responsibilities,” the administration schedule, the accommodations and special provisions to be provided, the instructions for the information session and other details.
STEP 2 Test environment	• Arrange the test room to ensure that students work independently. • Ensure that the room for writing the test is appropriate and meets the requirements outlined in “Professional Responsibilities” in Section 2 of this guide. • Cover or remove from view all materials containing reading or writing content of an instructional nature (meaning anything that directly aids the student in the writing of the OSSLT, e.g., a chart that outlines the writing process in detail). • The “Key Words” document available at www.eqao.com may be posted. You may make copies or enlarge the originals as required. • Ensure that students have the required materials for the completion of the test: – pens with dark blue or black ink – sharpened pencils – an eraser
STEP 3 Receipt and security of STS and test packages	• Check that you have received from your principal an up-to-date STS and the correct number of student packages for your room. If materials are incomplete, inform your principal immediately. Do not use an absent student’s package unless instructed to do so by EQAO. • Do not open the individual student packages. • Instructions for answering multiple-choice questions and responding to written-answer prompts are provided in Appendix C of this guide. • Store all test materials securely throughout the administration.

Step	Action
STEP 4 Administration and instructions to students	Teachers should follow the instructions below, without extra instructions to the students. • Distribute student packages according to the STS. • Ensure that the final 12 digits of the package ID on the STS and the student package match. If there is a package ID problem or if a package is incomplete, follow the directions in “Package ID Numbers” in Section 1 of this guide. <i>Note:</i> Do not attempt to change package IDs. It is very important that they not be altered, as alteration will affect the accuracy of the student’s score. • At the beginning of the scheduled test time, ask students to remove their booklets from the plastic wrapping. • Extra packages must not be opened. They must be returned to the principal at the end of the test session and will be returned to EQAO after the test administration. Read the following to students: • You have two and a half hours to complete the OSSLT (not including the time for preliminary test instructions, for the break and for the Student Questionnaire at the end of <i>Booklet 2</i>). • You have 75 minutes to finish each test booklet. If you finish early, you should review your work and check that you have not missed any questions. • Attempt all questions. If you leave a question blank, the question will be scored zero. • No cellphones, pagers, digital music players or any e-mail or text-messaging devices are permitted during the test. • Check that you have <i>Booklet 1</i> and <i>Booklet 2</i> (includes Student Questionnaire) and a Student Answer Sheet. • Write your name on the Student Answer Sheet. • Check the ID numbers of your three documents to see that the final 12 digits all match. If they do not, report the mismatch to me. • Check the pages of each test booklet to see that they are in order. If they are not, report the problem to me. • Read the instructions on the inside front cover of the test booklet while I read them to you. • Put <i>Booklet 2</i> face down on the corner of your desk while you are doing <i>Booklet 1</i>. • You must use blue or black ink or pencil for all written answers in the booklet and for the multiple-choice answers on the Student Answer Sheet. • If you have any questions, ask them now, since you will not be able to talk during the test. (<i>If students do not have any questions, start the test and carefully keep track of the time.</i>) • You are now ready to start <i>Booklet 1</i>. • Signal to the students when 15 minutes is left before the end of the test session. • At the end of the first 75-minute test session, collect all <i>Booklet 1</i>s.

Step	Action
STEP 4 (cont'd) Administration and instructions to students	• For accommodated students using assistive technology, computers or word processors, the printed copy of the student's responses (with the final 12 digits of the student's package ID number in the header on each page) must be stapled to the inside front cover of <i>Booklet 1</i>. • Make sure the room is secure during the break. Have students leave the Student Answer Sheet and <i>Booklet 2</i> face down on their desks during their break. • When students return from the break, remind them to review the instructions for completing multiple-choice and written answers. Students have 75 minutes to complete <i>Booklet 2</i>. • Signal to students when 15 minutes is left before the end of the test session. • Have students complete the Student Questionnaire if they finish the test early, or at the end of the testing period (the Student Questionnaire is not included in the time allotted for <i>Booklet 2</i>). Remind students to record their answers on the questionnaire section of the Student Answer Sheet. • At the end of Session 2, collect all <i>Booklet 2</i>s and all Student Answer Sheets separately. • For accommodated students using assistive technology, computers or word processors, the printed copy of the student's responses (with the final 12 digits of the student's package ID number in the header on each page) must be stapled to the inside front cover of <i>Booklet 2</i>.
STEP 5 Return of test materials and STS to the principal	• Use the STS to check that each student's test booklets and Student Answer Sheet have been returned. Use the STS to record student absences. • Include the STS. • Bundle separately each of the following: – all completed <i>Booklet 1</i>s and <i>Booklet 2</i>s together – all completed Student Answer Sheets together – all unused, sealed student packages together • Bundle together all materials that require EQAO's attention (e.g., materials with student package ID problems, special version tapes, booklets with missing pages and any notes addressed to EQAO representatives). Provide a detailed written explanation of each problem to the principal; he or she will include it on the outside of the Issues Envelope. • Bundle together all special versions using the following response formats: computer or word processor, assistive technology, scribed and audiotape. Place them in the Special Versions Envelope. • Return all materials to the principal.

Appendix A—The Role of EQAO

The Role of EQAO

EQAO conducts province-wide assessments at the primary, junior and secondary levels to measure student achievement against curriculum expectations. The data can be used as an additional tool to direct improvements in education at the individual, school, board and provincial levels. For access to our frameworks, which map how the tests reflect curriculum expectations, and other useful educator resources, visit www.eqao.com.

The role of EQAO is to

- design and implement a comprehensive program of student assessment within government-established guidelines;
- develop and implement a system for measuring the quality of education in Ontario;
- manage Ontario's participation in national and international assessments;
- promote research in best practices in assessment and accountability;
- report to the Minister of Education, the public and the education community on system quality issues, and recommend improvements.

Development of the Test

EQAO has developed the OSSLT in collaboration with teams of Ontario teachers, consultants and principals. These educators have contributed their expertise in language, their knowledge of *The Ontario Curriculum*, their experience with equity issues, their knowledge concerning students with special needs and their technical knowledge pertaining to validity and reliability. The test assesses the cross-curricular reading and writing skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 9, as outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*.

EQAO's commitment to both accountability and improvement has led to the following criteria for the OSSLT. The test must

- be of high quality to ensure that reliable information about student achievement is obtained;
- ask students to work independently to complete challenging language tasks across the curriculum;
- give a broad view of students' knowledge and skills in language and
- contribute to student learning.

Appendix B—EQAO Policies and Procedures

Consistency and Fairness

The consistency of testing procedures is important to ensuring fairness for all students. Students must work independently in a quiet environment, supervised by teachers trained to administer the test. Teachers are provided with instructions to be read to students that must be followed to ensure that a common message is given to all students throughout the province. The conditions of the test administration include a time limit as well as limited access to the test booklets. The standardization of the test content and of the conditions under which the test is administered ensure comparable opportunities for students to demonstrate the skills measured by the test.

Quality Assurance

As part of EQAO's quality assurance procedures, a random sample of schools is visited during the test by observers representing EQAO. The observers' responsibility is to monitor the consistency of administration across the province. The observers will notify the school in advance by phone and will present a letter of identification to the principal.

Participation in the OSSLT

Successful completion of the OSSLT is a requirement for students who entered Grade 9 in September 2000 or later and are working toward an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Students can also meet this requirement through the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course, but must have had at least two opportunities to take the test (at the principal's discretion, this may be reduced to one) and have failed the test at least once.

Participants in the March 2008 OSSLT are

- students who entered Grade 9 in the 2006–2007 school year;
- students who did not pass the test on a previous administration;
- students who were absent or deferred in the 2007 administration and
- students who were exempted from the 2007 administration but are now working toward an OSSD.

Punctuality

The school's late policy for exams will determine admittance of students to the test room. EQAO's reports will deem students to be absent if there is no work for one or both sessions of the administration.

Teacher Absences

In the case of an absence, another teacher, supervised by the principal, may administer the test. The teacher taking over the administration of the test must be provided in advance with a copy of this guide and must follow the detailed steps in it. The teacher must have the opportunity to have the procedures clarified.

EQAO Policy on the Duty to Report Child Abuse

Under provincial law, persons dealing with children, including teachers, teaching assistants and principals, have a duty to report suspicions of child abuse to the Children's Aid Society. According to the *Child and Family Services Act*, the duty to report also applies where there are reasonable grounds to suspect patterns of child neglect.

If a teacher, non-teaching staff member, principal or volunteer working as a scribe has reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse or neglect, he or she is obligated to report any suspicion and the information on which it is based directly to the Children's Aid Society. When reporting to the Children's Aid Society, send only the student's writing linked to the suspicion of abuse or neglect. Notify EQAO at 1-888-327-7377 at the same time, indicating

which portion of the test is in question. Do not send the Children's Aid Society any part of the preprinted test, including the writing prompt. If they require more information, they will contact EQAO.

EQAO has procedures in place to facilitate scorers' reporting of suspicions of child abuse.

EQAO Policy on Offensive Language

Student work that contains offensive language or obscene or racist graphic depictions will be reported to the student's principal, so that appropriate action can be taken at the school level. Offensive content may invalidate a student's response.

Reporting to Students and Parents

EQAO will provide an Individual Student Report (ISR) for each student who participated in the OSSLT, following the test administration. A copy will also be provided for the student's school record. The ISR will indicate whether a student has successfully completed the test. Samples of student work will be available on the EQAO Web site (www.eqao.com) to assist in the interpretation of EQAO reports. Each district school board and school authority will receive school, board and provincial results. EQAO will also report on student achievement at the board and provincial levels in the *Provincial Report*.

Embedded Field-Test Materials

Field-test questions are embedded in the student booklets. **Students will have different versions of these embedded questions.** These questions will not be included in the students' scores. However, it is important that students give them the same effort they give the other parts of the test.

Appendix C—Test Instructions

Read carefully before writing the test:

- Check the identification numbers of your three documents to see that the final 12 digits all match. If they do not, report the problem to the teacher in charge.
- Check the pages of this *Test Booklet* to see that they are in order. If they are not, report the problem to the teacher in charge.
- Read all instructions before responding to the questions.
- Use only HB pencil or blue or black pen in the *Test Booklet* and on the Student Answer Sheet.
- Attempt all questions. If you leave a question blank, the question will be scored zero.

Multiple-Choice

- Choose the best or most correct answer for each question.
- You must record your multiple-choice answers on the Student Answer Sheet. Multiple-choice answers recorded in the *Test Booklet* will not be scored.

To indicate your answer, **fill in the circle completely**, as shown below.

Like this: ● **Not like this:** ⊗ ✓ ◐ ⊙

- If you fill in more than one circle for a question, the question will be scored incorrect.
- If you wish to change a multiple-choice answer, erase or cross out your answer and fill in the circle for your new answer. Ensure that your final answer is clear.

Written Answers

- For all questions that ask for a written answer, **write legibly on the lined space provided** in the *Test Booklet*.
- For the writing sections, pay attention to clarity, organization, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.
- There is space in the *Test Booklet* for rough notes. Nothing you write in these spaces will be scored.

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You are now ready to start *Test Booklet 1: Session 1*.

Remember to record all your multiple-choice answers on the Student Answer Sheet.

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