



**FSA**  
ELA & Mathematics  
Assessments

**Grade 9**  
FSA ELA Reading  
Practice Test Questions

The purpose of these practice test materials is to orient teachers and students to the types of questions on paper-based FSA ELA Reading tests. By using these materials, students will become familiar with the types of items and response formats they may see on a paper-based test. The practice questions and answers are not intended to demonstrate the length of the actual test, nor should student responses be used as an indicator of student performance on the actual test. The practice test is not intended to guide classroom instruction.

**Directions for Answering the  
ELA Reading Practice Test Questions**

If you don't understand a question, ask your teacher to explain it to you. Your teacher has the answers to the practice test questions.

To offer students a variety of texts on the FSA ELA Reading tests, authentic and copyrighted stories, poems, and articles appear as they were originally published, as requested by the publisher and/or author. While these real-world examples do not always adhere to strict style conventions and/or grammar rules, inconsistencies among passages should not detract from students' ability to understand and answer questions about the texts.

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Read the passages “Odysseus and the Sirens” and “The Sirens,” refer to “Ulysses and the Sirens,” and then answer Numbers 1 through 5.

## Passage 1: Odysseus and the Sirens

by Homer

*In this excerpt from Homer’s Odyssey, the Greek king Odysseus tells of his encounter with a group of dangerous creatures called the Sirens. He begins with the warnings given by the witch Circe before he and his men leave her island.*

- 1           “Now, then, stay here for the rest of the day, feast your fill, and go on with your voyage at daybreak tomorrow morning. In the meantime I will tell Ulysses<sup>1</sup> about your course, and will explain everything to him so as to prevent your suffering from misadventure either by land or sea.’
- 2           “We agreed to do as she had said, and feasted through the livelong day to the going down of the sun, but when the sun had set and it came on dark, the men laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship. Then Circe took me by the hand and bade me be seated away from the others, while she reclined by my side and asked me all about our adventures.
- 3           ““So far so good,’ said she, when I had ended my story, ‘and now pay attention to what I am about to tell you—heaven itself, indeed, will recall it to your recollection. First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If any one unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. . . . Therefore pass these Sirens by, and stop your men’s ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get the men to bind you as you stand upright on a cross piece half way up the mast, and they must lash the rope’s ends to the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster.’ . . .

<sup>1</sup>Ulysses: the Roman name for Odysseus

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- 4        "Here she ended, and dawn enthroned in gold began to show in heaven, whereon she returned inland. I then went on board and told my men to loose the ship from her moorings; so they at once got into her, took their places, and began to smite the grey sea with their oars. Presently the great and cunning goddess Circe befriended us with a fair wind that blew dead aft, and staid steadily with us, keeping our sails well filled, so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship's gear, and let her go as wind and helmsman headed her.
- 5        "Then, being much troubled in mind, I said to my men, 'My friends, it is not right that one or two of us alone should know the prophecies that Circe has made me, I will therefore tell you about them, so that whether we live or die we may do so with our eyes open. First she said we were to keep clear of the Sirens, who sit and sing most beautifully in a field of flowers; but she said I might hear them myself so long as no one else did. Therefore, take me and bind me to the crosspiece half way up the mast; bind me as I stand upright, with a bond so fast that I cannot possibly break away, and lash the rope's ends to the mast itself. If I beg and pray you to set me free, then bind me more tightly still.'
- 6        "I had hardly finished telling everything to the men before we reached the island of the two Sirens, for the wind had been very favourable. Then all of a sudden it fell dead calm; there was not a breath of wind nor a ripple upon the water, so the men furled the sails and stowed them; then taking to their oars they whitened the water with the foam they raised in rowing. Meanwhile I took a large wheel of wax and cut it up small with my sword. Then I kneaded the wax in my strong hands till it became soft, which it soon did between the kneading and the rays of the sun-god son of Hyperion. Then I stopped the ears of all my men, and they bound me hands and feet to the mast as I stood upright on the cross piece; but they went on rowing themselves. When we had got within earshot of the land, and the ship was going at a good rate, the Sirens saw that we were getting in shore and began with their singing.
- 7        "'Come here,' they sang, 'renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song—and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.'

- 8        "They sang these words most musically, and as I longed to hear them further I made signs by frowning to my men that they should set me free; but they quickened their stroke, and Eurylochus and Perimedes bound me with still stronger bonds till we had got out of hearing of the Sirens' voices. Then my men took the wax from their ears and unbound me."

Excerpt from "Odysseus and the Sirens" by Homer, from *The Odyssey*, translated by Samuel Butler. In the public domain.

## Passage 2: The Sirens

by James Russell Lowell

- 1        The sea is lonely, the sea is dreary,  
The sea is restless and uneasy;  
Thou seekest quiet, thou art weary,  
Wandering thou knowest not whither;—
- 5        Our little isle is green and breezy,  
Come and rest thee! O come hither,  
Come to this peaceful home of ours,  
          Where evermore  
The low west-wind creeps panting up the shore
- 10        To be at rest among the flowers;  
Full of rest, the green moss lifts,  
          As the dark waves of the sea  
Draw in and out of rocky rifts,  
          Calling solemnly to thee
- 15        With voices deep and hollow,—  
          "To the shore  
          Follow! O, follow!  
To be at rest forevermore!  
          Forevermore!"
- 20        Look how the gray old Ocean  
From the depth of his heart rejoices,  
Heaving with a gentle motion,  
When he hears our restful voices;  
List how he sings in an undertone,

- 25 Chiming with our melody;  
And all sweet sounds of earth and air  
Melt into one low voice alone,  
That murmurs over the weary sea,  
And seems to sing from everywhere,—
- 30 "Here mayst thou harbor peacefully,  
Here mayst thou rest from the aching oar;  
Turn thy curvèd prow ashore,  
And in our green isle rest for evermore!  
Forevermore!"

Excerpt from "The Sirens" by James Russell Lowell. In the public domain.

## Passage 3: Ulysses and the Sirens

by John William Waterhouse



*Ulysses and the Sirens* by John William Waterhouse. In the public domain.

Now answer Numbers 1 through 5. Base your answers on the passages “Odysseus and the Sirens,” “The Sirens,” and “Ulysses and the Sirens.”

1. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What advice from Circe is essential for Ulysses and his men to prepare for the Sirens in Passage 1?

- Ⓐ The Sirens are few in number.
- Ⓑ The Sirens can predict the future.
- Ⓒ The Sirens enjoy flattery and praise.
- Ⓓ The Sirens never let anyone leave their island.

**Part B**

Fill in the bubble **before** the detail from the Sirens’ song in Passage 1 that contradicts what Circe tells the men.

- 7     Ⓐ “‘Come here,’ they sang, ‘renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. Ⓑ No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song—  
Ⓒ and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser,  
Ⓓ for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.’



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2. Which ideas are contrasted throughout Passage 2?
- Ⓐ the harshness of the sea and the peace of the island
  - Ⓑ the ugliness of the ship and the beauty of the island
  - Ⓒ the comfort of home and the toughness of the open sea
  - Ⓓ the excitement of the battlefield and the dullness of the sea
3. Ancient Greece was a seagoing culture that made important explorations. Ancient Greeks also believed the sea to be a dangerous place. How is this aspect of ancient Greek culture symbolized in Passage 1?
- Ⓐ The Sirens appear enchanting, but they are lethal.
  - Ⓑ Circe enjoys the adventures of Ulysses but warns him of the Sirens.
  - Ⓒ The Sirens reveal important knowledge to sailors who listen to them.
  - Ⓓ Ulysses follows Circe's instructions, but he is tempted by the Sirens' song.

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4. In Passage 3, which element of Ulysses's encounter with the Sirens does the artist emphasize?
- Ⓐ the heroism of Ulysses's actions on the ship
  - Ⓑ the struggle of the sailors to resist the Sirens' song
  - Ⓒ the menacing beauty of the Sirens' physical appearance
  - Ⓓ the dangerous nature of Ulysses's surrounding environment

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5. Fill in the bubbles to show how Passage 1 and Passage 2 represent the Sirens' story differently.

	Passage 1	Passage 2
<b>The author depicts a wise guardian who guides the characters.</b>	(A)	(B)
<b>The author uses rhythm and rhyme to show the appeal of the Sirens.</b>	(C)	(D)
<b>The author uses repetitive imagery that emphasizes comfort and rest.</b>	(E)	(F)
<b>The author dramatizes the danger of the Sirens through vivid description.</b>	(G)	(H)

**Listen to the audio clip “Address to the Nation about National Energy Policy, November 25, 1973,” read the passage “Radio Address about the National Energy Crisis, January 19, 1974,” and then answer Numbers 6 through 13.**

*In 1973, some members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) banned petroleum exports to the United States and introduced cuts in oil production. As the price of oil rose sharply in 1973, President Richard Nixon addressed the American people to explain the steps the people and the government would take to deal with the emerging energy crisis.*

## **Passage 1 Audio Clip: Address to the Nation about National Energy Policy, November 25, 1973**

by Richard Nixon



**Raise your hand so your test administrator can provide you access to this audio passage.**

Listen to the following speech given by Richard Nixon on November 25, 1973.

Address to the Nation about National Energy Policy by Richard Nixon, November 25, 1973. In the public domain.

## **Passage 2: Radio Address about the National Energy Crisis, January 19, 1974**

by Richard Nixon

*President Nixon spoke to the American people about the energy crisis multiple times during this period. This speech was made several weeks later.*

- 1 Good afternoon:
- 2 Ten weeks ago, I reported to the Nation on the energy crisis. I asked all Americans to accept some sacrifices in comfort and convenience so that no American would have to suffer real hardship.
- 3 Today, I want to report to you on our progress and answer the basic questions that many Americans have asked about this crisis.

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- 4 On the positive side, I am glad to be able to report that we are making solid progress in facing up to this challenge. There are several reasons for this:
- 5 Far more important than anything else is what every American has done voluntarily. It is your response—the actions you take to save energy on a personal, voluntary, day-in, day-out basis—that is now the single most important reason for our success so far.
- 6 For the past 7 weeks, we have observed “gasless Sundays” across the country. Your cooperation with this program helped to make it possible for me to announce today that during the month of December, the total consumption of gasoline in the United States was nearly 9 percent below expectations.
- 7 Americans are also responding to the call for lower temperatures at home and at work. A recent report from New England shows that 19,000 homes surveyed there have reduced heating oil consumption by more than 16 percent under last year, and that is after making adjustments for warmer weather.
- 8 Utilities are reporting that the consumption of natural gas across the country has been reduced by approximately 6 percent over last year, while the consumption of electricity—in homes, offices, factories, and elsewhere—is down by about 10 percent.
- 9 Beyond the progress we have made because of voluntary conservation, we have also been fortunate because the weather in the last quarter of 1973 was warmer than usual, so we did not consume so much for fuel for heating as we expected. Even though the oil embargo continues in the Middle East, we have also received some oil we did not expect at the time the embargo was imposed.
- 10 Finally, let me tell you what your Government has been doing to meet this crisis.
- 11 A fuel allocation program has been set up so that no area of the Nation is being subjected to undue hardship. We have begun the process of converting oil-burning utilities to the use of coal wherever possible, freeing some 200,000 barrels of oil a day for use in other areas.
- 12 At my request, laws governing energy conservation, such as year-round daylight savings time, have been enacted by the Congress and are now in effect. Teams of Federal inspectors have been sent to investigate fuel prices at gasoline stations and truck stops. Where price gouging is discovered, it is being stopped.

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- 13        Within the Government, where we have a special obligation to set an example, I first directed that energy consumption be cut by at least 7 percent. That goal has now been met, and it has been exceeded. Consumption of energy by the Federal Government has been cut by more than 20 percent under anticipated demands.
- 14        These are just some of the steps we have taken to meet the problem head-on, and you can expect more in the future.
- 15        Nothing which the Federal Government might do could be successful, however, without the full cooperation of the American people. It is your sacrifice that is making the difference. You deserve the credit.
- \*\*\*\*
- 16        America is a rich, a strong, and a good country. We must set for ourselves this goal: We must never again be caught in a foreign-made crisis where the United States is dependent on any other country, friendly or unfriendly, for the energy we need to produce our jobs, to heat our homes, to furnish our transportation for wherever we want to go.
- 17        Late last year, I announced the beginning of Project Independence, a full-scale effort to provide the capacity to meet American energy needs with American energy resources by 1980. As an important part of that project, the head of the Federal Energy Office, William Simon, will mount a major effort this year to accelerate the development of new energy supplies for the future.
- 18        Most of the money and the work for Project Independence must come from private enterprise. But the Federal Government also has a vital role to play. It must be a catalyst for industrial initiative. It must clear away the red tape that lies in the way of expanding our supplies, and it must provide the seed money for research and development.
- 19        Many of these Federal responsibilities can only be met with new legislation. That is why, over the next few weeks, I shall submit to the Congress a broad legislative package of energy initiatives and urge it to place these requests at the very top of the Congressional agenda for 1974. If we are to be successful in dealing with our long-term energy needs, the Congress must play its part, and I believe that the Congress, after returning from their districts over the Christmas holidays, will agree that the people want them to play their part along with the Administration.

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- 20 The burden of energy conservation, of cutbacks and inconvenience, of occasional discomfort, continued concern is not, I can assure you, an artificial one. It is real. During the Second World War, Winston Churchill was once asked why England was fighting Hitler. He answered, "If we stop, you will find out."
- 21 If we should choose to believe that our efforts in fighting the energy crisis are unnecessary, if we permit ourselves to slacken our efforts and slide back into the wasteful consumption of energy, then the full force of the energy crisis will be brought home to America in a most devastating fashion, and there will be no longer any question in anyone's mind about the reality of the crisis.
- 22 The distance between the winter of 1974 and the springtime of energy independence for the United States remains great. We must proceed with confidence in our ability to do the job. Far more importantly, we must act now, as one people, to do the job that must be done.

Radio Address about the National Energy Crisis by Richard Nixon, January 19, 1974. In the public domain.

**Now answer Numbers 6 through 13. Base your answers on the audio clip “Address to the Nation about National Energy Policy, November 25, 1973” and the passage “Radio Address about the National Energy Crisis, January 19, 1974.”**

**6.** Select **two** ideas that show how President Nixon develops the idea of responsibility in Passage 2.

- Ⓐ by highlighting areas for continued improvement
- Ⓑ by outlining roles for different parts of society
- Ⓒ by minimizing the influence of outside factors
- Ⓓ by summarizing government successes
- Ⓔ by using the opinions of experts

**7.** Read this excerpt from Passage 2.

“But the Federal Government also has a vital role to play. It must be a catalyst for industrial initiative. It must clear away the red tape that lies in the way of expanding our supplies, and it must provide the seed money for research and development.” (paragraph 18)

Why does Nixon use the word “catalyst” in describing the role of the federal government?

- Ⓐ to show that the government needs to initiate change
- Ⓑ to describe how the government has caused the crisis
- Ⓒ to argue that the government must solve the crisis alone
- Ⓓ to highlight how the government will work with the American people



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8. In Passage 1, how does President Nixon develop the idea that the energy crisis “should not result in any serious hardship for any American family”?
- Ⓐ by stating the hours when gas stations will be closed
  - Ⓑ by outlining the plan to increase the supply of heating oil
  - Ⓒ by describing the progress the country has made by reducing speed limits
  - Ⓓ by providing examples that show the everyday effects of station closures
9. In Passage 2, how does President Nixon’s allusion to World War II reflect the purpose of his speech?
- Ⓐ It highlights the historical causes of the crisis.
  - Ⓑ It emphasizes the importance of dealing with the crisis.
  - Ⓒ It reassures people that the crisis is coming to an end.
  - Ⓓ It shows that problems are best solved through strong leadership.

**10.** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What argument does President Nixon make in Passage 1?

- Ⓐ People must make sacrifices to help the government deal with the crisis.
- Ⓑ Following the president's plan will bring an end to the energy crisis.
- Ⓒ Driving on weekends was a factor that caused the energy crisis.
- Ⓓ America will be better prepared for another crisis in the future.

**Part B**

Which sentence from Passage 2 supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "For the past 7 weeks, we have observed 'gasless Sundays' across the country." (paragraph 6)
- Ⓑ "These are just some of the steps we have taken to meet the problem head-on, and you can expect more in the future." (paragraph 14)
- Ⓒ "Nothing which the Federal Government might do could be successful, however, without the full cooperation of the American people." (paragraph 15)
- Ⓓ "Late last year, I announced the beginning of Project Independence, a full-scale effort to provide the capacity to meet American energy needs with American energy resources by 1980." (paragraph 17)

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**11.** Which **two** arguments in Passage 1 are supported by evidence?

- Ⓐ Reducing the temperature in homes and offices will keep people warm through the winter.
- Ⓑ The American people's cooperation will be key to the overall success of the plan.
- Ⓒ President Nixon is taking the necessary steps to move his plans forward.
- Ⓓ Operating cars at certain speeds will save gasoline.
- Ⓔ Closing gas stations will result in less driving.

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**12.** Fill in the bubbles **before two** sentences from Passage 2 that provide evidence that government action lessens the burdens of the crisis for Americans.

11    Ⓐ A fuel allocation program has been set up so that no area of the Nation is being subjected to undue hardship. Ⓑ We have begun the process of converting oil-burning utilities to the use of coal wherever possible, freeing some 200,000 barrels of oil a day for use in other areas.

12    Ⓒ At my request, laws governing energy conservation, such as year-round daylight savings time, have been enacted by the Congress and are now in effect. Ⓓ Teams of Federal inspectors have been sent to investigate fuel prices at gasoline stations and truck stops. Ⓔ Where price gouging is discovered, it is being stopped.

13    Ⓕ Within the Government, where we have a special obligation to set an example, I first directed that energy consumption be cut by at least 7 percent. Ⓖ That goal has now been met, and it has been exceeded. Ⓗ Consumption of energy by the Federal Government has been cut by more than 20 percent under anticipated demands.

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- 13.** Both of these speeches by President Nixon discuss the energy crisis. How do the two passages differ in their message?
- Ⓐ Passage 1 warns that the crisis will get worse, while Passage 2 insists that the crisis will be resolved.
  - Ⓑ Passage 1 focuses on immediate actions, while Passage 2 deals with plans for the future.
  - Ⓒ Passage 1 supports government action, while Passage 2 suggests action by the people.
  - Ⓓ Passage 1 states that the crisis is exaggerated, while Passage 2 takes the crisis seriously.

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**Read the passage and then answer Numbers 14 through 16. There are four underlined words or phrases in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect.**

Food was always important to my family, although no one could ever agree about what good food really meant. To my mother, good food meant fresh ingredients; to my father, good food meant that there was a lot of it; and my grandmother thought good food meant that you had taken the time to do all of the little details yourself. I never argued with my parents about it, but secretly I thought that my grandmother was right, and that's why I always enjoyed helping her make bread.

My grandmother was of French ancestry therefore, her bread reflected that heritage. It was neither the light, fluffy, supermarket sandwich bread, nor the puffed rolls so common at dinner, nor the thin, crusty baguettes that people call French bread. This was *pain de campagne* (French for "country bread"), a giant, round loaf of chewy, crunchy sourdough.

In the evening, my grandmother would make a sticky, shaggy mess out of the most basic mix of ingredients: water, salt, flour, and starter. The starter was a glob taken from a bowl of fermenting dough that my grandmother always had ready. There was nothing glamorous about the work, but the transformation of those simple ingredients seemed like magic.

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Now answer Numbers 14 through 16. Choose the correct word or phrase for each of the following.

**14.** To my mother, good food meant fresh ingredients; to my father, good food meant that there was a lot of it; and my grandmother thought good food meant that you had taken the time to do all of the little details yourself.

- (A) to my grandmother,
- (B) my grandmother always said
- (C) but for my grandmother,
- (D) correct as is

**15.** My grandmother was of French ancestry therefore, her bread reflected that heritage.

- (A) ancestry; therefore
- (B) ancestry therefore
- (C) ancestry; therefore,
- (D) correct as is

### 16. Part A

In the evening, my grandmother would make a sticky, shaggy mess out of the most basic mix of ingredients: water, salt, flour, and starter.

- (A) ingredients
- (B) ingredients;
- (C) ingredients,
- (D) correct as is

### Part B

There was nothing glamorous about the work, but the transformation of those simple ingredients seemed like magic.

- (A) glamorous
- (B) glamerus
- (C) glamerous
- (D) correct as is

**Read this passage and then answer the questions on the following page. Each underlined section is part of a question.**

Adored by the masses, plaid shows no signs of going out of style. Though this signature woven pattern is widely available in stores now, its beginnings were mostly functional. In fact, plaid had several important functions when it was first created in the 1500s. Back then, plaid reigned supreme in Scotland and was actually tartan. Plaid and tartan are very similar, but not the exact same thing; tartan is a wool fabric with intersecting lines. These lines form a plaid pattern. An easy way to remember the difference is this rule of thumb: “all tartans are plaid, but not all plaid is tartan.”

Tartan’s thick texture protected Scots from the cold. In remote Scottish communities, tartans were woven by local craftsmen. Weavers relied on a standard pattern, made the coloring from vegetable dyes, and then they construct the tartans worn in their towns. As tartan spread through Scotland, dressing in regional tartan was a meaningful way of signifying your Celtic clan.

During the Scottish Rebellion of 1745, tartan was associated with rebel uniforms. After the British won, they forbade tartan in order to undermine Scottish pride, it didn’t become legal again until 1782. In the early nineteenth century, the pattern expanded to the United States and became formally known as plaid. American and British manufacturers started mass-producing it in fabrics that were laden with less meaning and weight than tartan was. The rest, as they say, is history.



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**Now answer Numbers 17 through 19.**

**17.** Choose the correct punctuation.

- Ⓐ thumb:
- Ⓑ thumb
- Ⓒ thumb.
- Ⓓ correct as is

**18.** Choose the correct phrase to be used in the sentence.

- Ⓐ and construct the tartans worn in their towns
- Ⓑ and constructed the tartans worn in their towns
- Ⓒ and they would construct the tartans worn in their towns
- Ⓓ correct as is

**19.** Choose the correct punctuation.

- Ⓐ pride: it didn't become legal again until 1782
- Ⓑ pride; it didn't become legal again until 1782
- Ⓒ pride it didn't become legal again until 1782
- Ⓓ correct as is



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