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Reading 7.0: The 30/40 Question-Type Priority Map

Eleven official question types, ranked by how many marks they carry and how cheaply that mark is won — a map for where your sixty minutes actually pay off.

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Reading 7.0: The 30/40 Question-Type Priority Map

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What this book is

The Band 7.0 Blueprint, also free on this site, already explains the core mechanic: Reading is scored out of 40, and roughly 30 correct answers lands you on band 7. It also names the single biggest 6.5-to-7.0 blocker — confusing **False** with **Not Given** — and the reason paraphrase, not vocabulary, is most of what reading in English actually is. This book does not repeat any of that. It picks up exactly where it stops: eleven official question types, ranked by how many marks they typically carry and how cheaply that mark is won once the type's own trap is known.

Every one of the eleven types shares a structural fact, named once here and shown in each type's own section: the test is built around locating and matching a specific detail, not around reading and understanding a whole passage first. This book does not treat all eleven types the same. The four that typically carry the most marks get a full playbook each — what the type asks, its own trap, the technique, a worked example. The other seven get a shorter but complete entry. That uneven treatment is the point: a map ranks, a list does not.

This book is Academic Reading only. General Training Reading shares the same eleven question types and the same 60-minute, 40-question shape, so every technique in this book transfers directly — but

its passages and its raw-to-band table both differ from Academic's, and this book's own "30/40" title is an Academic-specific number. A General Training reader should use their own module's band table, not this one, alongside these techniques.

What this book is not

It is not a self-test. **The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0** already gives the official self-test and stopping rule for Reading — sort your wrong answers by question type, since an aggregate score hides which type is actually costing you marks. This book does not invent a second, competing one. Part 8 sends you there by name once you have read the technique here and want to check whether it has worked.

It does not cover Listening, Writing or Speaking. Each of those gets its own dedicated book on this site. This book is Reading only.

The one promise this book makes

Getting band 7 in Reading is not about reading faster or understanding more of each passage. It is about knowing which of the eleven question types actually carries the marks, exactly how each one is built to be missed, and spending your sixty minutes where that pays off. No technique here is claimed to guarantee a particular answer gets caught — each one is stated as what it does: it reduces a named failure mode. Only an official test result determines your actual band.

One thing to know before you start

The passage, the questions and every worked example in this book were invented for it. None of it is a transcription or a close copy of any real IELTS Reading passage or question — the real test's content is never reproduced, and nothing here should be mistaken for it. Practising with an invented example teaches the technique; only official practice materials tell you where you actually stand.

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Part 1 — The 30/40 rule, revisited — and why this book is a map, not a list



1.1 What 30/40 actually requires

The Band 7.0 Blueprint already covers this: band 7 in Reading needs roughly 30 correct answers out of 40. The exact number moves slightly from test to test. It is a hit rate under time pressure across three passages in sixty minutes. It is not a requirement to fully understand everything you read. Very few candidates finish with time to spare and complete comprehension of all three passages. Band 7 candidates are the ones who spend their limited time on the questions that pay. They are not the ones who read fastest, and not the ones who understand most.

That single idea — spend limited time where it pays — is this book's whole organising principle, taken one level further than the Blueprint takes it.

1.2 Why eleven types need a map, not a list

Listening has six official question types. A book on Listening can give each one roughly equal space and call it complete. Reading has eleven. Treating all eleven the same way — the same length, the same depth, in the order a textbook happens to print them — has two costs. Give each one too little space and none of them is useful. Give each one the same space Listening's six get, and the book runs too long to actually read.

So this book ranks them instead. Four types typically carry the most of the test's 40 marks. A candidate who knows their specific trap wins those marks cheaply. The other seven carry fewer marks each, or the same marks at a higher cost in time. They get a shorter but complete entry: the trap and the technique, without a separate worked example for each one.

This ranking is not an official score table. The exact mix of question types varies from test to test, and IELTS does not publish a fixed mark count per type. It is this book's own priority order, built from the published test format and from which traps actually block candidates at band 6.5. It is meant to change how you spend a practice session: work the four highest-yield types until their trap stops catching you, then work through the rest.

Part 2 — What's changing in 2026 — Reading's own version

The Band 7.0 Blueprint already covers the delivery-mode changes in full: the paper-based test is retiring worldwide from mid-2026, Writing on Paper remains an option in selected markets, and most candidates now sit every skill on computer. This book does not repeat any of that.

Reading's own consequence of the move to computer is smaller than you might expect, and smaller than Listening's. Reading never had a "write now, transfer your answers later" structure the way paper-based Listening did. On paper, the sixty minutes already included writing your answers directly onto the answer sheet as you went. There was no separate transfer block at the end to plan around. On computer, you type your answers directly into the on-screen form as you read. Again, there is nothing left to transfer afterward.

2.1 No transfer time, on paper or on computer

The practical result: computer delivery changes less for Reading than it does for the other three skills. There is no new check-window to plan for, and no old safety net that has disappeared. One habit is still worth carrying from this, and Part 5 argues for it on separate grounds too: type or write each answer correctly the first time. There is no dedicated block of time set aside at the end to go back and fix it.

Part 3 — Before you read a word: the two minutes that decide a passage



3.1 Previewing structure before reading in full

The Band 7.0 Blueprint already recommends spending two or three minutes skimming a passage's structure before reading it in full. Here is exactly what to look at in those minutes. Count the paragraphs. Check whether any carry a heading or a clear topic sentence. Notice where the passage seems to shift from one sub-topic to the next. You are not reading for content yet. You are building a rough map of the passage, so that when a question sends you looking for a detail, you already have an idea which paragraph it lives in.

This preview costs two or three minutes out of twenty per passage. It is not wasted time. A candidate who skips it and starts reading word one, paragraph one, has to build that same map anyway. They just build it one question at a time, under far more time pressure than a single dedicated pass gives you.

3.2 Questions first, or passage first?

There is no single right answer to this. This book states the actual decision rather than pretending one method suits every question type.

For question types that ask you to **locate** a specific detail — matching information, matching headings, matching features — reading the questions before the passage is usually faster. You know what you are looking for before you start searching. A full read-through of the whole passage first is time you were never going to need.

For question types that follow the passage's own order — identifying information (True/False/Not Given and its relatives), summary completion, sentence completion — reading in passage order and answering each question as its answer comes up is usually faster. These types are typically sequenced to match the passage. Working through the passage once, question in hand, avoids a second search.

Part 4 states which of these two approaches fits each type. You will not be left guessing on the day.

Part 4 — The Priority Map: eleven question types, ranked by yield

This part ranks the eleven official Reading question types. The ranking is by how many of the test's 40 marks each type typically carries, and how cheaply that mark is won once the type's own trap is named. It is not alphabetical, and it is not the order a given test happens to print them in. It is a working ranking, not an official score table — the exact question mix moves from test to test, and IELTS does not publish a fixed mark count per type.

The four highest-yield types get a full playbook: what the type asks, its own trap, the technique, and a short worked example. The remaining seven get a compressed entry: the trap and the technique, with no separate example for each one. Read the full playbooks first if you are short on time. Work through the rest afterward.

4.1 Identifying information, and identifying writer's views

What it asks. A statement is given. You decide whether the passage says it is true, whether the writer agrees, or whether the passage never actually addresses it.

The trap. This is the single biggest 6.5-to-7.0 blocker in Reading, and it is almost always the same confusion. **False** and **Not Given** feel like the same thing in ordinary reading. They are not. A statement the passage actually contradicts is False. A statement the passage simply never mentions, one way or the other, is Not Given. Most candidates who miss this type are not misreading the passage. They mark a statement False

when the honest answer was Not Given, because the passage's silence on the point felt like a kind of disagreement.

Technique. Before marking a statement False, find the exact sentence in the passage that contradicts it. If you cannot point to one, the answer is Not Given. This holds no matter how confident the passage's silence makes you feel. Apply it every time. It is a rule, not a case-by-case judgment call.

Worked example. Passage sentence: *"The workshop's early sessions ran for two hours, though organisers later shortened this to ninety minutes after attendee feedback."* Statement: *"The workshop sessions always ran for two hours."* A candidate reading quickly might mark this True, since the passage does mention two-hour sessions. But the passage also states the length changed. The statement's "always" is directly contradicted by "later shortened." The correct answer is False, not True and not Not Given, because a specific contradicting sentence exists.

4.2 Matching headings

What it asks. A list of headings is given, one more than the number of paragraphs. You match each paragraph to the heading that best summarises it.

The trap. Distractor headings are usually built from a true detail that appears inside a paragraph, rather than from the paragraph's actual main idea. A paragraph mostly about the economic effects of a policy might contain one sentence mentioning a public reaction. A distractor heading about "public reaction to the policy" can look tempting to a reader matching on a shared word rather than the paragraph's overall point.

Technique. Before looking at the heading options, state the paragraph's main idea in your own words, in one short phrase. Then find the heading that matches your own phrase. Do not scan the headings first and pick whichever one shares the most words with something you remember reading.

Worked example. A paragraph opens with two sentences on rising urban populations, spends four sentences on a city's public transport investment, and closes with one sentence noting some resident complaints about disruption during construction. A reader matching on "complaints" might reach for a heading like "Residents object to construction delays." But the paragraph's own main idea, stated in one phrase, is "a city expands public transport to meet population growth." The correct heading matches that phrase. The complaints sentence is a supporting detail, not the paragraph's point.

4.3 Summary, note, table and flow-chart completion

What it asks. A summary, a set of notes, a table or a flow-chart repeats some of the passage's information in a different structure. Gaps are left for you to fill in, usually under a word limit such as "no more than two words."

The trap. Two traps combine here. First, the word limit is a hard rule — a technically correct three-word answer where the limit is two words scores zero, not partial credit. Second, the summary's own wording is a paraphrase of the passage, not a copy of it. Scanning for the passage's exact words to match against the summary's wording usually fails.

Technique. Look at the gap's grammar first. Decide what part of speech is missing — a noun, a verb, a number — before searching the passage.

Then search for the paraphrased idea the summary is expressing, not its literal wording. Count the words in your answer before writing it down.

Worked example. Passage: *"The bridge's original wooden structure was replaced in 1954 with a steel frame designed to withstand stronger river currents."* Summary gap: *"The bridge's wooden structure was replaced with a _____ frame in 1954."* The gap's grammar calls for a noun describing a material, one or two words. The passage's wording is "steel frame." The summary already supplies "frame," so the answer is simply "steel," not "a steel frame," which would break the two-word limit this example assumes.

4.4 Multiple choice

What it asks. A question or an incomplete sentence is followed by three or four options. You choose the one — occasionally more than one — that the passage supports.

The trap. At least one wrong option is usually a statement that is true according to the passage, but does not actually answer the specific question being asked. A reader who checks each option only against "is this true in the passage," rather than "does this actually answer the question," is likely to pick a true-but-irrelevant option.

Technique. Reread the exact question stem before choosing. Hold every option against it, not against the passage in general. Eliminate options that are true elsewhere in the passage but do not address the specific question, the same way you eliminate options that are simply false.

Worked example. A passage discusses a company's decision to switch suppliers. It mentions in passing that the new supplier also offers lower

prices, but states the switch's stated reason was delivery reliability.

Question: *"According to the passage, why did the company change suppliers?"* Options include "Lower prices" and "More reliable delivery."

Lower prices is true according to the passage. But the question asks for the stated reason, which the passage names directly as reliability. The true detail about pricing does not answer the question asked.

The remaining seven types

These carry fewer marks each, or the same marks at a higher time cost, than the four above. Each entry below states the trap and the technique only.

4.5 Matching information. A question names a detail — a date, a cause, a comparison — and you identify which paragraph contains it.

Trap: several paragraphs can plausibly touch the same general topic.

Technique: match on a specific fact — a number, a name, a stated cause — rather than a general subject area. The general subject is often shared across more than one paragraph.

4.6 Matching features. Statements are matched to a list of people, theories, dates or categories. Unlike matching sentence endings below, options can be used more than once or not at all. **Trap:** assuming each option is used exactly once, the rule that applies elsewhere in the test.

Technique: track which options you have already used as you go. Stay open to reusing one, or leaving one unused — this type does not follow the one-to-one rule other matching types do.

4.7 Matching sentence endings. A list of sentence beginnings is matched to a list of possible endings, with more endings offered than

beginnings. **Trap:** an ending can be grammatically correct for a beginning and still be the wrong match. The sentence reads smoothly but says something the passage does not support. **Technique:** check the ending's grammar against the beginning first, to narrow the options. Confirm the resulting sentence's content against the passage before finalising.

4.8 Sentence completion. A single sentence about the passage has a gap, under the same kind of word limit as summary completion. **Trap:** the same word-limit rule as 4.3, applied to one sentence rather than a whole summary. It is easy to forget when a sentence-level question feels lower-stakes. **Technique:** predict the required word type from the gap's grammar before reading the passage for content, exactly as in 4.3.

4.9 Short-answer questions. A question is asked directly. You answer it in a small number of words, again under a word limit. **Trap:** the passage's own exact wording is usually the safest answer. A paraphrase of it — even a fully correct one in your own words — can miss the specific word limit or the exact form the answer key expects. **Technique:** lift the answering phrase directly from the passage rather than restating it in your own words. Check the word limit before moving on.

4.10 Diagram label completion. A diagram, map or simple illustration has labels missing, and the passage describes what belongs in each blank. This type is rare in Academic Reading — it appears more often in General Training — but is built the same way as its Listening counterpart. **Trap:** losing your place in the passage's description of a process or a layout loses every label that follows it. The labels are usually described in sequence. **Technique:** track the diagram alongside the passage's description as you read, following the same sequence the

passage uses. Do not jump between the diagram and scattered parts of the text.

A note on order. These six entries are listed here in no particular internal order beyond being lower-yield than 4.1–4.4 as a group. Spend remaining practice time on whichever of the six your own self-test (see Part 8) shows is actually costing you marks, rather than working through them in the order printed here.

Part 5 — Paraphrase: the mechanic that makes every type harder

5.1 Why paraphrase, not vocabulary, is the actual skill

The Band 7.0 Blueprint already makes this point: Reading questions rarely reuse the passage's exact wording. A question about a study's "financial support" might be answered by a sentence in the passage about its "funding." This is not the test trying to trick you. It is testing whether you recognise the same idea stated in different words — most of what reading in a second language actually requires once you are past a certain level.

Every one of the eleven question types in Part 4 assumes this. Summary completion's gap wording is a paraphrase of the passage. Matching headings' correct heading paraphrases the paragraph's main idea. Identifying information's statements paraphrase claims the passage makes directly. A candidate who scans for exact-word matches is fighting the test's own design. It is not a quirk of one question type.

5.2 A repeatable drill

This is a drill you can run with any sentence, from any passage. It does more for this specific skill than reading more passages does on its own.

Take one sentence. Write three different ways of saying the same thing, each changing the wording without changing the meaning. For example:

"The city's population doubled between 1990 and 2010."

- "Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people living in the city grew to twice its earlier size."
- "The city was home to twice as many residents in 2010 as it had been two decades earlier."
- "A twenty-year period starting in 1990 saw the city's population increase by a factor of two."

Notice what stays fixed across all three: the fact of doubling, and the two-decade span. Notice what changes freely: sentence structure, which word carries the main verb, whether the time period is named directly or described. That is exactly the kind of variation a real passage-and-question pair uses. Practising it directly, a few sentences a week, builds the recognition skill this test rewards more directly than reading unfamiliar passages does.

Part 6 — Time across three passages, not just within one



6.1 Which passage first?

The Band 7.0 Blueprint already gives the per-passage plan: roughly twenty minutes per passage, spent as two or three minutes skimming for structure and the rest answering questions in passage order where the two usually match. This part adds the layer above that — which of the three passages to attempt first.

Every passage is worth the same number of marks regardless of how hard it reads. The marks do not care which passage you find easiest. Before committing to the printed order, spend thirty seconds reading the opening lines of all three passages. Attempt whichever one reads most comfortably to you first. This is not necessarily Passage 1 — Reading passages generally increase in difficulty across the test, but not always predictably for every individual reader. Starting with the passage that feels most manageable builds a working rhythm and banks marks early.

It does not spend your freshest concentration on whichever passage happens to print first.

This is the same "spend limited time where it pays" idea Part 4's ranking applies to question types. Here it is applied one level up, to whole passages.

6.2 Skip and return, not stuck and stalled

A single question that will not resolve after roughly a minute of genuine effort is not worth a second minute of the same effort. Mark your best guess. Note the question number so you can return to it. Move on to the next question.

This matches the stopping-rule philosophy **The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0** applies to a whole study plan — no wasted effort, not less effort. Here it applies to a single passage under time pressure. A guess you write down now, even an uncertain one, has a chance of being correct. A blank left because you spent your remaining time stuck on one question has none. It very often costs you the next question too, since the minute spent stuck is a minute not spent reading ahead.

If time remains at the end of a passage, return to the questions you flagged. If it does not, the guess you already wrote down stands. That is exactly why writing one down the first time, rather than leaving the answer blank while you think, matters.

Part 7 — One passage, start to finish

Everything in this part — the passage, the questions and the answer key — was written for this book. None of it is a real IELTS passage or question, and none of it should be treated as an official practice test. It exists to show the techniques from Parts 3 and 4 applied together, start to finish.

7.1 Preview

Before reading the passage below, here is what a candidate applying Part 3's preview technique would notice in thirty seconds: five paragraphs, each opening with a topic sentence about a different stage of the same story — an observation, a hypothesis, a first response, a complication, and a wider lesson. The question set below mixes an identifying-information task (Part 4.1), a matching-headings task (Part 4.2), and a short-answer task (Part 4.9) — so before reading, a candidate would read the matching-headings options first, since that task benefits from knowing what to look for, and plan to answer the identifying-information and short-answer questions in passage order as they read.

7.2 The passage and questions

Urban Beekeeping and the Return of the Rooftop Hive

For most of the twentieth century, beekeeping was assumed to be a rural activity, incompatible with the noise, pollution and limited green space of a city centre. That assumption began to shift in the early 2010s, when a small number of hotel and office-building managers in several northern European cities started placing hives on flat rooftops, initially as a

marketing gesture rather than a serious ecological measure. What surprised the building managers who tried it was not that the bees survived, but that colonies on urban rooftops frequently outproduced comparable colonies in the surrounding countryside, sometimes by a considerable margin.

Researchers who later studied this pattern proposed several explanations, and it took some years to establish which mattered most. One early hypothesis was that cities were simply warmer than surrounding rural areas, extending the foraging season by several weeks at each end. This turned out to be a real but relatively minor factor. The larger effect, established through comparative studies of hive productivity, was diversity of forage: an urban environment, with its parks, private gardens, roadside verges and even balcony planters, offers bees a wider range of flowering plants across more of the year than a rural landscape dominated by a single crop in bloom for a few weeks at a time. A single wheat field, however large, is a poor foraging environment for a colony once that crop has finished flowering; a city block, by contrast, tends to have something in bloom nearly year-round.

The initial response from building owners was enthusiastic, and the number of rooftop hives in several major cities grew rapidly through the mid-2010s. This enthusiasm produced its own problem within a few years: a small number of high-density districts ended up with far more hives than the local forage could actually support, and colonies in those districts began to show signs of nutritional stress despite the generally favourable urban environment described above. The issue, researchers noted, was not that cities were unsuitable for bees in general, but that beekeeping associations in several cities had not coordinated hive placement, so hives clustered wherever a willing rooftop happened to be

available rather than where forage was actually sufficient to support them.

In response, several city governments began working with local beekeeping associations to introduce voluntary hive-density guidelines, recommending a maximum number of colonies per square kilometre based on an estimate of the area's flowering capacity. Early results from cities that adopted these guidelines suggested colony health improved within two seasons, though researchers cautioned that the guidelines were new enough that longer-term data was still needed before drawing firm conclusions.

The wider lesson researchers drew from the episode was not specific to bees. A resource that appears abundant at a city-wide scale — in this case, flowering plants across an entire urban area — can still be locally scarce at the scale that actually matters to the organisms using it, and enthusiasm for a genuinely beneficial practice can undermine its own benefit if it is not paired with some means of coordinating how that practice is distributed across a city.

Questions

Questions 1–3: Do the following statements agree with the information in the passage? Write TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN.

1. Urban rooftop hives were originally introduced mainly to help the environment.
2. Warmer city temperatures were the single largest reason urban hives outproduced rural ones.
3. Some cities introduced rules limiting how many hives could be kept in a given area.

Questions 4–5: Choose the correct heading for paragraphs 3 and 4 from the list below.

List of headings i. A surprising early discovery ii. A problem caused by success iii. A response that shows early promise iv. A comparison between two theories v. A shift in public opinion

4. Paragraph 3

5. Paragraph 4

Question 6: Answer using no more than three words from the passage.

6. According to the passage, what did some beekeeping associations fail to do, according to researchers?

7.3 Answers and why the wrong options were designed to be chosen

1. False. The passage states rooftop hives began "initially as a marketing gesture rather than a serious ecological measure" — the opposite of the statement, so this is a direct contradiction, not an absence of information. A candidate scanning only for "environment" and "hives" without reading the full sentence might mark this Not Given, missing the explicit contrast the passage draws.

2. False. The passage names the warmer-temperature idea as "a real but relatively minor factor" and states the forage-diversity explanation was "the larger effect." A candidate who stops reading after finding the temperature explanation, without continuing to the sentence that ranks the two explanations against each other, would wrongly mark this True.

3. True. The passage states city governments "began working with local beekeeping associations to introduce voluntary hive-density guidelines." This is a direct match, though a paraphrased one — the question's "rules limiting how many hives" corresponds to the passage's "hive-density guidelines," which is exactly the kind of paraphrase Part 5 practises.

4. ii — A problem caused by success. Paragraph 3 opens with enthusiasm and hive numbers growing, then turns to nutritional stress caused by too many hives clustering in one area. A reader matching on "enthusiastic" alone might reach for heading v ("a shift in public opinion") — but the paragraph's main idea, stated in one phrase, is that the earlier success created its own problem, which heading ii names directly and heading v does not.

5. iii — A response that shows early promise. Paragraph 4 describes the density guidelines and notes early results were positive but that longer-term data was still needed. Heading i ("a surprising early discovery") is a plausible-looking distractor because the paragraph does mention an early result, but that phrase belongs to paragraph 2's discovery about forage diversity, not to this paragraph's response measure.

6. Coordinate hive placement (or "coordinate where hives were placed"). The passage states the issue was that associations "had not coordinated hive placement." A candidate answering in their own paraphrase — such as "manage hive numbers properly" — would likely exceed the three-word limit or miss the exact phrase the answer key expects, which is why Part 4.9's technique recommends lifting the passage's own wording directly rather than restating it.

Part 8 — Checking your own progress

8.1 This book is technique, not a test

This book teaches technique. It is not a self-test, and one original practice passage is not enough to tell you where you actually stand.

The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0 already gives the official self-test for Reading: sort your wrong answers on an official practice test by question type, rather than trusting a single aggregate score. An aggregate score can sit at band 6.5 for two very different reasons — a reader missing a few marks spread evenly across every type, or a reader missing most of their marks in one specific type while handling the rest comfortably. Only sorting by type tells you which one is true for you, and only that tells you which parts of this book to return to.

If you have not taken an official practice test recently, that is the next step — not another invented passage from this book, but a real one, under real timing, so the result actually means something.

The end

You started this book with eleven question types treated as equally important, or not treated as distinct at all. You finish it with a ranked map: four types where the trap and the technique are worth knowing cold, seven more where a shorter but complete entry covers what you need, and a habit of previewing a passage's structure before committing to reading it start to finish.

That is the whole of it: locate before you comprehend, match the paraphrase rather than the exact words, spend your time where the marks actually are, and never leave a blank you could have filled with a guess. None of it requires reading every passage twice or understanding every sentence of Passage 3. It requires not losing marks you were never actually going to lose to comprehension.

About the passage and questions. The passage, questions and worked answers in Part 7 were written for this book. None of it is official IELTS content, and practising with it is not the same as sitting the real test. Use official practice materials for your actual self-assessment — see **The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0.**

About the 2026 changes. The delivery-mode details in Part 2 were checked against ielts.org shortly before publication. Delivery details are exactly the kind of thing that gets adjusted over time. Confirm current rules with ielts.org and with your own test centre before you rely on them.

Good luck with the test, and with whatever it is a step toward.

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