

The Link

Issue 5 2016



Memory Magic

How can we support a pupil's poor memory?

Developing Discussion

The importance of promoting and developing discussion skills

Rhyme Time!

The importance of rhyme for speech, language and early literacy development

NEW

Speech & Language Resources Catalogue

Pages 7-10

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"[The trainers] were very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and approachable."

"Lots of useful strategies and information to take back to school."

Editor's Letter

Welcome to all teachers and TAs.

This issue introduces our new Big Leap speech and language printed resources. As a software company, our school assessment and intervention packages are web-based but we know that printed materials are also integral to everyday teaching. Have a look through the catalogue in the centre of the magazine or go online to our shop at www.speechlink.info. We think that they will be a valuable and engaging addition to your toolbox.

Elsewhere in this issue, we are talking about memory, rhyme and discussion. **Memory Magic** considers the impact of a working memory difficulty and what we can do to help. **Rhyme Time!** considers the importance of rhyme for speech, language and early literacy development. Our third subject, **Developing Discussion**, looks at the importance of promoting and developing discussion skills

as part of the Spoken Language Curriculum. Our regular **SLCN Glossary** explains the difference between speech disorder and speech delay. And we have a fascinating article by Diane Backhouse, about how she runs language groups in her school – with some top tips for us all.

As always, there is a wealth of practical advice and free resources to help you in your day to day support of pupils with speech and language difficulties.

Having experimented with an online format for the previous issue, we are reverting to a full printed version for this issue. Feedback from all our readers shows us that you like to have a magazine to hold and leave in the school staffroom for your colleagues to read. Read this magazine and previous issues at www.speechlink.info/thelink/.

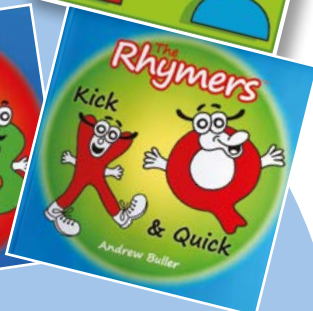
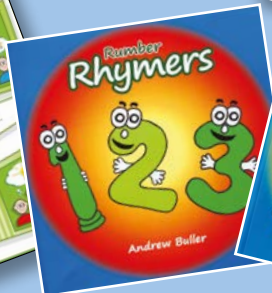


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FREE Resource

FREE Resource

Memory Magic

Derry Patterson, SaLT, considers the impact of a working memory difficulty and what we can do in the classroom to help.

I was recently lucky enough to attend a mind mapping seminar presented by the originator himself, Professor Tony Buzan. It served as a great reminder of how memory does not just 'happen by magic'; we need to be active participants in the process.

As adults we have a fully developed memory system which stores different types of information and experiences in different ways. We use our long term memory to remember facts, experiences and autobiographical information and to build up knowledge of how the world works. We use our short term working memory to temporarily hold and manipulate information.

Recent research is beginning to show just how important our working memory is for learning. In the classroom we are expecting children to process and think about

a range of information during every lesson and task they perform. They will need to use their working memories to do this. The 'fly in the ointment' is that working memory has a capacity. When a pupil reaches that capacity they start to lose bits of information or the capacity is used up on one part of the task not leaving room for them to process other information that they need.

For example, when following an instruction, the pupil who has reached their working memory capacity may only complete the first or the last part of the instruction. When completing a science experiment, the demands of following the procedure may take up all the working memory leaving no space for thinking about the science or making inferences or deductions.

Impact

A poor working memory can affect all aspects of a child's learning. Most common everyday classroom tasks such as mental maths, reading, writing and following instructions place a heavy burden on working memory (Gathercols and Alloway, 2007).

Warning signs:

- Forgets words or parts of a sequence
- Struggles to follow instructions
- Misses out words when reading or writing
- Easily distracted
- Gives up easily

How to Help

We need to consider the working memory demands of tasks and try to reduce this where possible for these pupils by:

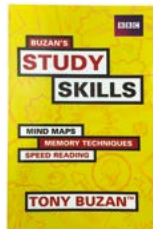
References

Buzan, T (2011) Buzan's study skills. *Pearson Education Ltd.*
Gathercols, S.E. & Alloway, T.P. (2007) *Understanding Working Memory: A Classroom Guide. Harcourt Assessment: London.*

- reducing the amount of information
- simplifying the language used
- repeating key information frequently
- breaking multi step tasks into single steps
- using memory strategies

Children with speech and language difficulties frequently have poor working memories. To support them we need to utilize a range of strategies to help with storage and recall. We are all familiar with a few 'memory tricks' such as repeating numbers or names over and over, and using mnemonics to help learn difficult spellings or lists of words. However, the real 'magic' is choosing the right strategy or combination of strategies for the task. If we can get this right for our children then we really can perform memory magic.

Buzan's Study Skills: Mind Maps; Memory Techniques; Speed Reading.



Buzan, T. and Harrison, James (2011), Pearson Education Ltd

Having long been a fan of mind mapping, I was keen to read this book by Tony Buzan™. The book explains BOST® (Buzan Organic Study Technique). It's a concise, easy read, beginning with the theory behind the programme. Buzan discusses how some established techniques can hinder our learning and details how we can develop our reading and note taking skills to maximise the amount of information we are able to process and remember. I particularly enjoyed the activities that are built in to each section and was thrilled at how well I was able to perform. (The answers are given at the back but I didn't even need to cheat!)

I knew a bit about mind maps before I read the book but now appreciate the importance of imagery, line shape and colour to maximise memory. I think Mind Maps would be a valuable read for educationalists, giving them information that they need to facilitate good study techniques in students of all ages.

Strategy Name	Description	Useful for
Visualisation	Form a picture in your head. Use vivid imagery and humour to make it more memorable.	Remembering lists, e.g. Ingredients Mental Maths Spellings
Stories	Make up a story incorporating the information to be remembered. Include imagery and details and where possible make the story a journey around a familiar space, e.g. home or school.	Facts, e.g. The order of the planets People's names Topic vocabulary Steps in an instruction
Chunking	Break information into smaller pieces, e.g. spellings into syllables.	Spellings Number Strings, e.g. Passwords Telephone numbers
Grouping	Group similar information together. This helps extend the capacity of the working memory as you use the group heading to remember the items within the group.	Facts Lists, e.g. shopping lists
Mind Mapping®	This is Tony Buzan's unique approach for organising and remembering information.	Facts about topics

Try this combination of visualisation and chunking for teaching spellings:



Step 1: Ask the child to think of a place to 'see' the word, e.g. bedroom wall, bathroom mirror, desk.

Step 2: Ask the child to think of what the word will be written in, e.g. spray paint, lipstick, blood!

Step 3: Write the word out for the child breaking it down into chunks (syllables), e.g. hel i cop ter.

Step 4: Cover the word and reveal the first syllable. Ask the child to draw a picture of that part of the word in their head in their chosen place with their chosen writing material.

Step 5: Ask the child to 'read' the letters in their head.

Step 6: Continue repeating steps 4 and 5 until they have 'written' the whole word in their head and 'read' it back.

Quick memory check

Working memory capacity increases with age. A child of 4 years will have roughly half the working memory capacity of a 15 year old. To check a child's working memory capacity use a digit span test. Ask the child to repeat a series of numbers back to you in the order you say them and then backwards. The number that they can repeat back easily is their working memory capacity.

2, 7, 8, 5 ----- 5, 8, 7, 2 ✓ working memory capacity 4

SLCN Glossary

by Heather Stevens, SaLT

Speech Delay versus Speech Disorder

It's not difficult to appreciate that a child's speech skills take a while to develop and that it can be difficult to understand the speech of little ones when they first start to talk. What is more difficult to get to grips with is the fact that speech sounds develop in a particular order and that certain substitutions are "normal". Some two year olds may be very talkative but there will be sounds that they are not yet able to use and that we would not expect them to use. If they make the "normal" substitutions we, as listeners, know what they are trying to say.

There are a number of normal developmental processes that affect the speech sounds of young children. The most common are:

Fronting: Where a sound made at the back of the mouth is replaced by a sound made at the front. For example: instead of "cup" you might hear a child say "tup" and instead of "book" you might hear "boot".

Final consonant deletion: Where the last sound in a word is left off. For

example, for "bus" you might hear "bu_".

Stopping: Where a child uses a short sound (also known as a plosive or a stop) instead of a long sound (also known as a fricative). For example, using /t/ instead of the long sound /s/. So you might hear "tock" instead of "sock".

If these normal processes persist for longer than expected a child can be described as having delayed speech. In other words, they are following the normal developmental pattern but at a slightly slower rate.

A child who is making errors that do not fit into this normal developmental pattern or is substituting sounds that we would not expect to hear is described as having disordered speech. This may be the result of a physical or mechanical problem such as a hearing loss or cleft palate. It may be the result of a difficulty with motor coordination. Some children have specific difficulty processing and discriminating between speech sounds. Vowel sound difficulties are

not part of the normal developmental pattern of speech and are usually associated with a speech disorder.

Children who have disordered speech should always be discussed with a speech and language therapist (SaLT).

Speech Link is an assessment and intervention package that helps schools decide if a pupil has a speech delay or a speech disorder. The Speech Link evaluation takes into account the age of a child and uses developmental norms to establish whether or not a child is making the appropriate sounds for their age. When a delay is identified by the Speech Link screen, the package will provide speech sound programmes and resources for the school to use to develop the pupil's speech.

The Speech Link evaluation will also identify when a child is using unusual or unexpected substitutions and recommend discussion with SaLT.

To find out more about how Speech Link can help your school visit www.speechlink.info/speech-link.php

Order of Development of Speech Sounds

Age	Established sounds	Emerging sounds
2 – 2 ½ years	p, b, t, d, m, n	k, g, y, ng, w, h
2 ½ - 3 years	k, g, y, ng, w, h	f, s, l
3 - 3½ years	f, s, l	z, v
3½ - 4 years	z, v, ch	Some blends, j/dge,
4 – 5 years	j/dge, blends	r, th, sh
5 – 7 years	Complex blends	Sh, r, th

Speech Link evaluation



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- SaLTs



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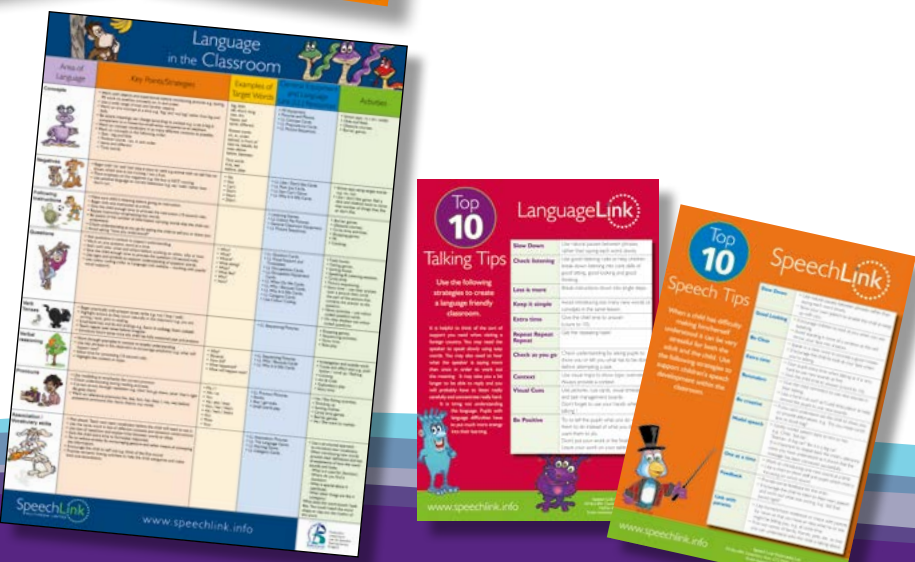
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POCKET PACK – Associate £12.50 + VAT

Two fun games to develop matching and linking, important skills for developing a wide vocabulary. In 'Find a Partner' children must use association and memory skills to find pictures that go together. 'Turn Over' is a fast game of quick fire associations.

POCKET PACK – Categories £12.50 + VAT

Three games in one for sorting and linking.

These category cards provide a range of colourful and amusing pictures for children to sort into different groups. The cards can all be grouped and sub-grouped in different ways, encouraging children to see the links between them. These cards can be used to broaden vocabulary, improve description skills and enhance word finding abilities.



POCKET PACK – Describe £12.50 + VAT

A fun pack for developing description and compare and contrast skills. Children answer the questions on each card to improve their knowledge of the target words. The questions cover the key information needed to describe the object in terms of function, location, attributes, category and the first sound.

POCKET PACK – Rhyme Time £12.50 + VAT

The ability to detect and produce rhyming words are seen as key phonological processing skills. This fun pack includes two different games in one. In 'Rhyming Pairs' children must try to find a rhyming partner and in 'Rhyme Time' children must think of other words that rhyme with a given card.



POCKET PACK – Syllables £12.50 + VAT

Syllable segmentation is a vital skill both for speech and literacy development. Children must be able to break longer words down in order to understand meaning and to help find words in their vocabulary. This fun pack includes three games to break words down into syllables and develop an awareness of syllable boundaries.



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Product Description		Unit Price	Unit Price incl VAT	Quantity	Total
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3	Pocket Pack - Associate	£12.50	£15.00		
4	Pocket Pack - Categories	£12.50	£15.00		
5	Pocket Pack - Describe	£12.50	£15.00		
6	Pocket Pack - Rhyme Time	£12.50	£15.00		
7	Pocket Pack - Syllables	£12.50	£15.00		
8	Poster Set	£12.50	£15.00		
	FREE Poster Set when you order all products	FREE			
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Company Registration Number: 5304452 VAT number: 875 8101 05				TOTAL	

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Working with Language Groups

Diane Backhouse, speech and language teacher, describes her experience of using Language Link in her school.



As a school we have been using the Infant Language Link and Speech Link packages for the last seven years and last September we added Junior Language Link. I assess the children in September and then organise groups which change each half term after prioritisation by myself and the SENCo. In Reception I find the Language Link assessment extremely useful for highlighting children needing extra support through group work and also to discuss pupils with the local SaLT service.

Fun Factor

I use the Language Link groups and all children have thoroughly enjoyed the activities, appearing more relaxed and more confident to express themselves. They take the form of fun games, quite different to their classroom work and evaluations show that the majority of the children make good progress with their language skills.

I am often greeted with "When's it my turn to come and work with you?" from both children that have been in earlier groups and those that have only undergone the assessment and don't need further input. The children have obviously enjoyed the activities and most have managed to enhance their language skills above the magic 80% accuracy needed!

Range of Resources

Each Language Link package comes with a wide range of resources for the classroom as well as for small group and individual work and I have found using some of the resources from the groups useful for classroom consolidation work. For example, I have used the positional language cards during sand, water and playdough activities.

I have found that what works best is to use the resources consistently across all the year groups. The good listening cards and tokens

are a good example of this. Each classroom, from Nursery to Year 2, displays the 'Good Listening' cards as visual cues enhancing attention and listening skills. All teaching staff carry smaller copies on key fobs to use with individuals or small groups. In Year 2 a TA made a chart (similar to a bingo board) with the 'Good Listening' cards and tokens to use with an individual child struggling with attention and listening in the classroom. When he showed good skills he could stick the corresponding token on the chart. This proved to have a positive effect on his behaviour.

We also use the Language Link visual timetables throughout school which helps all children and especially those with ASD to focus and feel secure. Our teachers use many of the classroom strategies advocated in Language Link to enable children to access more of the curriculum.

Read Diane's full article online at www.speechlink.info/thelink/



In a classroom the other day listening to a phonics session, it struck me how really important rhyming can be. How a child learns that one spelling has the same sound as another spelling is based on rhyme. If children can understand that, it becomes the hook on which they can hang the seemingly random spellings they encounter in English.

By making children aware that words share segments of sounds (e.g. the -ay segment in the words hay, day, lay, say) through rhyming, this in turn can help them to understand that such words often have the same spellings (Goswami, 1988). Similarly, these rhymes can also help children learn that words like hay and sleigh rhyme, but have different spellings.

Learning to read and enjoying the act of reading in the early days with children isn't always easy! We have to do everything we can to capture young children's imagination and interest in the idea of books and

the idea of reading stories. There are many ways we can do this, and one important way is with the use of rhyming. Children usually love rhyme, rhythm and repetition! They tend to learn rhymes more quickly than other things. You only have to think of how a very young child can be prompted to complete the missing rhyming word with nursery rhymes such as - "humpty dumpty sat on the wall-humpty dumpty had a great?"

So it's no surprise really that rhyming plays such an important part with children and literacy development. Research is mixed on the real value of rhyming in terms of its effect on literacy and spelling, as it has discovered a clearer impact from children's ability to use segmentation of words into syllables. However, there is also plenty of clear evidence to show that developing rhyming skills does help with literacy development. This is especially so in children's second year of

reading, where its impact is visible on spelling skills. Experts in literacy and child development in Wales have discovered that, if a child knows eight nursery rhymes by heart by the time they are four years old, they are usually among the best readers and spellers in their class by the time they are in Year 3.

There are so many good reasons to use rhymes in your everyday teaching. Children can gain practice in pitch and volume as well as in language rhythm. Rhymes often introduce children to new vocabulary, thereby expanding their own knowledge of words in a natural and fun way.

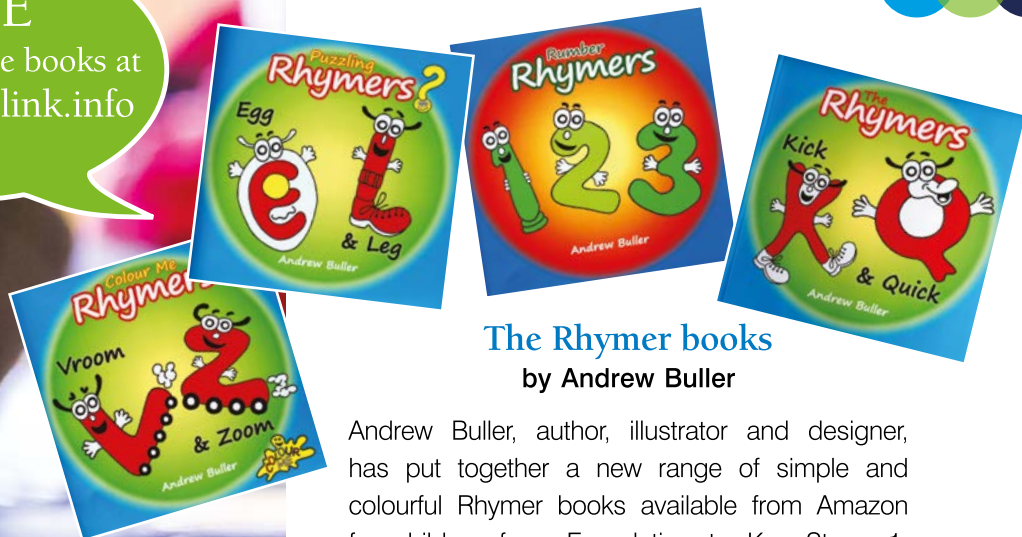
Most of all, making use of rhyming in your teaching can be fun and will help develop in children a love of language, books, singing and rhyme. This will go on to form a solid foundation for their literacy and language development.

References:

- Muter, V., Hulme, C., Snowling, M. & Taylor, S. (1997) Phonemes, Rimes, Vocabulary, and Grammatical Skills as Foundations of Early Reading Development: Evidence from a Longitudinal Study. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol 40(5), Sep 2004, 665-681.
- Goswami, U (1988) 'Children's use of analogy in learning to spell'. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 6, 21-34.

FREE

Rhymers puzzle books at
www.speechlink.info



The Rhymers books by Andrew Buller

Andrew Buller, author, illustrator and designer, has put together a new range of simple and colourful Rhymers books available from Amazon for children from Foundation to Key Stage 1. There are 8 different types of book ranging from colouring games, short stories and puzzles, all based around some lovely alphabet characters. The characters all have their own names and personalities with each book focussing on a rhyming pair. The stories all encourage the development of rhyme, with each of the rhyming pairs having its own full-colour story book, a colouring and story book combined. Some have a companion puzzle book too. Andrew uses some nice alliteration and varied vocabulary within the story lines which will appeal to many children of varying ages.

More details about all The Rhymers' books can be found at www.meettherhymers.com.

Rhyme Time!

Ruth Merritt, SaLT, considers the importance of rhyme for speech, language and early literacy development.



NEW!
 Speech Link
 Pocket Pack

Speech Link Pocket Packs are available to buy at www.speechlink.info

These are pocket sized packs of beautifully designed and colourful pictures which can be played in a number of ways. With the Rhyme Time pack, children are encouraged to detect and produce rhyming words – both these aspects are seen as key phonological processing skills. With Rhyming Pairs, children must find a rhyming partner to the word they pick and with Rhyme Time, children are encouraged to think of others words that rhyme with their word.

The Syllables pack looks at another vital aspect of both speech and literacy, and children can play three different games helping them break down words into syllables and develop their awareness of syllable boundaries.

Developing Discussion

Jo Chessum, SENCo, takes a closer look at the importance of promoting and developing discussion skills as part of the Spoken Language Curriculum.

Think about the number of opportunities for discussion that you have given your class this week. I would guess that there have been a number of times when you have asked children to 'talk with a partner' with the aim of developing their thinking and extending their answers to questions. Now think about the feedback you have given. I could almost guarantee that your focus will have been on the answers that children have given, not on how well they have used their discussion skills.

We know that feedback has been highlighted as one of the cheapest yet most effective ways of promoting progress and that children knowing the 'next steps' for learning is high on the agenda. We also know that developing children's discussion skills, through collaborative activities, can lead to improved outcomes across the curriculum and promote deeper learning. But do we teach children the skills they need for effective discussion?

Providing opportunities for discussion is not enough to improve children's spoken language. Evidence suggests that collaborative learning is most effective when both individual and group goals are present (Slavin,

2010). As such, discussion tasks need to be structured and learning outcomes differentiated, exactly like any other learning activity. Children need to know that the purpose of any discussion is to reach a decision or agreement by ...

- Making suggestions and sharing ideas.
- Asking questions to understand others' ideas.
- Asking questions to find out more about others' ideas.
- Sharing opinions about others' ideas.
- Building on the ideas of others.
- Helping the group to reach a decision or agreement.



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Discussion Skills Poster
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Why not have a go at using these guidelines to develop planning and provide effective feedback for extended discussion tasks?

Next Steps ...

STEP 1

Teach the Skills of Discussion

Introduce children to the key skills and language involved in effective discussion ... they need to know what they are aiming for. Provide sentence starters or word banks to support and encourage each skill.

STEP 2

Provide Visual Support

Display effective discussion skills in your classroom to provide reinforcement. Even when you are not focusing on developing discussion skills, children will begin to refer to them when they are working in Talk Partners or when they realise anything they are doing is discussion based.

STEP 6

Provide Practical Prompts

Use our free 'Discussion Tokens' to provide children with a tangible record of which skills they need to develop in order to improve their performance. As they use a skill, they place the relevant token in the centre of the table - the task is only complete when all tokens have been 'spent' and the group have reached a decision.

STEP 5

Set Individual Targets

Children who make limited contributions in discussions may need to focus on making suggestions and sharing ideas; others may make lots of relevant contributions but need to ask questions for clarity or more information. Personalise targets so that the successful completion of tasks relies on individual performance as well as the group reaching a decision.

STEP 3

Model the Skills of Discussion

Set up situations for children to observe effective discussion – remember you provide the best model of language for your class! Pause during your discussion and ask children to identify the skill that you are using.

STEP 4

Identify Areas for Development

Children need to understand how they are performing in discussion tasks before they know what to do to improve. Providing a ball of string to be passed between children and looped around their finger can help them to see if they are dominating a discussion or not contributing enough.

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