



Investigating The Influence of Paragraph Shrinking Strategy Towards Students' Reading Comprehension at Senior High School

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the effect of the paragraph-shrinking strategy on reading comprehension at senior high school. The quantitative method with a pre-experimental design was used, involving pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' progress. This study revealed that implementing the Paragraph Shrinking strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension. Statistical analysis using paired sample t-test showed a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, indicating a statistically significant effect of the intervention. The results confirmed that the null hypothesis (H_0), assuming no significant effect of the intervention, was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a), indicating a significant effect, was accepted. The strategy encouraged students to identify main ideas and summarize paragraphs, which improved their comprehension and retention of reading materials. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the paragraph-shrinking strategy is efficacious in improving reading comprehension, especially in the context of narrative texts within the Merdeka Curriculum framework.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki pengaruh strategi Paragraph Shrinking terhadap keterampilan pemahaman bacaan siswa di level SMA. Metode kuantitatif dengan desain pra-eksperimental digunakan, yang melibatkan tes awal dan tes akhir untuk mengukur kemajuan siswa. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan penerapan strategi Paragraph Shrinking secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan siswa. Analisis statistik dengan menggunakan uji-t sampel berpasangan menunjukkan nilai-p sebesar 0,000 < 0,05, yang menunjukkan pengaruh intervensi yang signifikan secara statistik. Hasil tersebut menegaskan, hipotesis nol (H_0) yang mengasumsikan tidak ada pengaruh signifikan dari intervensi ditolak, sedangkan hipotesis alternatif (H_a) yang menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan diterima. Strategi tersebut mendorong siswa untuk mengidentifikasi gagasan utama dan meringkas paragraf, yang meningkatkan pemahaman dan retensi mereka terhadap materi bacaan. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa strategi Paragraph Shrinking merupakan strategi yang efektif untuk meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan, khususnya dalam konteks teks naratif dalam kerangka Kurikulum Merdeka.

A. Introduction

Reading comprehension is an important skill that contributes significantly to students' academic development. As a cognitive process, reading comprehension involves interpreting written language (Manoharan & Ramachandran, 2023). Reading is a significant cognitive skill students must improve during learning (Jakobson et al., 2022). According to Karen R. Harris and Steve Graham, reading comprehension is an interactive process in which readers and texts engage in a dialogue (Graham, 2007). In addition, Reading comprehension involves understanding the meaning of words in sentences and how these sentences connect to form a coherent understanding of the text, ultimately allowing the reader to acquire new information (Knoop-van Campen et al., 2022). Students' ability to learn English and comprehend information depends on their reading comprehension.

In addition, Reading comprehension is a core skill that forms the fundamental basis for successful learning across various subjects, especially at the Senior High School (SMA) level, a crucial transitional period for students' intellectual and academic development (Syamsir et al., 2021). Practical reading ability not only functions as a means to deeply understand the content of texts but also plays an important role in sharpening critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to systematically conclude information, which is highly needed in academic contexts as well as everyday life (Burns et al., 2024). In other words, reading is not merely the process of decoding words but a complex cognitive process that involves comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation of information (Silalahi, 2020).

In the educational realm, students with good reading skills tend to have higher academic achievements and can better face various learning challenges with greater confidence (Adi, 2020). However, reality shows that most Senior High School students struggle to effectively understand reading texts, especially when confronted with complex and academic texts (Ramadhianti & Somba, 2023). These difficulties directly impact decreased motivation to learn, cause frustration, and widen the gap in learning achievements among students. This indicates that reading skills limited to word recognition are insufficient; they must be accompanied by implementing reading strategies that can optimize students' comprehension and analytical abilities toward texts (Sun et al., 2021).

A national literacy survey published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) stated that the reading ability of Indonesian Senior High School students is still classified as low when compared to international standards measured through various instruments, including the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). In PISA 2022, Indonesia ranked 71st out of 81 participating countries in reading skills, with an average score of only 359 points, far below the OECD countries' average score of 476 (OECD, 2023). This data shows a significant gap in the literacy abilities of Indonesian students compared to developed countries (Wulandari & Haryadi, 2020). Many students have difficulty identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions, and connecting ideas within relatively complex reading texts (Wildan et al., 2022). This condition presents a serious challenge that must be addressed immediately, as literacy is a primary prerequisite for general learning success and a key factor in improving

the quality of human resources (HR) capable of competing in the globalization era (UNESCO, 2021). The factors causing low reading ability vary, including the lack of proper and structured implementation of reading strategies by students, suboptimal teacher training in the use of effective and innovative reading teaching methods, and the use of conventional teaching methods that inadequately involve critical thinking, reflective activities, and active student participation in the learning process (Novianti et al., 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to develop and implement reading learning strategies that suit the characteristics and needs of Indonesian students to significantly improve their literacy competence (Lesmana & Wahyuningsih, 2025).

Reading comprehension remains a fundamental language acquisition component, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, preliminary observations often reveal persistent difficulties that hinder students' ability to derive meaning from texts. A preliminary investigation conducted through interviews with an English teacher in the tenth grade in one of the senior high schools in Bandar Lampung showed that students faced several challenges in comprehending reading texts. The findings indicate that many students struggle with identifying main ideas, particularly when the text contains implicit or inferential information. This suggests that students may lack the necessary inferencing skills or strategies to comprehend content that is not explicitly stated.

Moreover, the issue is compounded by students' limited vocabulary mastery. As EFL learners, many students encounter considerable difficulty engaging with texts containing unfamiliar or complex vocabulary. This lexical deficiency obstructs their ability to decode meaning, infer significance, and ultimately grasp the overall message of the passage. Students often find distinguishing essential information from supporting details challenging when confronted with linguistically demanding texts, affecting their overall comprehension performance. These initial findings underscore the importance of addressing strategic reading skills and vocabulary enrichment in the EFL classroom to effectively support learners' reading development.

Reading strategies are fundamental in improving students' understanding of various types of reading texts. Several reading strategies that have been widely studied and implemented in language and literacy learning contexts include skimming, scanning, the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), and summarizing technique (Banditvilai, 2020). However, there is a significant gap between the theories developed and their real application (Dewi, 2020). The effectiveness of these strategies is still suboptimal due to a lack of adaptation to the unique characteristics of Indonesian students, differing learning contexts, and insufficient teacher understanding in selecting and applying the most appropriate strategies according to student needs and the learning environment. As a result, reading instruction has not yielded optimal results in enhancing students' ability to comprehend texts comprehensively and critically (Asani, 2022).

In this context, one reading strategy that has begun to attract special attention is the paragraph-shrinking strategy. This technique instructed the students to actively summarize the main idea of each paragraph into a short, concise, and clear sentence (Graham, 2007).

This process requires students to read carefully, understand the paragraph content, identify the main idea, and rewrite it briefly, enhancing their focus and overall comprehension of the text (Aziz et al., 2022). Paragraph shrinking differs from the general summarizing technique, which usually summarizes the entire text. Paragraph shrinking offers a more structured and systematic method by emphasizing the condensation and highlighting of each paragraph individually (Lesmana & Wahyuningsih, 2025). This approach enables students to develop analytical skills gradually and continuously, which is very beneficial in understanding complex and information-dense readings and helps them map the logical structure of the text (Preast, 2020).

The paragraph-shrinking strategy is an effective method for helping students improve their reading comprehension, especially in cooperative learning environments. Initially introduced by (Fuchs et al., 2000) as part of the Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) program, Paragraph Shrinking encourages students to actively check their understanding by restating the main idea in their own words after reading each paragraph. Students are not just reading passively; they engage with the text by identifying and summarizing key information (Vaughn et al., 2015). Also, this technique supports deeper comprehension since summarizing is a key component of strategic reading. As a result, Paragraph Shrinking helps students find the main idea and builds critical thinking and information-processing skills essential for academic reading.

Although the potential of the paragraph-shrinking strategy is enormous, empirical research specifically examining the influence of this technique on the reading abilities of Senior High School students in Indonesia is still minimal. Most previous studies have focused more on students at the junior high school level. The first study (Sagita, 2021) conducted quasi-experimental research to determine the effect of paragraph shrinking strategy at the junior high school level; the population of this research is 108 students in eighth-grade junior high school. This study found that the paragraph-shrinking strategy significantly affected student reading comprehension. Similarly, (Aziz et al., 2022) conducted quasi-experimental research to improve student reading comprehension using paragraph shrinking strategy. The population of this research is 224 students in the first grade of junior high school; this study shows that the paragraph-shrinking strategy significantly improved student reading comprehension. Furthermore, (Vanesia et al., 2023) employed quasi-experimental research to find out the effect of paragraph shrinking strategy by using narrative text as the teaching material; the population of this research is students at ninth-grade junior high school. This study found that the paragraph-shrinking strategy also significantly affected student reading comprehension.

However, previous research has not examined how paragraph-shrinking strategies can be used at the high school level. This left an important gap in the current literature. High school students typically read more difficult texts and face higher academic expectations than middle school students. They also have more developed thinking and language skills, which may influence how well they respond to specific reading strategies. However, little

research has examined how these strategies work for older students. Therefore, more research is needed to see if these strategies are still effective for higher-level learners.

A novelty of this study is its focus on high school students, a group rarely included in previous research on paragraph-shrinking strategies. By investigating their use in this context, this study provides new insights into how these strategies can be adapted and implemented to suit students with more advanced skills in learning English as a foreign language. This study is also limited in scope because it only used narrative texts. This type of text is commonly found in high school English classes. It helps measure students' ability to find main ideas, make inferences, and understand story structure – skills that align with the goals of paragraph contraction strategies. However, because this study used only one type of text, the findings may not indicate how well the strategy works with other types of text, such as expository or descriptive texts. Therefore, future research should apply the strategy to various reading materials.

B. Method

In this recent study, the researchers employed a quantitative method with pre - pre-experimental research, a one-group pre-test-post-test design. Experimental research tests whether a treatment changes an outcome by controlling for all factors that might influence that outcome. The pre-experimental design showed that the dependent variable's outcomes are not influenced by the independent variable (Wulandari & Purwani, 2021). This research has two variables: the independent variable, the Pparagraph shrinking strategy, and the dependent variable in terms of student reading comprehension

Table 1. Design One Group Pretest - Posttest

Group	Pre test	Treatment	Post-test
Experiment	O1	X	O2

Notes:

O1 : Pre-test before treatment

X : Treatment by using paragraph shrinking strategy

O2 : Post-test after treatment

1. Population and Samples

Population refers to the group the research findings are expected to apply or generalize. Population is defined as a group of potential participants that the researcher can access, and it reflects the characteristics of the population being studied (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). In this research, 360 students in tenth grade comprised the population of this study. A sample is a smaller portion of the population chosen to participate in a research study. Moreover, in choosing the sample, the researchers used a probability sampling technique, namely cluster random sampling. Cluster random sampling is selecting a random sample

where the population is divided into several groups. The sample studied in this research comprises 36 students from class X2.

Table 2. Student Population at Tenth Grade

No	Class	Number of students
1	X.1	36
2	X.2	36
3	X.3	36
4	X.4	36
5	X.5	36
6	X.6	36
7	X.7	36
8	X.8	36
9	X.9	36
10	X.10	36
Total		360

2. Instrumentation

Furthermore, quantitative research is a method that examines theoretical concepts by measuring variables and analyzing data through statistical procedures (Paramita, 2021). According to Purwanto, the tools used to gather the data are called instruments (Purwanto, 2021). The types can be tests, questionnaires, observations, documentation, etc. As the measuring tool, in this study, the researchers employed tests as the instrument to collect the data. The test consists of 40 narrative text multiple-choice questions that were validated. Each item concerns all aspects of reading comprehension: main idea, detailed information, supporting idea, reference, inference, phrase or idiom in the context, vocabulary content, and excluded meaning. The students were given the test twice; the pre-test was conducted before the treatment, and the post-test was done after the treatment.

3. Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which a research study, test, or measurement effectively measures the specific concept or variable it is intended to evaluate. In other words, validity is the extent to which a measurement tool accurately captures the concept it is designed to measure. Before the research was employed, the test instruments were validated by a teacher and tried out on students to determine whether they were suitable for use as pre-test and post-test assessments. The primary purpose of the validation process was to ensure that each test item was of good quality. Initially, the pre-test and post-test consisted of 60 questions, but after the trial, each was revised and reduced to 40 based on the results.

On the other hand, reliability refers to how consistent and dependable a test or measurement is. According to Mohajan, in quantitative research, reliability is the degree to

which results remain consistent and stable across similar conditions, even when repeated in different situations (Mohajan, 2017). The data in this study were reliable.

4. Techniques for Collecting the Data

In addition, in the process of collecting the data, there are several stages that researchers, namely have carried out:

- 1) Observed the population, determined samples for the try-out group and experiment group
- 2) Prepared try-out tests to get good items for pre-test and post-test.
- 3) Prepared pre-tests for students in the experiment group before administering the treatment.
- 4) The researchers gave a treatment that used a paragraph-shrinking strategy.
- 5) After the treatment, the students were given a post-test to identify treatment progress.
- 6) Performing data analysis and presenting the outcomes
Describe the results and provide an interpretation of the findings.

5. Data Analysis

In a one-group pretest-posttest design, the data analysis process begins with the computation of descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the participants' scores before and after the intervention. This includes calculating the mean, median, standard deviation, range, and other central tendency and dispersion measures. After summarizing the data, a normality test, typically the Shapiro-Wilk test, is performed to evaluate whether the distribution of the differences between pre-test and post-test scores adheres to the normality assumption. The outcome of the normality test guides the selection of the appropriate inferential statistical method. If the assumption of normality is satisfied, a paired sample t-test is utilized to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores. This test examines whether the intervention has resulted in measurable changes within the same group over time.

C. Result and Discussion

Result

The researchers collected quantitative data through the administration of pre-test and post-test assessments. The pre-test was conducted on February 11, 2025, and the post-test was administered on April 15, 2025. In the pre-test session, participants completed assigned tasks before receiving the intervention, while during the post-test session, they responded to assessment tasks following the completion of the intervention. The outcomes of the pre-test and post-test, administered to a sample of 36 students, are detailed below.

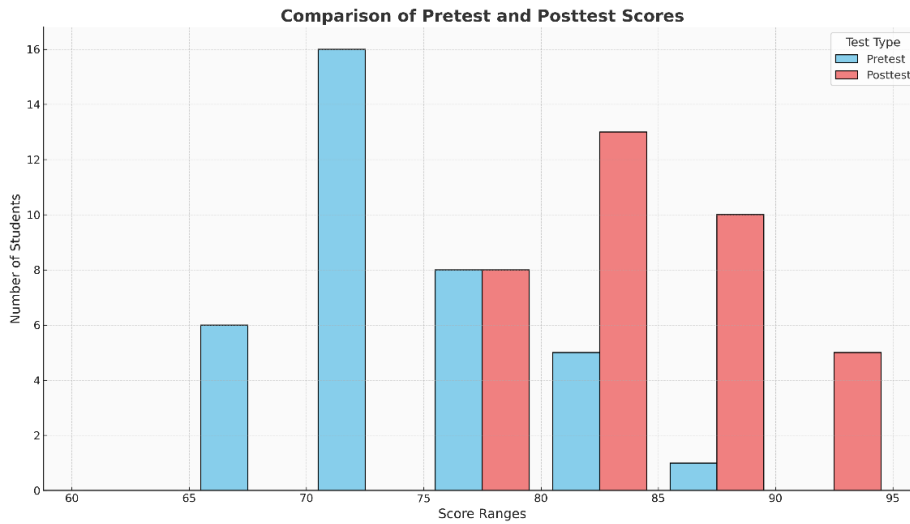


Figure 1. Students' Scores in Pretest and Posttest

1) Pre-test Result

The data of the pre-test consists of 36 individuals with various scores. Most scores are between 70 and 75, with 70 being the most frequent score achieved by nine individuals, 72.5 scored by eight individuals, and 75 by six. Higher scores, such as 77.5 and 80, were achieved by 3 and 5 individuals, respectively, while only one reached the highest score of 85. Lower scores, like 65 and 67.5, were obtained by 4 and 2 individuals, respectively. The distribution shows that most individuals scored in the middle range, with fewer individuals achieving extremely low or high scores. For the statistics of the pre-test outcomes, it can be seen in the Table below:

Table 3. Result of Pre-test

Statistic	Value
N	36
Mean	72.92
Median	72.5
Mode	70
Variance	24.13
Standard Deviation	4.91
Minimum	65
Maximum	85

The dataset of 36 individuals shows scores ranging from a minimum of 65 to a maximum of 85. The mean score is 72.92, the median is 72.5, and the mode is 70. The variance is 24.13, and the standard deviation is 4.91, indicating moderate variability with scores primarily concentrated around the mid-range.

2) Post-test Result

In the post-test results, five individuals scored 75, while three individuals achieved a score of 77.5. Another five individuals obtained a score of 80. The score of 82.5 was the most common, achieved by eight individuals. A total of 4 individuals scored 85, and 6 individuals scored 87.5. Additionally, three individuals earned a score of 90, while only one scored 92.5, and another scored 95. Overall, the data includes 36 participants. For the statistics of the post-test outcomes, it can be seen in the Table below:

Table 4. Post-test Result

Statistic	Value
N	36
Mean	83.06
Median	82.5
Mode	82.5
Variance	27.12
Standard Deviation	5.21
Minimum	75
Maximum	95

Based on 36 participants, the post-test results show an average (mean) score of 83.06. The median and mode are 82.5, indicating that most scores are centered around this value. The spread of scores is moderate, with a variance of 27.12 and a standard deviation of 5.21. Overall, the scores range from a minimum of 75 to a maximum of 95, suggesting generally strong performance across participants.

3) Normality Test

A normality test checks whether data follows a normal distribution, an important assumption in many statistical analyses such as t-tests, ANOVA, and regression. Since these methods rely on normally distributed data, testing for normality is important to ensure the results are valid and trustworthy (Mishra et al., 2019). The result of this normality test is presented in the Table below:

Table 5. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.144	36	.055	.949	36	.095
Post-test	.124	36	.176	.957	36	.176

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The Table shows that the Pvalue (Sig) for the pre-test was 0.095, and the P-value (Sig) for the post-test was 0.176. H_a is rejected because the Sig (P-value) of the pre-test and post-test is $> \alpha 0.05$. In summary, the data in the pre-test and post-test had a normal distribution.

4) Homogeneity Test

A homogeneity test, also known as a variance equality test, is a statistical method employed to assess whether two or more data groups possess identical variances, meaning their data are similarly dispersed or consistent. The outcomes of this homogeneity test are shown in the Table below:

Table 6. Tes of Homogeneity

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.171	1	70	.681

Levene's test for equality of variances produced a significance value of 0.681, which exceeds the α level of 0.05. This suggests that the data is homogeneous. Since the data is usually distributed and homogeneous, a Paired-Sample T-test was performed. The results of this test are shown in Table.

5) Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing with Paired Samples T-test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-10.1250	4.0078	.6680	-11.4810	-8.7690	15.158	35	.000

The Paired-Sample T-test analysis demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, with a p-value of 0.000, substantially lower than the predetermined significance threshold of 0.05. These findings indicate that implementing the Paragraph-Shrinking strategy significantly Influences students' reading comprehension in Tenth grade.

Discussion

The outcome of this study indicates that implementing the Paragraph-Shrinking strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension skills, especially in understanding narrative texts. The increase in post-test scores compared to the pre-test

indicates that the intervention was successful in helping students identify the main ideas and summarize the contents of the text more effectively. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of active involvement through summarizing activities to improve understanding (Graham, 2007).

The statistical findings provide strong support for this conclusion. The paired sample t-test resulted in a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that the difference in students' performance before and after the intervention is statistically significant. The average test score increased from 72.92 on the pre-test to 83.06 on the post-test, showing an improvement of more than 10 points. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_0), which assumes no significant effect of the intervention, is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which suggests a significant effect, is accepted. This notable improvement reflects enhanced academic performance and implies that students likely developed more effective reading strategies due to the paragraph-shrinking method. Thus, it can be concluded that implementing the paragraph-shrinking strategy had a meaningful and positive influence on senior high school students' reading comprehension.

This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies conducted by (Sagita, 2021), (Aziz et al., 2022), and (Vanesia et al., 2023). Each researcher found that the paragraph-shrinking strategy positively impacted junior high school students' reading comprehension. However, this study provides a new contribution by applying the strategy to senior high school level students in the context of the Independent Curriculum, which shows that this strategy is flexible and can be applied more widely at the secondary education level. In addition, this study also found that students showed increased confidence in recognizing main ideas and summarizing paragraphs. Video media and activities to share reading results between friends in three interactive learning sessions contributed to student engagement and retention. These components support the comprehension process and strengthen vocabulary and language structure mastery in narrative texts.

Even though the results showed a significant effect, this study also has limitations. This study faces several limitations that need to be considered before interpreting the findings. Several factors contributed to the challenges faced during the research process. These include varying levels of learning motivation, unequal prior knowledge among students, and a tendency for decreased concentration when learning activities are delivered monotonously. Some students also exhibited passive attitudes during the learning process, which affected the effectiveness of the instructional strategies implemented in this study. The diversity in student characteristics and learning readiness presents a significant challenge researchers must address to achieve optimal outcomes.

D. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the paragraph-shrinking strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension in tenth-grade narrative texts. The researchers employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design; the data significantly influenced students' reading comprehension scores –

from a mean pre-test score of 72.92 to a post-test mean of 83.06. The paired sample t-test presented a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant effect of the intervention. These results confirmed that the null hypothesis (H_0), which assumes no significant effect of the intervention, is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which suggests a significant effect, is accepted. In other words, the paragraph-shrinking strategy significantly influenced students' reading comprehension at senior high.

In addition, the findings of this study have important pedagogical implications, particularly in the context of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes active, student-centered learning. The Paragraph Shrinking strategy enhances students' comprehension of reading texts. It fosters critical thinking, active engagement, and peer collaboration, as students are required to interpret, summarize, and share key ideas orally. The strategy encourages students to take ownership of their learning process and develop more structured thinking. However, its implementation also presents challenges: teachers must be prepared to facilitate each step and manage class time efficiently to ensure all students benefit. Furthermore, this study focused only on narrative texts, so the strategy's application to other text types, such as expository or argumentative texts, was not explored.

Although the results showed significant effects, this study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, using a pre-experimental design without a control group limits the internal validity of the findings, as external variables may have influenced the results. Second, the sample was limited to one group in one school, limiting the conclusions' generalizability. Therefore, future research should adopt a proper experimental design with randomized control and experimental groups to produce more robust results. Including a more diverse sample and examining the strategy's long-term effects would also be beneficial. In addition, future research should explore the strategy's effectiveness across different text genres and at different levels of reading proficiency to better understand its broader instructional potential.

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