

Beyond the Test Score: Developing Listening Test Feedback and Activities to Empower Young Learners and Teachers of English

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Introduction

We report on the development of a multi-level listening test for 11- to 15-year-olds, and the personalized feedback and learning activities presented on the test's score report.

MET Go!

- four-skills test
- designed to track learners' development in English
- multi-level: targets A1 to B1 on the CEFR

Age Appropriate

- full-color, engaging artwork
- content situated in educational, public, and personal domains

Learning & Development Oriented

- variety of tested subskills
- test items are similar to classroom tasks
- personalized feedback can help test takers recognize their strengths and weaknesses
- authentic learning activities can help test takers decide on strategies for improving their English
- feedback and learning activities are written at the level of English test takers have demonstrated
- test results can help EFL teachers place test takers into appropriate classes, monitor progress, and provide diagnostic information

MET Go! Listening Test

- consists of five item types
- stimuli are double played
- stimuli include teen voices
- an application of Buck's (2001) "default listening construct"

Task Types & Subskills Tested

Figure 1: Sample Task, Identify People in a Picture

N: Look at the people in the picture. Listen to some information. Find the person to answer the question. You will hear the information twice.

N: Look at the picture of students in a classroom. Listen and answer the questions.

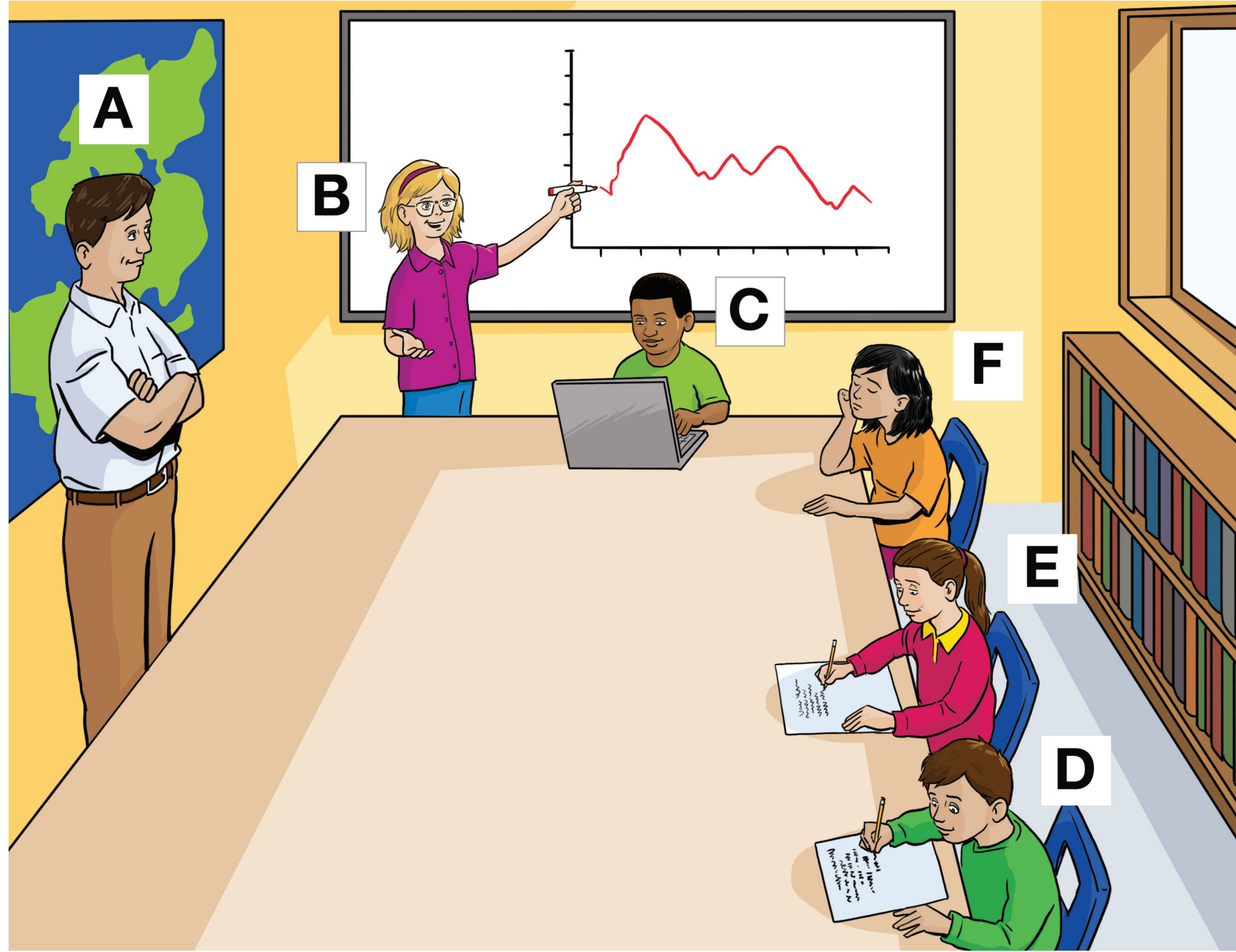
M: Mr. Wilson is listening to a student. He is standing near the map. Which person is Mr. Wilson?

M: Ella is at the table. She is writing some notes on her paper. Which person is Ella?

M: Ken is at the front of the room. He is looking at a computer. Which person is Ken?

M: Cathy is tired today. Her eyes are closed. Which person is Cathy?

Look at the people in the picture. Listen to some information. Find the person to answer the question. You will hear the information twice.



1. Which person is Mr. Wilson?
2. Which person is Ella?
3. Which person is Ken?
4. Which person is Cathy?

Figure 2: Test Tasks & Subskills Tested

| Task Type | Identify people in a picture | Listener-directed questions | Short dialogue | Longer dialogue | Announcement |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Task Description | Audio descriptions of people in the graphic; test takers choose which person is being described in the audio stimulus | Short question delivered by one speaker; test taker chooses the best response to the question | Short conversations between two speakers; test takers choose the best picture that answers the question | Longer conversation between two speakers; test takers answer 3 questions about the stimulus | Short announcement of message delivered by one speaker; test takers answer 3 questions about the stimulus |
| Subskills Tested | A1-level vocabulary | | | | |
| | | A2-level vocabulary | | | |
| | | | | B1-level vocabulary | |
| | | | Follow extended speech | | |
| | | Grammar | | | |
| | Details | | | | |
| | | | Main idea | | |
| | | | | Speaker's purpose or attitude | |

Feedback Descriptors & Learning Activities

Score Report

Test takers receive

- scaled score
- CEFR level
- personalized feedback
- recommended learning activities

Value of Feedback

Test takers can

- engage directly with performance information
- take more ownership of their performance in reading the feedback themselves

Teachers can

- identify test taker strengths and challenges
- better place test takers into classes
- monitor test taker progress

Figure 3: Example Feedback Descriptors and Learning Activities

| Test Taker | Scaled Score | CEFR Level | Feedback Descriptor | Learning Activity |
|------------|--------------|------------|---|--|
| A | 40 | B1 | About Your English You can understand conversations and talks about everyday things well. When listening, you can understand details, but try to listen for the main points, too. However, you can recognize people's attitude and purpose in conversations and talks. | Things to Do Watch a review of a movie or product you like. In one sentence, summarize what the review is about. |
| B | 40 | B1 | About Your English You can understand conversations and talks about everyday things well. When listening, you get the main points, but try to listen for the details, too. Also, think about the reasons why speakers are talking and how they feel about the topic. Learning more English grammar can help you understand more of what you hear. | Things to Do Watch a review of a movie or product you like. What is the reviewer's opinion? How do you know? |

Feedback Descriptors

- personalized for each test taker
- written at the test taker's level of English
- includes strengths and challenges

Test Taker A

strength: local detail, attitude/purpose
challenge: main idea

Test Taker B

strength: main idea
challenge: local detail, attitude/purpose

Learning Activities

- interesting and authentic
- familiar to young learners
 - > watching videos
 - > listening to songs

Test Taker A

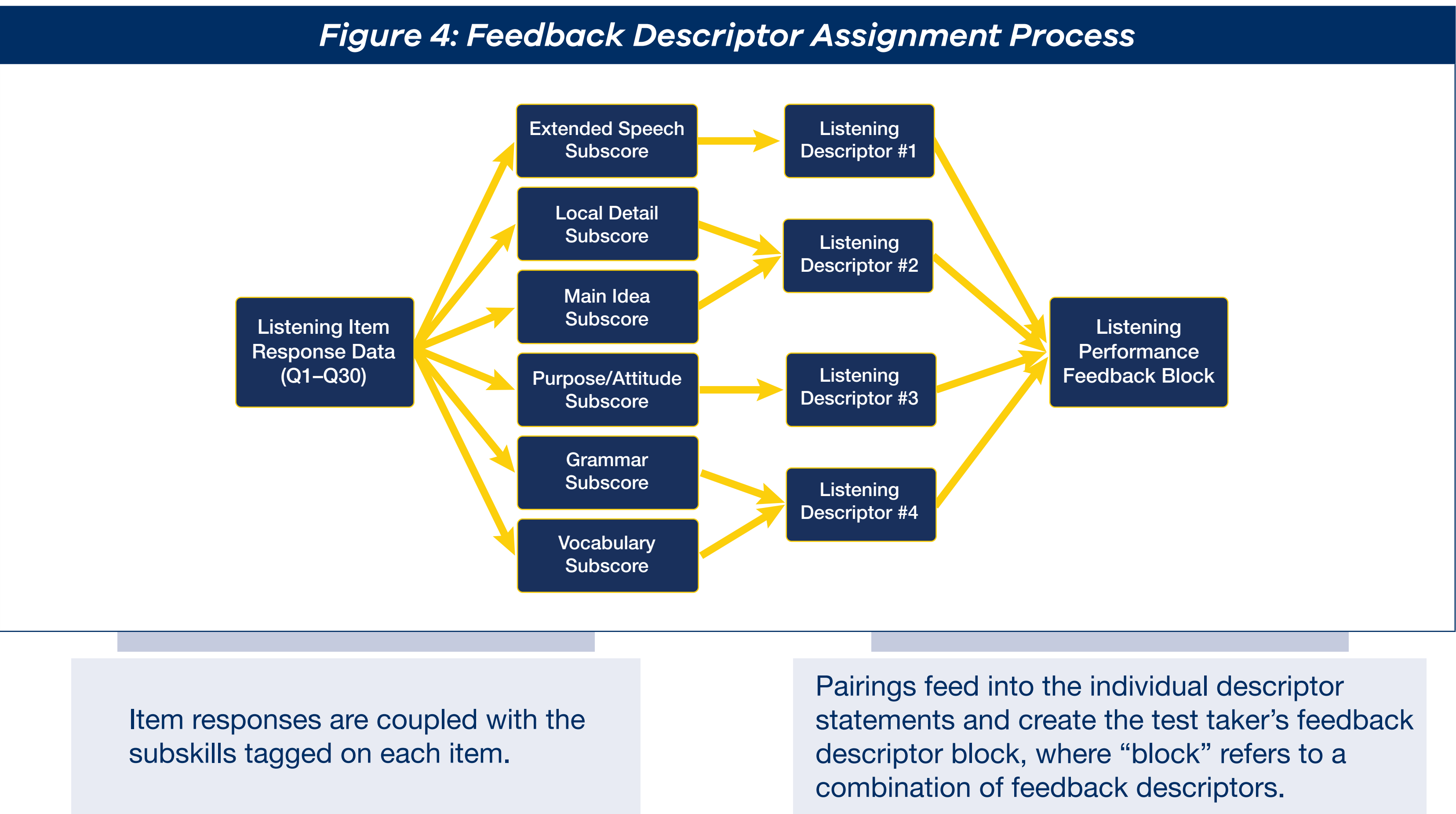
activity: summarize a movie or product review

Test Taker B

activity: listen for the reviewer's opinion

Assignment Procedures

Figure 4: Feedback Descriptor Assignment Process



Learning Activity Assignment Process

- based on the test taker's overall performance combined with their weakest subskill
- each subskill points to a specific stimulus and activity

Conclusion

In reporting on this project, we hope to

- inspire other test makers to develop assessments that give descriptive feedback and authentic learning activities
- empower test takers and their teachers by providing a more concrete understanding of their language ability

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