

10.2.1

Lesson 15

Introduction

In this lesson, students reread and analyze paragraphs 26–33 of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (from “Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment” to “whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust”), in which King discusses his disappointment with the white church and its leadership. In 10.2.1 Lesson 14, students completed a reading of the passage to explore how King unfolds his analysis of the church in the focus excerpt. In this lesson, students review these paragraphs in order to analyze how King develops and refines ideas from earlier in the text. After engaging in an evidence-based discussion of the ideas developed in paragraphs 26–33, students take part in a jigsaw activity in which they determine how these ideas refine ideas from earlier in the text.

The lesson closes with a Quick Write on the following prompt: How does King use paragraphs 26–33 to develop and refine an idea from earlier in the text? For homework, students write an objective summary of the text up through paragraph 33. Additionally, students continue to read their AIR text and prepare for a brief discussion on how they applied their chosen focus standard to their text.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs or longer portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.9.b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. b. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).
SL.9-10.1.a-e	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed. c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions. d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented. e. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.
L.9-10.4.a, b	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy</i>).

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does King use paragraphs 26–33 to develop and refine an idea from earlier in the text?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an idea from earlier in the text that is developed further in paragraphs 26–33 (e.g., mutuality, the call to direct action, timeliness, etc.). • Demonstrate how King develops and refines this idea in paragraphs 26–33 (e.g., in paragraphs 26–33, King develops the idea of timeliness which he introduces in paragraph 11, where he compares

the word *wait* to thalidomide, a drug which seems comforting but is devastatingly harmful. Here King claims that the injustices faced by African Americans mean that they cannot wait: “There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over.” He develops this idea in paragraph 33, claiming that “the judgment of God is upon the church as never before.” This implies that the church is at a decisive moment, and recalls the sense of “cosmic urgency” to which King referred in paragraph 23.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pious (adj.) – deeply religious, devoted to a particular religion; falsely appearing to be good or moral • sanctimonious (adj.) – making a hypocritical show of religious devotion, piety, righteousness, etc.
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secular (adj.) – not spiritual; of or relating to the physical world and not the spiritual world • infanticide (n.) – the act of killing an infant

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.9-10.5, W.9-10.9.b, SL.9-10.1.a-e, L.9-10.4.a, b • Text: “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr., paragraphs 26–33 <p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Jigsaw Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10% 2. 15% 3. 30% 4. 30% 5. 10% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 10.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 5)—Students may need blank copies of this tool if they have run out of space on their original tool.
- Student copies of the Short Response Checklist and Rubric (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and sharing the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.9-10.5. In this lesson, students reread paragraphs 26–33 of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (from “Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment” to “whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust”) in order to analyze how King develops and refines ideas from earlier in the text. Students engage in an evidence-based discussion as well as complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Distribute or ask students to take out their copies of the 10.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool. Inform students that in this lesson they begin to work with new substandards: SL.9-10.1.b, d and L.9-10.4.b. Ask students to individually read these substandards on their tools and assess their familiarity with and mastery of them.

- ▶ Students read and assess their familiarity with substandards SL.9-10.b, d and L.9-10.4.b

Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the substandards mean. Lead a brief discussion about these substandards.

- ☞ For substandard L.9-10.4.b student responses may include:

- Use word parts and patterns to determine the meaning of a multiple-meaning or unfamiliar word.
- 🗨 For substandard SL.9-10.1.b student responses may include:
 - Work with classmates to set rules, goals, deadlines, and roles for discussion
- 🗨 For substandard SL.9-10.1.d student responses may include:
 - Think before responding to someone who disagrees with you.
 - Summarize points that classmates agree and disagree on.
 - Explain your own opinion and ideas as they change with new evidence and reasoning.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson's AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

Instruct students to take out their paragraph 26–33 annotation (10.2.1 Lesson 14 homework) and do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their annotation. Instruct student pairs to discuss, based on their annotation, which central ideas Martin Luther King, Jr. develops in paragraphs 26–33.

- 🗨 Student responses may include:
 - Call to direct action
 - Mutuality
 - Timeliness

Remind students that annotating helps them keep track of evidence they use later in the Mid-Unit and Performance Assessments, which focus on the development of central ideas.

- ① This focused annotation supports students' engagement with W.9-10.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

30%

- ① If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a Masterful Reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project the following questions for students to discuss.

Instruct students to reread and analyze paragraphs 26–29 (from “Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment” to “But again I have been disappointed”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

In paragraphs 26–29, what idea does King develop in contrast to the hope that he outlines in paragraphs 28–29?

- 🗨️ King outlines the disappointment that he now feels in contrast to hope.

What ideas does King develop about the role of the church in society in paragraphs 26–29? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.

- 🗨️ Student responses should include:
 - King develops the idea that the church has a moral responsibility to take “significant stands” (par. 26) on social issues such as civil rights. He had the expectation that “the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be some of our strongest allies” (par. 28) and that they “would see the justice of our cause” (par. 29). He suggests in paragraph 29 that the church should show “a deep moral concern” with the cause of desegregation.
 - In paragraph 29, he sees the role of the church as being “the channel” between the desegregation movement and the authorities, “through which our just grievances could get to the power structure.”

How does King draw a connection between his disappointment and the role of the church?

- 🗨️ King develops the idea that the church has disappointed him, not so much by opposition but because “all too many [ministers] have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows” (par. 28). In this sentence, he implies that church leaders should intervene on social questions, and that he is disappointed that they have not done so. In addition, he frequently states his disappointment, using the words “disappointed” and “disappointment” four times in four paragraphs (par. 26, 27, 29, and 33).

How does this connection between King’s disappointment and the role of the church advance his purpose in paragraphs 26–29?

- 🗨️ By emphasizing his disappointment in the church’s failure to take a stand, King takes the moral high ground, contrasting his own action as a minister with the failure of the white church, in order to persuade the church to take a more active role on social issues.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses. Distribute or ask students to take out their Central Ideas Tracking Tools and record the ideas from paragraphs 26–29 as discussed here.

Instruct students in their pairs to reread paragraphs 30–33 (from “I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South” to “whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *pious* means “deeply religious, devoted to a particular religion or falsely appearing to be good or moral” and *sanctimonious* means “making a hypocritical show of religious devotion, piety, righteousness, etc.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *pious* and *sanctimonious* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Use the context of King’s phrase “a strange distinction between . . . the sacred and the secular” to define the word *secular*.

- 🗨 The word *secular* is opposed to the word *sacred* here. From this we can infer that the two words mean the opposite. *Secular* means “not spiritual: of or relating to the physical world and not the spiritual world.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *secular* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of substandard L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context to determine the meaning of a word.

In paragraph 30, how does King further develop his disappointment with the church? What idea does he develop and refine here?

- 🗨 Student responses may include:
 - He criticizes ministers for calling on worshippers to obey desegregation decrees because they are the law: instead, he says, they should be saying, “follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother” (par. 30). In this way, King develops his disappointment that the church is not showing “deep moral concern” (par. 29).
 - Through this criticism, he refines the idea that the moral and the practical, the spiritual and the secular are deeply linked. He goes on to criticize white churches because “in the midst” of injustice and struggle, they “stand on the sidelines and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities” (par. 30), meaning that their words appear to be moral but in fact are not. Finally, he makes the point explicit, remarking on what he calls “a strange distinction” (par. 30) between the sacred and the secular, implying through his use of the word “strange” that this distinction is a false one.

What common word can you see in the word *infanticide*?

☞ The word *infanticide* contains the word *infant*.

What does the suffix *-cide* mean in the words *homicide* and *suicide*?

☞ It means *killing*, of the self or of another.

Define the word *infanticide*.

☞ The word *infanticide* means “the act of killing an infant.”

▶ Students write the definition of *infanticide* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of substandard L.9-10.4.b through the process of using word parts to determine the meaning of a word.

How does King’s use of historical references in paragraph 31 develop his ideas from paragraphs 26–30?

☞ Student responses should include:

- King uses the example of early Christians to develop his idea that the sacred and the secular are linked. He notes that the power of the early church came from the fact that in contrast to the “otherworldly religion” (par. 30) of the modern church, it was “a thermostat that transformed the mores of society” (par. 31).
- The early church was powerful because it involved itself in secular matters rather than claiming, “those are social issues which the gospel has nothing to do with” (par. 30). In doing so, it “brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contest” (par. 31).
- Through his use of references, King develops the idea that there is a higher moral authority than human law. He describes early Christians as “God-intoxicated” (par. 31), obeying a higher power than human society.
- By alluding to *infanticide* and gladiatorial contests, King places segregation in the same group of social ills as something to be eliminated rather than enforced.

What is the rhetorical impact of King’s use of historical references?

☞ By referring to early Christians, King compares his mission to theirs and takes a position of moral authority.

What idea does King introduce in paragraph 33?

☞ King introduces the idea of judgment, both divine and human in paragraph 33. He states that, “The judgment of God is upon the church as never before” and implies that people will also judge the church for its failure to take a stand: “[the church] will lose its authentic ring, forfeit

the loyalty of millions and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century” (par. 33).

How does this idea develop ideas from the preceding paragraphs?

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- This idea develops the idea of disappointment with the church: King refers to “young people . . . whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust” (par. 33), echoing his references in 26–29 to his own disappointment with the church’s failings. The strong implication of the paragraph is that in being judged, the church will be judged negatively.
- The idea of “the judgment of God” (par. 33) also develops the idea that King has developed in the preceding paragraphs of a higher moral authority: here the authority is named as God himself.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses. Ask students to use their Central Ideas Tracking Tools to record the ideas from paragraphs 26–29 as discussed here.

Activity 4: Jigsaw Discussion

30%

Explain to students that they are going to participate in a jigsaw discussion. Direct students to remain in their pairs and analyze one of the following sections of King’s letter: paragraphs 1–9 (from “While confined here in the Birmingham city jail” to “to live in monologue rather than dialogue”); paragraphs 10–18 (from “One of the basic points in your statement” to “I would openly advocate disobeying these anti-religious laws”); or paragraphs 19–25 (from “I must make two honest confessions to you” to “antidotes to combat the disease of segregation”).

Ensure that the three sections of the letter are evenly distributed throughout the class. In other words, one or more pairs should read and analyze each section. Instruct pairs to identify ideas in their assigned section that are developed and refined in paragraphs 26–30 (from “Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment” to “whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust”), with corresponding textual evidence, using the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to record their work.

- ① Consider reminding students to review their notes and annotations for their assigned paragraphs in order to recall ideas developed in those paragraphs.
- ① Consider reminding students that this is an opportunity to apply standard SL.9-10.1.a-e by participating effectively in a collaborative discussion. Students may especially focus on setting goals for the discussion, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement, and making new connections in light of new evidence and reasoning.
 - ▶ In pairs, students read and analyze one section of King’s letter to prepare for a small group sharing.

- See the Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool for sample student responses.

When student pairs have completed their analysis of their section, direct them to split up and join with a member of two other pairs, each of whom have analyzed a different section. In other words, students form groups of three to share their responses to their section of text.

Direct students to take notes on their tool during the small group discussions.

Conduct a brief whole-class discussion, asking groups to discuss how King develops and refines ideas from earlier in the text in paragraphs 26–30.

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does King use paragraphs 26–33 to develop and refine an idea from earlier in the text?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
 - ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to write an objective summary of King’s letter from paragraphs 10–33. Ask students to use vocabulary words from 10.2.1 wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students are not yet ready to write an objective summary of the text up through paragraph 33, consider having them write an objective summary of paragraphs 26–33 only.

Also for homework, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Write an objective summary of King’s letter from paragraphs 10–33, using vocabulary words from 10.2.1 wherever possible in your written response.

Also, continue reading your AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Identify the central ideas that you encounter throughout the text. Trace the development of those ideas by noting how the author introduces, develops, or refines these ideas in the texts. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Text:	“Letter from Birmingham Jail”
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Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
Paragraphs 1–9	<p>Mutuality: In paragraphs 1–5, King develops the idea that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” saying, “I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states” (par. 4). He refutes criticism of his movement as “outsiders coming in” (par. 2), saying that “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality” (par. 4) and claiming that “never again can we afford to live with the narrow ‘outside agitator’ idea” (par. 4).</p> <p>Disappointment: King expresses his disappointment with the clergymen, saying, “You deplore the demonstrations that are presently taking place in Birmingham. But I am sorry that your statement did not express a similar concern for the conditions that brought the demonstrations into being” (par. 5). King gives an example of his disappointment with the white community by describing their failure to keep their promise about the</p>	<p>In paragraph 31, he reminds his reader that early Christians were also viewed as “outsiders coming in”: “Wherever the early Christians entered a town the power structure got disturbed and immediately sought to convict them for being ‘disturbers of the peace’ and ‘outside agitators.’”</p> <p>King picks up the idea of disappointment, along with the language of paragraph 7 in paragraphs 26–29, referring four times to being “disappointed” or feeling “disappointment” and to his “shattered dreams.” Throughout paragraphs 26–29, King expresses his disappointment not merely with the writers of the letter but with the white church as a whole: “Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment. I have been</p>

	<p>removal of racist signs in shops: “we were confronted with blasted hopes and the dark shadow of a deep disappointment settled upon us” (par. 7).</p> <p>Necessity of tension: King claims that positive, nonviolent tension is necessary for social change: “there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension that is necessary for growth” (par. 9).</p>	<p>disappointed with the white church and its leadership” (par. 26). He criticizes the white church for failing to take a stand on the issue of desegregation.</p> <p>King picks up the idea of constructive tension through his reference to early Christians in paragraph 31, in which he claims that by causing tension, early Christians promoted positive social change: “They brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contest” (par. 31).</p>
<p>Paragraphs 10–18</p>	<p>Timeliness: King rejects criticism of his actions as “untimely” and claims that there is no such thing as a “good” time for freedom: “We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct-action movement that was ‘well timed’ according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation” (par. 11). King gives a string of examples of the injustices inflicted up on African American people and claims that, “There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over” (par. 11).</p> <p>Higher moral authority: King refutes the criticism that he is breaking the law, stating that, “there are just laws, and there are unjust laws” (par. 12). He defines a just law as “a man-made law that squares with the moral law or</p>	<p>In paragraph 33, King stresses the urgency of the need for desegregation, using the apocalyptic threat “the judgment of God is upon the church as never before” to demand action from church leaders.</p> <p>In paragraphs 29, 30, and 31, King develops the idea of a link between the secular and the sacred through his criticism of the church for its inaction over desegregation. He claims that he had hoped to see the church act “with deep moral concern” (par. 29) on</p>

	<p>the law of God,” implying that there is a higher authority than human law. He emphasizes the need to disobey unjust laws, using as examples Hitler’s Germany and freedom fighters in communist countries (par. 18).</p>	<p>desegregation and criticizes not only those ministers who oppose civil rights but those who “stand on the sidelines and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities” (par. 30). Silence, according to King is not sufficient, the church has a duty to action, or it becomes a “completely otherworldly religion.” In paragraph 31, he holds up the early church as an example of how moral concerns should drive social change, referring to early Christians as “powerful” (par. 31) because they involved themselves in social change on matters such as infanticide and gladiatorial contest. He contrasts this with the modern church, which he describes in paragraph 32 as “a weak ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound.”</p>
<p>Paragraphs 19–25</p>	<p>Disappointment: King confesses the first of two disappointments—he is disappointed by moderate whites, saying, “I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Councilor or the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice” (par. 19).</p> <p>In paragraph 25, King again expresses his disappointment with the white community, including his addressees: “I was rather disappointed that fellow</p>	<p>This idea is developed further in paragraphs 26–29 when King shifts the focus of his attack specifically to the white church, whom he criticizes for being, like the white moderate, too passive, “more cautious than courageous . . . silent behind the anesthetizing . . . security of stained-glass windows” (par. 28).</p> <p>In paragraph 33, King warns of the dangers of disappointment, claiming that “I meet young people every day whose disappointment with the church</p>

	<p>clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist”; “I had hoped that the white moderate would see this.”</p> <p>Timeliness: King criticizes what he calls the “myth of time” (par. 21), the idea that time will inevitably bring change: “We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation.”</p> <p>King warns that the desegregation movement is at a crucial moment, and that action can no longer be delayed: “Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The urge for freedom will eventually come. This is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom . . . Consciously and unconsciously, he has been swept up by what the Germans call the <i>Zeitgeist</i>” (par. 23). He goes on to speak of a “cosmic urgency” (par. 23) with which the movement for desegregation is moving towards freedom.</p>	<p>has risen to outright disgust.”</p> <p>King develops this idea in paragraph 33 when he remarks that “the judgment of God is upon the church,” implying the need for urgent, immediate action, and developing the idea of “cosmic urgency” from paragraph 23.</p>
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