

Essential Radiology Review

A Question and Answer Guide

Adam E. M. Eltorai
Charles H. Hyman
Terrance T. Healey
Editors

 Springer

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Preface

This review guidebook is written in a rapid-fire question-and-answer format for medical students and junior-level residents. Its two-column, question-and-answer format makes it a perfect quick reference. This pocket resource addresses both general and subspecialty topics in radiology and provides accurate, on-the-spot answers to commonly encountered questions.

Essential Radiology Review is organized by body part into subspecialties, focusing on common conditions. Readers can review the text from cover to cover to gain a foundation of knowledge and then use specific chapters to review a subspecialty before starting a new rotation or joining a new service. Its content breadth covers the most commonly encountered topics in radiology. Carry it with you for convenient access to the answers you need – from anatomy, pathophysiology, differential diagnosis, and hallmark signs and image features.

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Contents

Part I Imaging Modalities

- 1 Radiography** 3
Matthew Czar Taon
- 2 Computed Tomography** 7
Matthew Czar Taon
- 3 Ultrasonography** 11
Matthew Czar Taon
- 4 Magnetic Resonance Imaging** 15
Matthew Czar Taon
- 5 Fluoroscopy** 19
Matthew Czar Taon
- 6 Nuclear Medicine** 23
Matthew Czar Taon

Part II Chest

- 7 Technical Adequacy of Chest X-Ray** 29
Gaurav Rana
- 8 Frontal Radiograph** 33
Mehdi Taghipour
- 9 Normal Pulmonary Vasculature** 37
Gaurav Rana

10	Lateral Radiograph	41
	Mehdi Taghipour	
11	Normal CT Anatomy of the Chest	45
	Mehdi Taghipour	
12	Normal CT Anatomy of the Lungs	49
	Gaurav Rana	
13	The Fissures	53
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
14	Classifying Parenchymal Lung Disease	57
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
15	Characteristics of Airspace Disease	61
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
16	Some Causes of Airspace Disease	65
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
17	Characteristics of Interstitial Lung Disease	71
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
18	Some Causes of Interstitial Lung Disease	75
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
19	Atelectasis of the Entire Lung	81
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
20	Massive Pleural Effusion	85
	Matthew Pouw	
21	Pneumonia of an Entire Lung	89
	Matthew Pouw	
22	Post-pneumonectomy	91
	Matthew Pouw	

23 What Is Atelectasis? 95
 Brian Joo

24 Types of Atelectasis 97
 Brian Joo

25 Patterns of Collapse in Lobar Atelectasis 99
 Brian Joo

26 Normal Anatomy and Physiology of the Pleural Space101
 Brian Joo

27 Causes of Pleural Effusions103
 Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake

28 Types of Pleural Effusions107
 Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake

29 Side-Specificity of Pleural Effusions111
 Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake

30 General Characteristics of Pneumonia113
 Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake

31 Patterns of Pneumonia117
 Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake

32 Lobar Pneumonia121
 Rei Mitsuyama

33 Interstitial Pneumonia123
 Rei Mitsuyama

34 Round Pneumonia125
 Rei Mitsuyama

35 Cavitory Pneumonia127
 Rei Mitsuyama

36	Aspiration	129
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
37	Localizing Pneumonia	133
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
38	Pneumothorax	137
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
39	Pneumomediastinum	141
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Hall	
40	Pneumopericardium	145
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
41	Subcutaneous Emphysema	147
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
42	Endotracheal and Tracheostomy Tubes	151
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
43	Intravascular Catheters	155
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
44	Cardiac Devices: Pacemaker, AICD, and IABP	159
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
45	GI Tubes and Lines: Nasogastric Tubes, Feeding Tubes	163
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
46	Esophagus	167
	Lauren Park	
47	Mediastinal Masses	169
	Lauren Park	
48	Anterior Mediastinum	171
	Lauren Park	

49	Middle Mediastinal Masses	173
	Lauren Park	
50	Posterior Mediastinal Masses	175
	Lauren Park	
51	Solitary Nodule/Mass in the Lung	179
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
52	Bronchogenic Carcinoma	183
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
53	Metastatic Neoplasms in the Lung	187
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
54	Pulmonary Thromboembolic Disease	191
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
55	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	195
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
56	Bullae, Cysts, and Cavities	199
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
57	Bronchiectasis	203
	Alexander Croake and Mary Frances Croake	
58	Normal Cardiac CT Anatomy	207
	Rajat Chand	
59	Uses of Cardiac CT	211
	Rajat Chand	
60	Cardiac MRI	215
	Josi Herren	
61	Enlarged Cardiac Silhouette	219
	Josi Herren	

62	Pericardial Effusion	223
	Josi Herren	
63	Extra-cardiac Causes of Apparent Cardiac Enlargement	225
	Josi Herren	
64	Identifying Cardiac Enlargement on an AP Chest Radiograph	227
	Josi Herren	
65	Cardiomegaly on the Lateral Chest Radiograph ...	229
	Youngmin Chu	
66	Non-cardiogenic Pulmonary Edema	233
	Youngmin Chu	
67	Hypertensive Cardiovascular Disease	237
	Youngmin Chu	
68	Mitral Stenosis	241
	Youngmin Chu	
69	Pulmonary Artery Hypertension	245
	Youngmin Chu	
70	Aortic Stenosis	249
	Rajat Chand	
71	Cardiomyopathy	251
	Rajat Chand	
72	Aortic Aneurysms: General Considerations	255
	Rajat Chand	
73	Thoracic Aortic Aneurysm	257
	Rajat Chand	
74	Aortic Dissection	259
	Rajat Chand	

75 Coronary Artery Disease.....263
Rajat Chand

Part III Abdomen

76 Normal Bowel Gas Pattern.....269
Efaza Siddiqui

77 Normal Fluid Levels.....271
Efaza Siddiqui

78 Differentiating Large from Small Bowel.....273
Efaza Siddiqui

**79 Acute Abdominal Series: The Views
and What They Show**.....275
Efaza Siddiqui

80 Calcifications.....277
Efaza Siddiqui

81 Organomegaly.....279
Sarah Maria Bahouth

82 Abdominal CT: General Considerations.....281
Sarah Maria Bahouth

83 Abnormal Gas Patterns.....283
Sarah Maria Bahouth

**84 Functional Ileus: Localized Sentinel
and Generalized Adynamic Ileus**.....285
Sarah Maria Bahouth

**85 Mechanical Obstruction: Small Bowel Obstruction
(SBO)**.....287
Sarah Maria Bahouth

**86 Mechanical Obstruction: Large Bowel Obstruction
(LBO)**.....289
Sarah Maria Bahouth

87	Colonic Volvulus	291
	Sarah Maria Bahouth	
88	Intestinal Pseudo-Obstruction (Ogilvie Syndrome)	293
	Sarah Maria Bahouth	
89	Signs of Free Peritoneal Air	295
	Sarah Maria Bahouth	
90	Visualization of Both Sides of the Bowel Wall	297
	Zachary Hartley-Blossom	
91	Visualization of the Falciform Ligament	299
	Zachary Hartley-Blossom	
92	Causes of Free Air	301
	Rose Miller	
93	Signs of Extraperitoneal Air	303
	Rose Miller	
94	Causes of Extraperitoneal Air	305
	Rose Miller	
95	Signs of Air in Bowel Wall	307
	Joseph Wes Albright	
96	Causes and Significance of Air in Bowel Wall	309
	Joseph Wes Albright	
97	Signs of Air in the Biliary System	311
	Joseph Wes Albright	
98	Causes of Air in the Biliary System	313
	Joseph Wes Albright	
99	Stomach and Duodenum: Normal Anatomy	315
	Joseph Wes Albright	

100	Duodenal Ulcer	317
	Gina Landinez	
101	Small Bowel: Normal Anatomy	319
	Gina Landinez	
102	Large Bowel: Normal Anatomy	321
	Gina Landinez	
103	Pancreas: Normal Anatomy	323
	Gina Landinez	
104	Hepatobiliary Abnormalities	325
	Gina Landinez	
105	Space-Occupying Lesions of the Liver	327
	Matthew Pouw	
106	Biliary System: Normal Anatomy	331
	Matthew Pouw	
107	Urinary Tract: Normal Anatomy	333
	Matthew Pouw	
108	Pelvis: Normal Anatomy	337
	Matthew Pouw	
109	Urinary Bladder: Normal Anatomy	341
	Matthew Pouw	
110	Abdominal Adenopathy	343
	Matthew Pouw	
 Part IV Trauma		
111	Chest Trauma	347
	Rajat Chand	
112	Rib Fractures	349
	Rajat Chand	

113	Pulmonary Contusions	351
	Rajat Chand	
114	Pulmonary Lacerations	353
	Rajat Chand	
115	Aortic Trauma	355
	Rajat Chand	
116	Abdominal Trauma	357
	Rajat Chand	
117	Pelvic Trauma	363
	Rajat Chand	
Part V Musculoskeletal		
118	Abnormalities of Bone Density	367
	Justin Guan	
119	Normal Bone Anatomy	369
	Justin Guan	
120	The Effect of Bone Physiology on Bone Anatomy .	373
	Justin Guan	
121	Generalized Increase in Bone Density	377
	Justin Guan	
122	Focal Increase in Bone Density	379
	Justin Guan	
123	Generalized Decrease in Bone Density	383
	Justin Guan	
124	Focal Decrease in Bone Density	387
	Justin Guan	
125	Pathologic Fractures	391
	Jeffrey H. Weinreb and Ryan D. Scully	

126	Acute Fracture	395
	M. Wesley Honeycutt	
127	Dislocations and Subluxations: Lower Extremity	399
	Grace Blaylock, Seth Stake, and Ryan D. Scully	
128	How Fractures Are Described: By the Number of Fracture Fragments	409
	Anna Johnson	
129	How Fractures Are Described: By the Direction of the Fracture Line	413
	Anna Johnson	
130	How Fractures Are Described: By the Relationship of One Fracture Fragment to Another	417
	M. Wesley Honeycutt	
131	Avulsion Fractures	421
	Bryan E. Wessel and David P. Duncan	
132	Stress Fractures	427
	Bryan E. Wessel and David P. Duncan	
133	Common Fracture Eponyms	431
	Bryan E. Wessel and David P. Duncan	
134	Some Easily Missed Fractures or Dislocations	437
	Bryan E. Wessel and David P. Duncan	
135	Fracture Healing	441
	Bryan E. Wessel and David P. Duncan	
136	Anatomy of a Joint	445
	Shantanu Warhadpande	
137	Classification of Arthritis	447
	Shantanu Warhadpande	

- 138 Hypertrophic Arthritis**449
Shantanu Warhadpande
- 139 Erosive Arthritis**453
Shantanu Warhadpande
- 140 Infectious Arthritis**457
Shantanu Warhadpande

Part VI Neuro

- 141 The Normal Spine**461
Rose Miller
- 142 Back Pain**465
Rose Miller
- 143 Malignancy Involving the Spine**467
Rose Miller
- 144 MRI in Metastatic Spine Disease**469
Rose Miller
- 145 Spinal Trauma**471
Rose Miller
- 146 Normal Brain Anatomy**473
Nagamani Peri
- 147 MRI and the Brain**477
Gaurav Jindal
- 148 Head Trauma**479
Gaurav Jindal
- 149 Intracranial Hemorrhage**485
Nagamani Peri
- 150 Diffuse Axonal Injury**489
Gaurav Jindal

151	Intracranial Pressure	491
	Nagamani Peri	
152	Stroke	495
	Rose Miller	
153	Ruptured Aneurysms	499
	Matthew Czar Taon and Gina Landinez	
154	Hydrocephalus	503
	Matthew Czar Taon and Gina Landinez	
155	Cerebral Atrophy	507
	Matthew Czar Taon and Gina Landinez	
156	Brain Tumors	511
	Rose Miller	
 Part VII Pediatrics		
157	Newborn Respiratory Distress	517
	Alexander Croake	
158	Childhood Lung Disease	521
	David Maldow	
159	Soft Tissues of the Neck	527
	Swapnil Patel	
160	Ingested Foreign Bodies	533
	Andrey Rupasov	
 Part VIII Ultrasonography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging		
161	How Does Ultrasound Work?	539
	Edwin A. Takahashi	
162	Doppler Ultrasonography	541
	Edwin A. Takahashi	

163	How Does Magnetic Resonance Imaging Work? . . .	543
	Edwin A. Takahashi	
164	How to Identify a T1-Weighted Image from a T2-Weighted Image?	545
	Edwin A. Takahashi	
165	MRI Contrast Agents: General Considerations	547
	Edwin A. Takahashi	
Index	549

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Part I

Imaging Modalities

Chapter 1

Radiography



Matthew Czar Taon

What is the process of X-ray production called?	Thermionic emission of electrons. The x-ray beam is created by bombarding an anode target (tungsten, molybdenum, or rhodium) with an electron beam within an x-ray tube [1].
What is Bremsstrahlung production?	Electromagnetic radiation produced during deceleration of a charged particle through the electromagnetic field of a nucleus. Bremsstrahlung radiation provides the primary source of x-ray photons from an x-ray tube [1].
What is the difference between a PA and AP radiograph?	A posteroanterior (PA) chest radiograph is one in which the x-ray beam passes through the back of the patient and exits through the front of the patient to expose an x-ray detector positioned against the patient's chest. An anteroposterior (AP) chest radiograph is obtained when an x-ray beam passes through the front of a patient, exits through the back of the patient, and exposes an x-ray detector positioned against the patient's back.

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By convention, when performing a lateral chest radiograph, which side of the chest is positioned against the x-ray receptor?

By convention, the left side of the chest is positioned against the receptor. Thus, the x-ray beam will travel from the patient's right side of the body toward the left [2].

What are the five basic radiographic densities?

Air, fat, soft tissue, bone, and metal (or x-ray contrast agents) [2].

What is the silhouette sign?

When two substances of the same density are in direct contact, there is a loss of the normal radiographic contour, and the substances cannot be differentiated from each other. This is called the silhouette sign [3].

What is the hilum overlay sign?

The hilum overlay sign is present when the outline of the hilum can still be identified despite the presence of a mass or consolidation in the mid-chest. It implies that the mass is not in the middle mediastinum but rather in the anterior or posterior mediastinum [3].

When performing pediatric radiographs, what three steps should be taken to reduce dose?

Do not use the grid. Lower the kVp. Use the same or lower mAs compared to adults [4].

What is the relationship between kilovoltage peak (kVp) and automatic exposure control (AEC)?	The selected kVp determines the length of exposure time when using AEC. A low kVp requires more exposure time to reach the predetermined amount of exposure and can lead to increased radiation exposure. A high kVp decreases the exposure time required to reach the predetermined amount of exposure and reduces the overall radiation exposure to the patient [4].
What is dual-energy subtraction radiography?	Two images are acquired at different beam energies, either by using low- and high-energy detectors simultaneously or by obtaining two exposures, one at a higher voltage and the other at a lower voltage. This technique can be used to generate images of two independent tissue types such as the bone and soft tissue, thereby reducing artifact due to overlap [5].

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Chapter 2

Computed Tomography



Matthew Czar Taon

What is multidetector helical CT (MDCT)?	A CT scan performed by moving the patient table at a constant speed through the CT gantry while scanning continuously with a rotating X-ray tube, with the added incorporation of multiple rows of detector rings [2, 3, 5].
What is CT dose index (CTDI)?	CT dose index is a standardized measure of radiation dose output of a CT scanner which allows comparison of radiation output of different CT scanners [2, 3, 5, 9].
What is dose-length product (DLP)?	Dose-length product is calculated by multiplying the CT dose index by the length of radiation output along the long axis of the patient. DLP can be used to quantify the total amount of radiation patients receive during a given scan [2, 3, 5, 6].

(continued)

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What is pitch?	Pitch is defined as table movement in 360 degrees divided by collimator width. If pitch is equal to 1, then the next 360-degree circuit starts adjacent to where the last one started, with no gap. If pitch >2, then there are gaps in the reconstruction. Generally, pitch is kept between 1 and 2 [2, 3, 5].
In general, what are the Hounsfield units (HU) for water, air, bone, soft tissue, fat, and lung?	Water is 0 HU, air is -1000 HU, the bone is +400 to +1000 HU, soft tissue is +40 to +80 HU, fat is -60 to -100 HU, and the lung is -400 to -600 HU [2].
What are the general phases of organ enhancement that can be assessed during a multiphase CT?	Pre-contrast, early arterial phase (15–20 seconds post injection), late arterial phase (35–40 seconds post injection), portal venous phase (50–70 seconds post injection), renal corticomedullary phase (25–80 seconds post injection), renal nephrographic phase (85–120 seconds post injection), and pyelographic phase (5–15 min post injection) [2, 8].
What are the two methods to measure contrast material arrival time (transit time)?	The test-bolus method and the bolus-tracking method. The test-bolus method utilizes a small test-bolus injection (approximately 10–20 mL) prior to performing diagnostic CT with a full bolus of contrast medium. The contrast material arrival time is determined from the time-to-peak enhancement in the tissue of interest and is used to estimate scan delay times for full-bolus injections. The bolus-tracking method is based on temporal changes of contrast enhancement at a sampling site during a full diagnostic contrast injection. No test bolus is required. A region of interest is selected on a pre-contrast image, contrast injection is initiated, and sequential low-radiation dose monitoring acquisitions are obtained; when contrast enhancement exceeds a predetermined threshold (such as 50–150 HU), the monitoring acquisition terminates, and after an additional preprogrammed diagnostic delay, a diagnostic CT scan is performed [1, 5].

What is a reconstruction kernel?	A reconstruction kernel is a CT processing algorithm that modulates spatial resolution versus noise. A smoother kernel generates images with lower noise but reduced spatial resolution. A sharper kernel generates images with higher spatial resolution but increased noise. Smooth kernels are usually used in brain or liver assessments to reduce image noise and enhance low-contrast detectability. Sharper kernels provide better spatial resolution and are more effective in bone or lung exams.
What is CT perfusion?	CT perfusion is an imaging technique that provides quantitative evaluation of tissue perfusion through consecutive scans acquired during contrast injection [8, 11].
What is dual-energy CT?	Dual-energy CT utilizes high- and low-peak voltage acquisitions to further characterize and differentiate materials based on their unique attenuation properties. For example, materials with equal Hounsfield densities at 120-kVp imaging can be differentiated by analyzing the materials at high- and low-peak voltage acquisitions (such as 80 vs 140 kVp). Methods for performing dual-energy CT include the use of two simultaneous working X-ray tubes, fast-peak kilovoltage switching, and dual-layer detector systems [4, 7, 10].

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Chapter 3

Ultrasonography



Matthew Czar Taon

What is the ultrasound pulse-echo technique?

The ultrasound transducer transmits a pulse of ultrasound energy into tissue, some of which reflect (echo) back to the transducer upon contact with tissue interfaces. The depth of the tissue interface is determined by the total transmission and reflection time (round-trip time), assuming an average speed of 1540 m/s for sound transmission in human tissue. The data from the ultrasound beam is then converted into a digital image matrix format for processing and display [2].

What are the four descriptive sonographic terms to characterize structures based on echogenicity?

Hyperechoic structures appear white on the display, hypoechoic structures appear gray on the display, anechoic structure appears black on the display, and isoechoic structures appear similar in echogenicity to those of neighboring or normal tissues [2].

(continued)

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What is the thermal index?	A unitless parameter that gives an estimate of the risk of thermal injury caused by an ultrasound beam. It is usually based on a homogeneous tissue model and various ultrasound instrument parameters including power, transducer aperture, beam dimensions, and scanning mode [2, 6, 7].
What is the mechanical index?	A unitless parameter that gives an estimate of the risk of mechanical injury (cavitation) caused by an ultrasound beam. It can be calculated by dividing the peak negative pressure (rarefaction pressure) of an ultrasound wave by the square root of the frequency of the ultrasound wave [2, 6, 7].
What contrast agents are used in contrast-enhanced ultrasound?	Microbubble contrast agents. First-generation ultrasound contrast agents consist of air within a shell of galactose microparticles. Second-generation ultrasound contrast agents utilize more inert and slow-diffusing gases such as sulfur hexafluoride, perfluorobutane, or octafluoropropane within a microparticle shell [3–5, 9–11].
What is intravascular ultrasound?	Intravascular ultrasound utilizes an endovascular catheter-based ultrasound transducer to provide a 360-degree cross-sectional view of vessels in real time [8].
What are the risks of diagnostic ultrasound during pregnancy?	Diagnostic error and possible biological effects. Although there is no documentation of adverse human fetal effects from diagnostic ultrasound, this does not equate to safety. Thermal injury and mechanical injury remain adverse possibilities with ultrasound during pregnancy. Due to the high energy intensity that can be reached with Doppler sonography, the International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends no routine use of pulsed Doppler imaging in the first trimester and, when medically necessary, keeping exposure times as low as reasonably acceptable with a displayed thermal index of 1.0 or less [1, 2].

What is the relationship between ultrasound probe frequency, image spatial resolution, and depth of tissue penetration?	High ultrasound probe frequencies, such as those measuring greater than 10 MHz, provide high spatial resolution but have limited tissue penetration. Low ultrasound probe frequencies, such as those below 3.5 MHz, provide better sonographic penetration of tissues but poorer image resolution [2].
What is the Doppler effect?	The Doppler effect is a shift in the frequency of returning echoes, compared with the transmitted pulse, caused by reflection of the sound wave from a moving object. If an object is moving toward the probe, the frequency will appear to increase. If an object is moving away from the probe, the frequency will appear to decrease. Generally, in color Doppler, blood flow moving toward the transducer is displayed in shades of red, and blood flow moving away from the transducer is displayed in shades of blue [2].
How does conventional color Doppler sonography differ from power Doppler sonography?	Conventional color Doppler can detect the presence of blood flow, determine its direction and velocity, and provide a color display of blood flow direction in relation to the ultrasound probe. Power Doppler sonography has approximately three times the sensitivity of conventional color Doppler for detection of flow but does not display speed and direction information [2].

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Chapter 4

Magnetic Resonance Imaging



Matthew Czar Taon

What is TR?	Time of repetition. The time between administered radiofrequency (RF) pulses or the time provided for protons to align with the main magnetic field [2].
What is TE?	Time of echo. The time provided for absorbed radiowave energy to be released and detected [2].
What are the TR and TE characteristics of a spin-echo T1-weighted image?	Short TR (approximately 500 ms) and short TE (approximately 20 ms) [2].
What are the TR and TE characteristics of a spin-echo T2-weighted image?	Long TR (approximately 2000 ms) and long TE (approximately 70 ms) [2].
What are the TR and TE characteristics of a proton density-weighted image?	Long TR (2000–3000 ms) and short TE (25–30 ms). These characteristics tend to minimize T1 and T2 effects and accentuate hydrogen proton-density differences in tissues [2].

(continued)

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