

Examiners' Report
January 2012

GCSE English Literature 5ET2F 01

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Introduction

There were, as in the first series, a number of responses where candidates engaged with the nature of poetry. This was particularly evident for the unseen poem, where examiners on this Tier professed themselves pleased with the quality of response. There were also many reasonably sound responses to the Anthology poems, but preparation was not always sufficiently thorough. On both the (a) questions on the named poem and the (b) questions that looked for links across two poems, many candidates showed evidence of careful preparation. On the (b) questions, although there were some relevant links, weaker candidates struggled to compare the poems effectively. Some added a brief comparative conclusion, after treating each poem in isolation. More detailed linkage would have greatly improved their grade, as most candidates showed an understanding of each. As was suggested after the summer series, Centres might like to consider ways of helping candidates to find and comment on similarities and differences between two poems, especially in their handling of similar thematic material. For example, many candidates on Question 3 missed the fact that both poems were about the sound and sight of approaching armies.

Question 1

The poem selected for 5ET2F was 'Winter' by Judith Nicholls, a poem with graphic imagery to which most candidates responded well. This question discriminated clearly, with better candidates able to deal soundly, and often quite interestingly, with the poem, and even most of the weaker ones able to respond at their level to the ideas and language.

The key to a successful response was the ability to appreciate that throughout the poem Winter is personified as a powerful and destructive force sweeping through the land.

Considering that the Unseen poem, 'Winter', had not been studied by the candidates there were candidates who wrote answers which were securely in the top band.

Less able candidates could at least respond to the first bullet point (What happens in the poem), some doing so at great length and others including little on the organisation and/or the effects of the poet's use of language.

An experienced examiner noted that it was "a joy to see that several candidates seemed able to use and be confident about using the terminology needed to discuss the effects of language". There were, it was noted, responses that competently discussed the poet's use of metaphor, personification and imagery. When candidates used the terminology inaccurately, however, this tended to stifle any heartfelt response. There appeared to be several candidates who could easily have handled the examination at Higher Level.

Most found the poem accessible and grasped Nicholls's use of personification, though there were others who confused the personification, giving Winter a human identity, "sounds like the man has frozen to death with icicles on his lips". The idea that the poem shifted from describing Winter to talking about actual people was quite common: it was easy to see how this interpretation could arise, and it did not undermine the positive aspects of candidates' responses.

This is the first part of a candidate's response to the Unseen Poem (Q1).

Judith Nicholls poem called 'Winter' is, as the title explains about the arrival of winter and what it does to the environment.

She has organised this poem well, starting with the beginning of the coldness winter bring 'crushed each leaf and froze each web.'

This explains ~~how~~ what winter does to the environment with 7 simple words. How winter effects our world in many different ways.

She has presented this poem in three verses stanza's, each stanza explains a different effect on the environment that winter has.

To help enhance the effects of winter she's used alliteration, 'whispering wood' and 'shivering sea' this really helps explain to the reader what winters like by using adjectives as well as alliteration that also relate ~~back~~ to winter. Using alliteration also makes a poem that's describing something much more exciting to read and helps to understand the feeling of the poem.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate shows a sound grasp and engagement with the poem. The response therefore merits an overall mark in mid Band 5. In this extract, the answer focuses appropriately on how language creates effects. and later in the essay (in the part not included here) moves onto discussing the use of the personification of Winter.



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Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate employs embedded quotations which illustrate the point made.

This is the middle section of a candidate's response to the Unseen Poem (Q1).

The poet has ~~the~~ written the poem in 3rd person, the way he describes each stanza tells us a story of winter, the first stanza starts with "winter crept" which shows it was slow but in stanza 2 it starts with "winter prowled" which tells us that winter is at its

peak. ~~the~~ But the final stanza starts with "winter raced" which tells us it was over after it prowled. therefore the poet has described each stage of winter, the start, the middle and when it finishes.



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Examiner Comments

This is an extract from a response which was generally sound in its understanding and exploration of the poet's language and the organisation of ideas, through the progression of the opening lines of each stanza. It was awarded an overall mark of 15/20, a mark near the top of Band 4.



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Examiner Tip

To reach a Band 5, this response needs a slightly fuller development of the argument.

Question 2

Question 2: Relationships

2(a) 'Even Tho' was the poem selected for candidates' comment. Many candidates engaged with its ideas, showing understanding of the language and imagery. One main difference between the weaker and more sound responses was that the weaker ones tended to summarise without going into any kind of detail about the language or the examples of the writer's craft. Examiners noted that candidates commented on the imagery and language, freely; they often showed understanding of implications of the dialect forms, which appeared not to have formed an insurmountable barrier to candidates' understanding. However, there were some responses which showed little real depth of understanding of the poet's content or ideas.

2(b)(i) With the named poem 'Rubbish at Adultery', which the clear majority went with, most did attempt to show the differences between the two relationships: some did so securely, where they had a clear sense of what they felt the writers were aiming to say about the situations they found themselves in. Others were less than confident about who was who in the adulterous relationship. In particular, there were many inaccurate misinterpretations of 'Rubbish at Adultery', with comments such as "just seems a normal marriage row between a wife and her husband... he wants to go off with someone else".

2(b)(ii) Candidates' own choices of poem included 'My Flesh' and 'Kissing', although few chose this option. The very different contexts of the second poems allowed candidates to consider relationships from a variety of perspectives.

This is the middle section of a candidate's response to Q2(a), focusing on the poem 'Even Tho'.

The language in the poem isn't formal and it does use some examples of slang. Such as "leh", instead of saying "lets" she says this to keep it casual and like a conversation. Grace Nichols' poem Even Tho is written from the caribbean and so it has a caribbean accent. We can tell this especially in the last stanza, she says "person/ality". Using this language keeps it flowing and we can read it as Grace Nichols is speaking in front of us.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

In this extract the candidate shows a generally sound grasp of how the writer uses language to focus in particular on the way that dialect conveys meaning. The overall mark awarded for Q2(a) was just into Band 4.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

For a Band 5 mark, comments such as those on use of language (eg 'person/ality') needed further depth of treatment.

This is the last part of a candidate's response to Q2(a), focusing on the poem 'Even Tho'.

It is clear to the reader that the ^{woman} ~~girl~~ and man love each other, but the last two verses explain the second side to the poem that was explained earlier. In the second to last verse it reads "But then let us break free yes, let us break free" So she's then saying that they should break free, become separate. The last verse explains in more depth what the second to last verse means ~~and~~ "And keep to the notion of we own personality" she has just explained that she wants to be her own person and to be free from anyone else.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate offers some relevant textual information, showing some grasp of the ideas. The mark awarded was 7/15, Band 2.



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Examiner Tip

Be sure to think about how to extend comments on quotations rather than just paraphrasing.

This is the middle of a candidate's response to Q2(b)(i), linking 'Rubbish at Adultery' to 'Even Tho'.

with the writer. Sophie Hannah writes how rubbish he is at cheating, "You're rubbish at adultery". She is very blunt and spare any feelings. She only wants a short relationship "I'd settle for a kiss" and then "... for an hour or so," this is alike those thoughts and feelings of Grace Nichols in Even Tho. Grace Nichols only wants a short, sweet, relationship "leh we hug up" and later "leh we break ~~up~~^{free}". Both writers only want a short, pleasurable relationship.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Some links are established between the two poems. In this extract, the candidate considers the nature of the relationship in each, but the ideas are not developed fully. This response overall scored 9/15, keeping it at the top of Band 3, as more detail was required.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Include a wider range of points on the second named poem and link, wherever possible, to the first poem (although equal coverage is not required).

This is the concluding paragraph of a candidate's response to Q2(b)(i), linking the two stated poems.

Finally like the poem 'Even Tho' the last verse shows the poets true view of the relationship and more importantly what she really wants. "Choose one and do it properly you stupid, stupid git. That ~~verse~~ verse showed me read that poet ~~the~~ want either one or the other. And not half and half, so she totally different from the poet of 'Even Tho'.



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Examiner Comments

The conclusion refers to the thoughts and feelings of Sophie Hannah in 'Rubbish at Adultery' with some cross reference to 'Even Tho'. The overall mark awarded was 8/15 as it is quite general, although an overall understanding is shown.



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Examiner Tip

Make sure that points are supported by close reference to the texts.

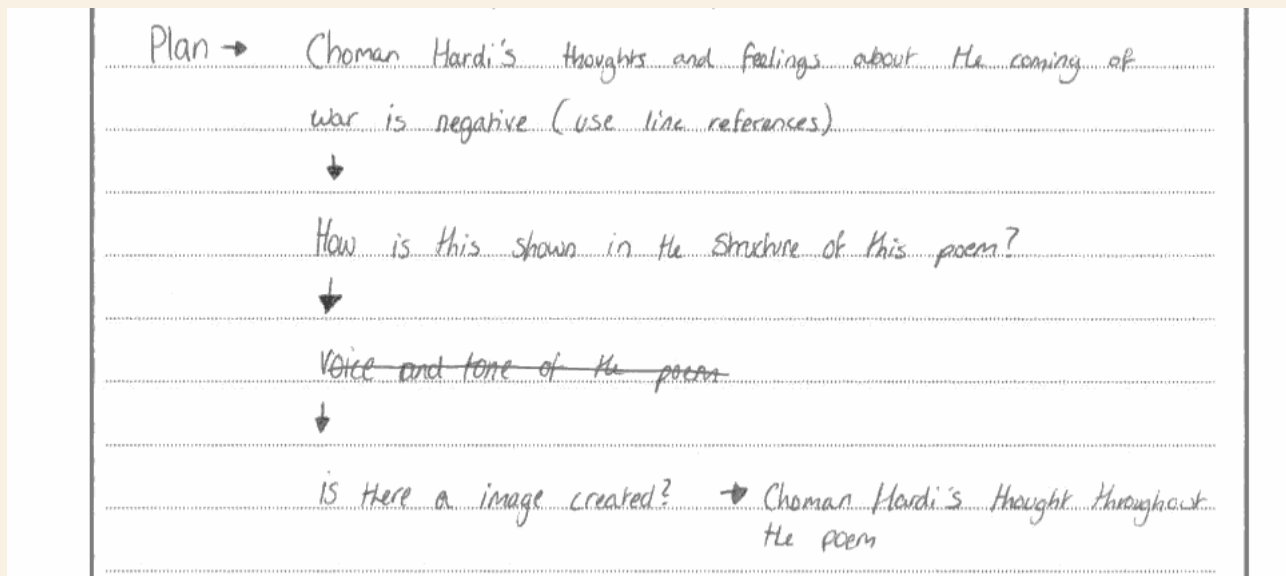
Question 3

3(a) The named poem on this popular question was 'Invasion'. For many candidates this poem allowed engagement with the situation described, but interpretations did not always show full assurance or appreciation of the writer's language and its effect. The most successful responses on this Tier referred to the threatening undertones and the imagery of the poem. To make full sense of this poem, some appreciation of the historical background and context was surely important. Candidates need to appreciate the nature of this conflict and its geographical and political location.

3(b)(i) In comparing 'Invasion' with 'O What is that Sound', the sense of approaching war and danger was the most frequently noted point of similarity. Some appreciated well the way in which the writers built up the sense of fear and the reality of war. However, many candidates showed a lack of certainty in their handling of the two characters in Auden, so that the significance of the final stanza, in particular, was often not explored effectively. This uncertainty about what was actually happening in the poem made it hard for candidates to write effectively when comparing the two poems.

3(b)(ii) Most candidates answered (b)(i) on 'O What is That Sound', but for the candidate's own choice of poem in (b)(ii), there was a variety of appropriate examples available. For example, 'August 6 1945' was selected by some candidates because it showed a very different perspective on war.

This is the plan and opening paragraph of a candidate's response to Q3(a) on 'Invasion'.



Answer: A. Choman Hardi's thoughts and feelings about the coming of war is negative, this is shown by the choice of words. On lines 4 it says "In their death-bringing uniforms." He could have just said in their uniforms, but he added death-bringing to create more emotion. On lines 14-15 he says "...we've lost this war before it has begun." Showing that he believes there is no hope in winning, it makes you wonder if he has already given up before the war has even started.



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Examiner Comments

The opening of this response shows a generally sound grasp of the poem, with supporting evidence. The mark awarded for the whole response was 12/15, Band 4.



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Examiner Tip

A brief plan can help to sort out ideas to ensure a clear structure and a relevant introduction focuses on the thoughts and feelings of the writer. NB: it is not necessary to put in the number of the lines when quoting.

This is an extract from towards the end of a candidate's answer to Q3(a) on 'Invasion'.

lose' this war. It's like he already knows
What's going to happen and has a really
negative feeling. He says how the blood will
cover their roads and mix with their drinking
water, which makes you think of dead bodies all
over the place and there being that many that
all their blood is leaking into the drains and
into their drinking water. In the last stanza



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Examiner Comments

The candidate shows a limited grasp of the ideas in the poem, with a tendency to state ('He says...') rather than analyse. Overall, this rather brief answer was awarded 6/15, at the top of Band 2.



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Examiner Tip

All points should be supported by short and relevant quotations.

This is an extract from the middle of a response to Q3(b)(i) on 'Invasion' and 'O What is That Sound'.

There is a lot of repetition in 'O what is that sound', which grabs the readers attention and sounds like, i think, that she is stuttering because of the nerves that the coming of war has brought. On the other hand 'Invasion' does not use repetition but it's choice of words grabs the readers attention. There is a lot of imagery created in 'Invasion' but not so much in 'O What is that sound'. ~~apart from~~ On line 36 it says "And their eyes are burning". This creates the image of anger.

The structure in 'O What is that sound' is good because just by glancing at the poem you can see that the last line of each stanza is shorter than the others, which draws the attention of the readers and shows that they have a lot of meaning in them. 'Invasion' does not have a clear structure which i think is bad because it doesn't draw the readers attention to it.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate has written generally sound comments linking the two poems. There is some clear evaluation of different ways to achieve effects. Comments could be more fully developed. Overall, this answer scored 11/15, in Band 4.



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Examiner Tip

For a Band 5 response, ensure that all examples are appropriate and well supported.

This is the last part of another candidate's response to Q3(b)(i).

When the ~~poem~~ poem starts to get negative the man is about to leave and the woman is getting upset as you can tell by what she says for example 'Were the lows you swore deceiving, deceivings?' It's like she thinks he's

leaving her for someone else but it's just that because he's a man he has to go to war. In the last stanza he says how they kind of break in to collect him and how their boots are 'heavy' on the floor like their mad or marching around.

I think this poem is quite different to 'Invasion' because this one starts off positive then turns negative, it has a lot of repetition and there is more of a story to it.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This extract fits into Band 3 (8/15). There is some linkage between the two poems in the last paragraph, with some appropriate references to 'O What is That Sound', but the comments are undeveloped.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Make sure that points linking the two poems are developed fully, with sufficient comments on the second named poem.

Question 4

4(a) 'My Mother's Kitchen'. There were very few answers on this section. Of those who answered this question, several candidates gave straightforward, narrative accounts of the poem, but with no awareness of the more over-arching themes.

4(b)(i) The stated poem for comparison was 'Sea Timeless Song'. Candidates who had not fully appreciated the first poem naturally struggled to make effective comparative points with this one. Some said that growing vegetation played a function in both poems, and noted that the poems both addressed permanence and change but with little close reference to the poems.

4(b)(ii) There were few answers to this part of the question. Several poems about particular places were chosen to compare the poets' treatment with that in 'My Mother's Kitchen'. However, comparative points were not always clearly made.

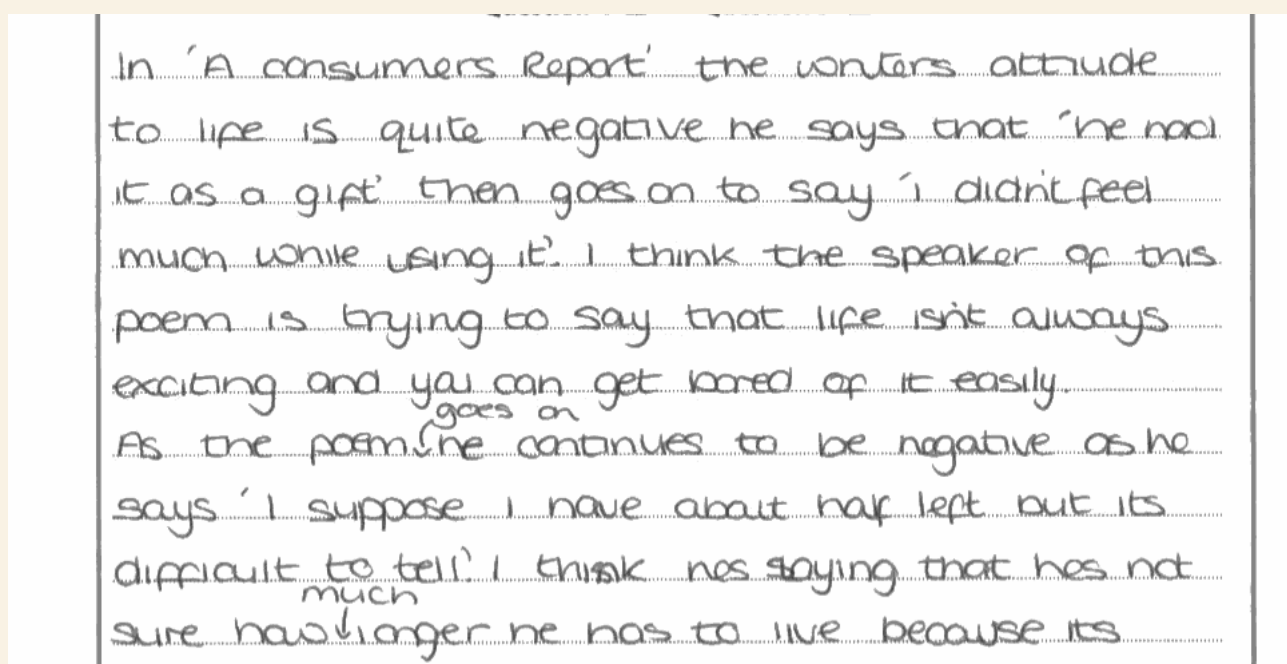
Question 5

5(a) 'A Consumer's Report' elicited some mostly sound responses, but this section attracted fewer responses than Questions 2 and 3 (though more than Question 4). An appreciation of attitudes expressed in this 'report' on life was a key feature.

5(b)(i) In making links between this poem and 'On the Life of Man', candidates offered some interesting responses. Central to sound responses was an appreciation that both poems offer a commentary on life, viewed as either a 'product' or a piece of theatre. However, the writer's use of theatrical genre (comedy and tragedy) misled some into thinking that the writer saw life as 'one big joke'.

5(b)(ii) Where candidates offered their own choice of poem, this was generally appropriate and permitted comparisons. For example, candidates sometimes looked at how life is viewed in 'The World is a Beautiful Place', and the most effective responses on this Tier were able to compare the stance of the two writers.

This is the first page of a candidate's response to Q5(a) on 'A Consumer's Report'.



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difficult to tell, and a happy person would just live the life.
The consumer of this product also presents himself as being a bit sensitive towards other people in the world. 'I'm not sure such a thing should be put in the way of children.' This is a part of the poem where the attitude of the writer changes and I think what they are trying to say is that children need a helping hand in life as it can be difficult.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The selection of examples is mostly appropriate and there is some support for the points made about the writer's attitudes. Overall, this was awarded 12/15, a mark at the top of Band 4.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

For a Band 5 answer, candidates should evaluate clearly how the language and ideas are related, picking out key words.

This is the first half of a candidate's answer on Q5(b)(i) on 'The Life of Man' and 'A Consumer's Report'.

The poems 'Consumer's Report' and 'On the Life of Man' present different attitudes. Life is ⁱⁿ like 'On the Life of Man' the poet Sir Walter ~~Raleigh~~ Raleigh explains how life is like a play and that when life ends it is like the curtains closing. But in 'Consumer's Report' the poet Peter Porter writes about how life is like a product.

The first and main difference in attitude is that 'On the Life of Man' takes quite a ~~dark~~ dark attitude towards life whereas 'Consumer's Report' takes a mostly negative attitude towards life.

'On the Life of Man' has a dark attitude because the poet sees life as a play and that heaven is just a harsh judge who just points out people who do things wrong. He also says that 'our mothers' wombs are like firing houses where we are ~~dressed~~ ^{dressed} for this short comedy'. This sounds as if life is short and that we are just living so people can watch and laugh. Then finally when the curtains close that means we die so this poem takes a more ~~dark~~ ^{report} darker look on life than 'Consumer's Report'.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

There is some evaluation of 'On the Life of Man', with brief links between the two poems. Points are made but without full development of the attitudes. An overall mark of 9/15, top of Band 3, was awarded for this question.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Ensure that the interpretation is fully supported from the text and the linking points are clearly justified.

This is the whole of a candidate's answer to Q5(b)(ii), on 'No Problem' and 'A Consumer's Report'.

In the poem 'No problem' the speaker's attitude is more positive than in 'A consumer's Report'. 'I greet you with a smile' ~~F~~ Straight away in that line the word 'smile' ~~is~~ stands out. It shows the speaker wants the reader to feel the happiness he is bringing.

In 'A consumer's Report' straight away you can feel the negative vibe of the poem ^{one way} ~~line~~ does this ^{is} by saying 'it was not economical'. The word that stands out to be negative is 'not' because if you are being positive and happy you would just touch on the bad things and focus on all the good.

Also the attitude in 'No problem' ~~is~~ comes across as the writer wanting to persuade the reader that they 'are not de problem'. This tells me the writer wants the reader to see they are not

negative and that all they are doing is showing the positive things about them.

Whereas

In 'A consumers Report' the writer says 'I'd like to leave until I get the competitive product'. I think this shows how different the attitude is of this writer to the writer of 'no problem?'. This is because the writer is saying that he doesn't really care what happens he's going to leave anyway.



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Examiner Comments

This response is rather brief and the comments are not fully developed, although there are some links established. The candidate has chosen an appropriate second poem but does not refer to sufficient examples. The overall mark was 8/15.



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Examiner Tip

If candidates opt for a (b)(ii) answer, they must choose a poem carefully and refer to it in sufficient depth, as well as making links with the first named poem.

Paper Summary

Overall, the response to the poems showed understanding and engagement with sections of the paper.

The candidates, however, should:

- include more detail and development in their answers
- make full use of examples, not just listing them or language features
- keep separate and clearly label the two parts of the Section B answers - (a) on one named poem; (b) (i) on a second named poem or (b) (ii) on a second poem of their choice
- remember to write their responses for Section B on their chosen collection of the Anthology (some candidates attempted answers on two or three collections)
- think carefully about how to make effective links and comparisons, addressing both poems (although equal weighting is not required)
- write their answers in the correct part of the answer booklet.

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