

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCSE English 5EH2H 01

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Introduction

Familiar strengths and weaknesses were apparent in the responses of candidates during the series: the character questions in Sections A and B are completed with continuing success, whilst answers to the theme questions tend to be the least successful. This may have something to do with time management, with some candidates spending too much time on the character questions, leaving themselves short on the theme questions. However, a larger number of candidates do seem to have a much clearer idea of what is required from the theme questions.

Candidates had no difficulty in generating ideas to write about in Section C, although technical inaccuracies continue to limit overall achievement. Time spent by candidates in planning and checking is invaluable and should be adopted more widely to ensure structured and less error-strewn responses.

Teachers continue to be inventive in devising strategies to help their students and many successful responses in all sections of the paper demonstrate the effectiveness of these.

Question 1

A majority of candidates answered on *Romeo and Juliet* with most of the rest answering on *Macbeth*.

1 a) This was answered soundly with most candidates picking out a number of aspects of Juliet's character and being able to support them with quotations. Many were able to grasp the complexities of the situation, noting that Juliet is grieving for Romeo's banishment at the same time that Lady Capulet believes she is bereft at the loss of Tybalt. The most perceptive investigated Juliet's language, such as the parenthetical 'dead' and the possible meanings of 'temper'.

1 b) This was less well answered and some candidates produced generalised and vague performance suggestions. Candidates did not always understand the need to consider how each line should be delivered and explain their decisions. The extract invites candidates to consider the difficulty of Juliet's predicament and how this would be reflected in her behaviour, alongside a clear understanding of Lady Capulet's preoccupations. The best answers focused on the gap in understanding between the two characters and how this could be reflected in their body language.

1 c) The majority of candidates had no difficulty in suggesting a short scene related to revenge and recounting the events. The challenge is also to show what the chosen scene tells us about characters, their relationships and its effects on the rest of the play. The candidates who made use of the acronym CRISP, as outlined in previous reports, often produced clearer and more disciplined responses. Romeo's fateful response to Mercutio's death, some perceptive candidates commented, was an indication of how rash and immature he could be.

This response is atypical in that it contains substantial answers to both the (a) and (b) questions whilst also producing a response to (c) which merits a top band mark.

Write your answer to Section A here:

9) In this extract, Shakespeare presents Juliet in a challenging situation: she is devastated and sad, 'let me weep' as she just heard about her cousin Tybalt murder by Romeo. yet her mother thinks she cries Tybat death. When her mother insults Romeo: 'villain', Juliet whispers 'villain and he be many miles asunder' because she is loyal to her lover and protects him. Also, she is forgiving him as she says 'God pardon him!' When her mother talks about vengeance, Juliet is struggling, because she has to say what she doesn't agree with just to content her

mother 'Would none but ~~aveng~~ I might revenge my
cousin's death'. For that, she speaks in a
convoluted way, which shows her wit and intelligence.
The pause after 'I behold him' illustrates that.

Also, this conversation shows that she doesn't
confy in her mother, her mother is not close to
her and doesn't understand her. 'We will have vengeance'

B) If I was the stage director, I would ask the
actress playing ~~Lady Capulet~~ Juliet to be
sat in her bed, embracing her knees and have
her face bathed in tears. She would say with
a shaking voice 'Feeling so the loss ^{of her friend}
^{because she is devastated, she just heard about Romeo's murder}
the actress playing Lady Capulet would be close
to her bed, stood up and looking Juliet down
at Juliet, she would express sarcasm when
saying 'Well, girl.... him'. ^{Because her mother doesn't understand her.}

than Juliet would be shocked, her eyes would
be wide open when she hears her mother
insults Romeo. Because she loves Romeo and
protects him. And then say with the same
shaking voice ~~stand~~ on interrogative tone:

'What villain' and whispering 'Villain ~~her~~
and he be....' then she would leave her
bed, stand up and say with a tone that

betrays ^{because she is loyal to her husband and protects him} ~~her~~ ^{God} ~~her~~ ^{prayer} ~~him~~ ^{heart} ~~him~~
the nurse would be observing the scene from
a corner and gathering her hands to pray
for Juliet as she cares about her life
her daughter.

C

c) In Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Revenge
is a crucial theme and affects the overall level
of emotions. In Act 3, scene 1, Mercutio can
not bear the humiliation Tybalt inflicts on
Romeo, then he challenges him to a duel.
However, Tybalt ~~also~~ kills Mercutio, which enrages
Romeo: 'Fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!' so
he avenges his best friend's honor.

This scene has a great impact on Romeo
as his anger and grief turns him from a
lover to a fighter.

And the murder of Tybalt, made the wrath
of the Capulet's family enflamed: As Lady
Capulet, in turn, wants to avenge Tybalt's death
by sending someone to Paris to kill Romeo,
worsening the relationship between the two feuding
families.

The ~~stuck~~ of revenge, creates tension in this scene and draws the play to its climax turning the comedy to tragedy. The plot is driven further, as the revenge of Romeo resulted in him being banished.

(Section A continued) Steinbeck uses, is using the ~~stuck~~ of revenge as an obstacle to such a passionate and wholly absorbing love as Romeo and Juliet's to say that it can not ~~exist~~ survive as it is in a cruel world.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate's response to a) is a thorough answer which presents thoughtful and illustrated points about Juliet being in 'a challenging situation' and speaking 'in a convoluted way'. A little more development might well have demonstrated the perception needed for a mark in band 3.

The candidate's response to b) is also thorough, showing clear understanding of Juliet's predicament whilst suggesting feasible performance features.

The candidate's response to c) is perceptive, making points about structure ('draws the play to its climax turning the comedy to tragedy') and Shakespeare's ideas (about love not being able to survive in a cruel world) as well as about character and plot.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should plan their time so that they can write a full answer to question c).

Question 2

2 a) Many candidates successfully explored Macbeth's state of mind as shown in the extract: his fear, his anxiety, his plans to preserve his hard-won status and his intentions towards Banquo. The most successful candidates commented, with perception, on how Macbeth's decision not to share all his plans with Lady Macbeth ('Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck') indicated a shift in their relationship. Other incisive points arose from an exploration of the imagery Macbeth is using or from his comments about Duncan ('he sleeps well') showing how much he envies the dead king's inability to feel the evils Macbeth is experiencing.

2 b) The more successful candidates focused on the Macbeths' tones of voice and their intimacy, especially Lady Macbeth's attempts to calm her husband. The less successful fell back on ideas concerning stage lighting and props, which did little to show understanding of how the actors should be feeling.

2 c) Again, candidates had no trouble in suggesting a relevant extract dealing with fear. Again, the best responses went further than describing what happened. However it is significant, I think, that far fewer candidates made the mistake of listing a number of different scenes or of discussing the theme in general terms.

This is an inconsistent response in which the character answer is significantly more successful than the other two.

Write your answer to Section A here:

a) Shakespeare presents the character of Macbeth as a guilt ridden man after all that he had done, "affliction of these terrible dreams". His mind keeps replaying what he has done to King Duncan, which is stopping him from sleeping at night. He knows that what he had done was wrong so his mind won't let him forget, this is an action of guilt from himself. Also, Macbeth is presented as a cruel/evil man, "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well" As if to say that what he had done was just to stop King Duncan from in pain, he can now sleep very well now. But he has no choice but to sleep if Macbeth had killed him. He does not care about the life that he had just taken.

In addition to this, "Must love our honours in these flattering streams" shows that he uses false appearance upon his guests in order to stop/prevent any suspicion on himself. He wants to show his guests what a kind, helpful and generous man he is when (Section A continued) in actual fact his trying to mask his true self.

Finally, Macbeth is secretive when it comes to lady Macbeth, 'Be innocent of the knowledge, my dearest chuck' he does not want his wife to know of his plans ~~but~~ because she is a lady and is supposed to be innocent, but it was in fact her who forced Macbeth to kill King Duncan in the first place. She was the one who fuels Macbeth's fire of Ambition.

B) ~~Next~~ To the side of the stage there would be lady Macbeth and Macbeth to show the audience that what they are saying is supposed to be secretive unless they would have been found out. With a small distance apart from one another Macbeth sounds optimistic that Duncan is now in a better place. 'After life's fitful

fewer he sleeps well' his face does not look bothered when it is in it's natural look. The audience would recognise this as his him being calm once again towards Duncan and (Section A continued) what he has done to him. His mood quickly changes when he turns away from his wife, 'nothing can touch him further' he sounds like he has disappointment in his voice yet still not feeling like what he has done was wrong. He does not want lady Macbeth to see the disappointment that he has. Lady Macbeth turns him back whilst leaving her hand on his shoulder as comfort 'come on, Gentle my lord' the audience can see that she is the most dominant of the couple and that is why she is there to comfort him. Her hope and optimism builds when she tries to uplift his mood to get him to stop being as obvious to what they have done, 'Be bright and jovial among your guests tonight' She does not want anyone to find out what she and he had done to their 'noble king'. Macbeth repays what Lady Macbeth was trying to do by mimicing her, 'so shall I, love; and so, I pray, be

you' as if he is ~~is~~ telling her that she just wants him to be ~~like~~ like her. This would show the audience that he is not kind to her when she is to him, he repays bad with the good at all times.

c) Fear is also significant when Banquo and Macbeth is going to kill king Duncan, he sees the blood stained dagger and does not want to go forth in the crime which he feels he must take part in, in order to fulfil his ambition of power and get his royalty. The blood stained dagger guides him to duncans room but also creates the guilt for Macbeth for what he is going to do is truly wrong which in his mind he knows, but does not want to stop. If he stops his wife would see him as a coward and as less of a man which he really does not want. This could drive a wedge between their relationship with one another because she wants him to do it whereas he did want to do it and has now changed his mind. This shows that Shakespeare is saying Ambition isn't always a good thing.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate's response to a) makes a range of valid and supported points, which takes it securely into band 2 but there is a lack of understanding which prevents access to band 3.

A lack of understanding is also evident in the candidate's response to b), but, more significantly, the candidate has produced a commentary on the scene with few performance suggestions.

The candidate's response to c) is generally a sound response which comments on Macbeth's conflict but lacks focus on the significance of fear.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should imagine that they are directing actors in the scene when writing their response to the performance question.

Question 7

Almost all candidates answered on *Of Mice and Men*. *Heroes* was less popular than in the past with small numbers of candidates choosing to answer on one of the hitherto neglected texts such as *Anita and Me* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

7a) Large numbers of candidates scored maximum marks by pointing out that George used to take advantage of Lennie, but that he was now showing remorse and that he now relied on Lennie to avoid the loneliness of an itinerant worker (supported by evidence). A number went a lot further, showing a considerable amount of perception about George's fear of isolation and his eagerness to confide in Slim. However, once three good points have been made, candidates should be moving on to the next questions. Many candidates wrote two or three pages on George and then wrote just one short paragraph in response to question 7 c), which is, of course, worth 10 marks.

7 b) Comparatively few candidates got to grips with this question, choosing to write a character sketch of Lennie rather than looking carefully at the language used to present him. A successful answer depends on a clear shift of focus to consider how single words and phrases function to present the character (in this case) or feature under discussion.

7 c) There are plenty of parts of the novel which feature violence, actual, reported or threatened. The most popular were Lennie's crushing of Curley's hand or his killing of Curley's wife. A simple retelling is not enough and most candidates were able to incorporate some elements of CRISP. The most successful remembered to refer to context also: the lonely life of the ranch hand, the dreams of those trapped in a narrow life, the power structure on the ranch or the absence of effective law-enforcement.

This is a mixed response, with a successful answer to c).

Write your answer to Section B here:

a) The extract presents George as a thoughtful character, 'he says "jump in" ... Well I ain't done nothing like that no more' this shows that George used to just use Lennie as his entertainment but he then began to respect him the way that he should after he doesn't care what George does, as long as he helps him then he is all ~~okay~~ about it.

Also, George happy and proud of what friendships and bonds that he has made with Lennie, 'I ain't got no people' ... 'They have no fun' implying that because he has Lennie to travel with he ~~doesn't~~ still has a lot of fun and he doesn't get mean, as he has somebody unlike the rest

of the men that just travel alone.

In addition to this, George is short tempered and frustrated sometimes with Lennie, 'Course Lennie's god damn nuisance most of the

(Section B continued) time' he knows that Lennie can get on his nerves alot of the time ~~but~~ and he ~~does~~ does shout at him alot awwell due to his frustration.

But on the other hand he cares alot about Lennie, 'But you get used to goin' around with a guy' an' you can't get rid of him' This shows that he doesn't only think of Lennie as a frustration because he also could never get rid of him as they are now like a pair they need / have to work together and travel together.

(Section B continued) B) ~~Language~~ Language is used in the extract to present the character of Lennie, firstly with repetition of 'dumb' George continually calls him dumb as a way to mock Lennie's mental disability. He is very childlike minded which is what causes him not understand alot of things, not that he is actually stupid but his mind is just slower in processing and calculating things.

In addition, the use of 'he aint mean' shows

that Lennie doesn't understand that his size changes the way people see him, they think that because he is so big that he is then going to be an awful person, but in actual fact he is the complete opposite.

Also, George always mocks how childlike Lennie's mind is, 'jokes played on him' that Lennie didn't even realise about. George knows that Lennie's weak spot would be how childlike and mentally lower than other people so he uses that against him a lot of the time.

(Section B continued) c) Violence is also significant in Chapter 6 when Lennie kills Curley's wife. Throughout the whole of the novel Lennie has had a fascination with Curley's wife which has all built up to this point when they are both left alone together. The build up throughout has been that no matter how many times Lennie was warned away from Curley's wife he always still ends up being near her. This whole scene was inevitable from the beginning especially when he had done the same thing in Weed with the girls' ~~were~~ red dress which Curley's wife also wears throughout the story. Not only did Lennie have a fascination with Curley's wife but she also was with him, this was due to them both being isolated on the ranch but both

for ~~and~~ different reasons. Curley's wife was isolated because she was a woman and was only known really as Curley's sex object 'gloves of vaseline' because in the 1930's women were not socially accepted like men were, they were not equal to one another, therefore she was Curley's possession. Whereas Lennie was isolated because of his mental disability, he is seen as less of a man due to him not being able to understand a lot of what was happening or what George did. Therefore they were both isolated, seen as weak and (Section B continued) were driven to this part in the novel. Also throughout the whole book Lennie has been petting things too hard and ending up killing them, each time he has done it and as time goes on, the objects that he is killing are getting bigger; mice; dog; a person. It was unexpected yet still quite obvious that Lennie was also going to hurt Curley's wife but he killed her by breaking her neck.

This had driven the rest of the plot because it means that it led to the ending of Lennie, George and Candy's dream because Lennie was then shot by George as his act of kindness and friendship. Also the death of Curley's wife ended when she had been killed because she definitely could no longer become an actor when she was dead.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate's response to a) is thorough, making several valid and supported points about George.

The candidate's response to b) has some points about language, whilst mainly being an account of other characters' opinions of Lennie.

The candidate's response to c) is a band 3 response, combining a perceptive understanding of the inevitability of the death of Curley's wife with relevant and embedded points about context.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should remember to make their points about context relevant to the part of the text they have chosen.

Question 11

This was by some way the more popular of the two writing questions. It was not surprising that young people have a view on whether life is too easy for them. Most responses declared that it isn't. The more successful were measured explanations of the pressures placed on them, by the media, by peers, by parents, by teachers. Many fulminated against exams, or the job market, and the most impressive were often those who made positive suggestions to improve their lot. Just occasionally, a candidate would argue with conviction from the opposite corner, telling teenagers in general to pull themselves together. Such comments were invested with added strength when candidates referred to the lives of young people in other parts of the world.

This is a lively and confident response, gaining marks in band 5.

Write your answer to Section C here:

Life couldn't be any more difficult for young people! The only people who think life is too easy for young people have obviously lost all memories of their youth. It has to be one of the most challenging life stages. A young person draws the plan and is responsible for their entire future; doesn't sound very easy to me! Ask yourself. Do you really think life is easy for young people? ~~Maybe~~ If you do, I am certain this article will change you mind.

First of all, we have the main thing: exams! How can anyone think the life of a young person is easy, when at the ages of 15-16 years, our future is reliant on how we perform on paper. We have to work ourselves to the point of exhaustion, just because we need to pass. Failure isn't an option. Every young person has a dream to have a big house, ~~valuable~~ astonishing car, plenty of money. However, we do

(Section C continued) not have a very promising future if we don't do brilliant on our exams. They take over our lives! There is nothing worse than the thought of failure. The thought of everyone being disappointed in you, the thought of them being embarrassed by you, but mainly the thought of them feeling sorry for you and looking down on you. The generation of young people have a dangerous habit of trying too hard to impress others. We drive ourselves to the point where our mental and physical health deteriorates, because we cannot fail. Does that sound like an easy life to you?

Similarly, we are at the stage in our lives where we experience the most change. The stage where we physically and mentally prepare to be an adult. We mature, grow taller, get smarter and have to deal with the worst hormonal changes in existence. One minute we're as happy as Larry, the next we're crying in our own tears. Our body goes through extreme change, we experience things we never have before, but we still have to figure them out. We go through a stage where our self-concept is like a yo-yo. Confident one minute, then a ~~little~~

(Section C continued) Little tiny thing can cause that confidence to come crashing down. We have to deal with feelings we have never felt before, although we're too embarrassed to tell anyone or ask for advice. Most days we just want the ground to open up and swallow us whole. Every single day we are faced with a new challenge that we have to deal with as well as school, socialising and striving towards success. Does that sound like an easy life to you?

Likewise, the pressure we feel is like a mansion is situated on our shoulders. Always under the pressure to impress, to be the best we can be, to not fail, but it's not that easy. We are faced with the pressure to be perfect. It's dangerously draining. A young girl can't leave the house without her hair and make-up done, looking her best because she fears the judgement. A young boy cannot bear to be the laughing stock because he has not done the same as his friends. Peer pressure is our biggest battle. All us young people dream for popularity, knowledge and good looks. Therefore,

(Section C continued) We will not sabotage ourselves by committing social suicide. We have to fit into society, do what is in right now, wear the right clothes and be perfect. As a young person I am always finding myself making decisions based on what other people will think. I feel this constant pressure, which is impossible to overcome, I just have to live with it. Day in, day out 9/10 young people are fighting the losing battle to be accepted by society. Does that sound like an easy life to you?

However, no matter how hard we're finding it our parents and older people think all we do is eat, whine and sleep. They don't know the half of it. Like I said they must have forgotten what their youth was like. Parents nag at us constantly, we just want a break. Teachers bombard us with work as if school is the only thing we live for. They just don't understand. They think we have everything handed to us on a silver platter. They majorly underestimate how hard it is. If for one day, they were a teenager again, they'd understand then. They'd feel sorry for us

(Section C continued) actually. They'd be glad they don't have to deal with it themselves. Considering it is not possible for them to magically turn into a teenager, they still think we're lazy and unachieving. They couldn't be more wrong.

Personally, I believe the life of a young person is more difficult than anything other. I know that as a young person we don't have to pay bills, or provide for ourselves, but we have our whole future in our hands. If we don't succeed as a young person, there is no chance we will ever be able to pay the bills or provide for ourselves. 90% of people who didn't achieve at least five A^R-C's on their exams are now on benefits. It's a scary thought for us. ~~Without~~ Without any qualifications, we will not get very far at all. It's terrifying. Does that sound like an easy life to you?



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Examiner Comments

The candidate addresses the audience with assurance, using rhetorical devices to persuade, such as alliteration, without them seeming too forced or obtrusive. Colourful imagery enlivens the ideas and there is a clear structure controlled by cohesive devices. There some errors but these are rare.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should think about the best ways to convince the reader that what they are writing is valid and make it compelling.

Question 12

Many candidates struggled with structuring this question and often ended up meandering off topic or straying into fantasy scenarios. There is nothing wrong with a candidate imagining themselves into a future situation after an important decision has been made, but there must be a focus on the decision and why and how it was taken. Some candidates created outlandish future lives for themselves resulting from being offered dream jobs and having made the decision to accept the offer. Others misunderstood what was required and presented a talk on how to make decisions in general, subsequently falling short in terms of substance and direction. The best responses to this question were grounded in reality and common situations facing students such as which school/sixth form to choose or whether to join the world of work instead.

This is a concise response demonstrating that a written piece (in this case the text of a speech) doesn't have to be long to be successful.

Write your answer to Section C here:

Good afternoon everyone, my name is Kelly and I have been asked to talk to you today, about ~~and~~ an important decision I had to make in my life. I had to decide whether or not I should go to university and pursue my love of zoology or whether ~~to~~ I should carry on working ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ my current part time employment, in the hope of being trained up in my ^{current} position. The decision was not an easy one! I found myself having an internal battle between my head and my heart. My head ^{was telling} ~~told~~ me to stay in employment and train to the highest level I possibly could. Everyone ~~hears~~ has heard the news reports stating the statistics on the unemployment rates here in the U.K, we have also heard about the level of debt that the average university student is left with after their bachelors degree. I wasn't sure if I wanted to spend the next 15 + years of my life

(Section C continued) constantly chasing my tail in an attempt to rid myself of over £20,000 debt. On the other hand, my heart seemed to be screaming at me to 'seize the day' and follow my dreams. After all, we only live once! The idea of living a life full of travel and adventure, filled me with joy. ~~Travel~~ ~~Conservation~~ Working in conservation, and helping save ~~many~~ endangered species is what I live for. After all, we can either work to live or live to work. Wouldn't it be great to wake up each morning with a spring in ~~your~~^{our} step and a smile on ~~your~~^{our} face ~~at~~ the prospect of what the day could bring?

It took me months of reading articles, making spreadsheets of pro's & con's and talking to my ~~total~~ family, friends and professional to make my decision. There were tears of pure despair at not knowing what to do for the best, there was anger at ~~my~~ my family members who told me something I didn't want to hear, and finally there was joy, elation even at the point of ~~my~~ settling on a decision. My mind felt peace

(Section C continued) for the first time in months.

I guess your wondering what I decided on? Although some of you may have already guessed. I have decided to follow my heart and chase my dream of becoming a zoologist. I came to the conclusion that life is far to short to live a life of regrets, ~~and not at least trying~~ and to ~~not at least try~~ even try to get my degree would be one of my biggest. ~~regrets!~~

So, when you have a big decision in your life, make sure ~~to~~ you make an informed decision but most importantly follow your dreams. You only live once.

Thank you, for listening.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate takes us through the process of her decision-making and it is convincing as a personal account. Rhetorical devices are used confidently and there is a sharp focus on the audience.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should visualise their audience and make their response relevant to them.

Paper Summary

There are signs that the (a) questions in both sections A and B are being approached with assurance and confidence by most candidates. Many more than in the past are able to meet the challenges of the language question in Section B, and have clearly benefited from word – and phrase – level analysis, whilst many candidates would benefit from a structured approach to answering the performance question in Section A. Answers to (c) questions in both Reading Sections have shown a marked improvement with some centres clearly adopting CRISP, or something similar, to give candidates a helpful framework.

There has been an apparent and continuing increase in the number of candidates managing their time effectively and completing all sections of the paper.

Writing responses clearly benefit from being carefully planned and checked for accuracy.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Use a structured approach to answer the performance question in Section A
- Use word and phrase level analysis in the language question in Section B
- A framework such as CRISP may help in the Reading sections
- Carefully plan and check writing responses for accuracy.

Grade Boundaries

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