Lesson Planning Guide

World Order of Bahá’u’lláh

The Institutions of the Bahá’í Faith

Level Three
Acknowledgments

Since 1988 the National Bahá'í Education Task Force has collected spiritual education materials on a wide range of topics from teachers throughout North America. This Lesson Planning Guide draws upon these materials and integrates them into the Core Curriculum learning framework. In addition, we are deeply grateful for the contributions of Ernestine Atkins, Mary Firdawsi, Michele Murphy, Katherine Johnson, Rick Johnson, Jeanette Livesay, Pepper Oldziey, and Barb Qualls.

Cover art for this Lesson Planning Guide is a mixed media work by Mehrdad Iman. Original illustrations are by Marilyn Lindsley.

National Bahá'í Education Task Force, February 2007
Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech.

Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í Education, no. 9, p. 3

This brief quotation from the writings of Bahá’u’lláh inspires the learning model for the Core Curriculum, a learning model that engages the volition of the learner by appealing to varied capacities, capabilities, and interests. For the purposes of the Core Curriculum, participants develop these fruits in the following way:

**Knowledge**
To become informed of the sacred writings on a spiritual principle;

**Wisdom**
To gain deeper understanding of a spiritual principle;

**Spiritual Perception**
To reflect on the application of a spiritual principle learned;

**Eloquent Speech**
To articulate or demonstrate the spiritual principle learned.

The Bahá’í writings compiled in the book, *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, guide the ongoing development of the curriculum. These writings outline the purpose, process, content, outcomes, and organizational principles for a spiritual education curriculum open to all.

**The Content of the Curriculum**
Bahá’í sacred writings, referenced in *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, outline the content or “strands” of the curriculum. The term “strand” provides the image of a combination of interrelated threads that, woven together, create a beautiful tapestry of spiritual education.

That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the Laws of God.

Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í Education, no. 14, p. 3

Following this exhortation of Bahá’u’lláh, the content of the Core Curriculum is organized into three strands, or major categories of study:

- The *Central Figures* of the Faith
- The *Principle of Oneness*
- The *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*
Themes of Study

Each strand has several themes:

**The Central Figures** includes The Báb, Baháʼu’lláh, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.


**The World Order of Baháʼu’lláh** includes The Covenant, The Guardianship, The Institutions of the Faith, Huqúqu’lláh and the Bahá’í Funds, and A Life of Service.

Three Levels of Study

The Core Curriculum provides three levels of study. All of the themes of study are organized into a nine-year sequential curriculum for children and junior youth, ages 6 through 14:

- Level One, for children 6–8,
- Level Two, for children 9–11,
- Level Three, for junior youth 12–14.

These three levels of study may be adapted to meet the needs of learners of all ages and varied backgrounds. In a growing community, this flexibility enables beginning learners to start with the concepts of Level One, using age-appropriate activities.

The spiritual education of each learner is carefully documented in a comprehensive Spiritual Education Plan.

Instructional Methods and Learning Tools

A wide variety of Instructional Methods and Learning Tools are also described in the Bahá’í writings, including such diverse approaches to learning as individual study, group consultation, and use of all the arts and sciences. Within each theme, specific goals and topics systematically guide the learner to increasingly deeper levels of knowledge, understanding, spiritual insight, and action.
Lesson Planning Guides and Storybooks
An effective spiritual education process engages the hearts and minds of learners to result in active lives of service to God and humanity. These detailed Lesson Planning Guides provide teachers with learning objectives and fully developed sample activities utilizing the arts, sciences, crafts, and other learning methods suggested in the Bahá’í writings.

Training of Children’s Teachers
A system of careful training and hands-on practice supports teachers to become fully adept at using these materials to teach children and junior youth. A growing collection of illustrated storybooks enhances the lessons being taught. The Core Curriculum Teacher Training Program systematically builds the skills to use Lesson Planning Guides and Core Curriculum Storybooks with children and junior youth. The initial 32-hour training program includes:

Module One: The Bahá’í Teacher—Station, Role, Qualities and Preparation
Module Two: The Spiritual Reality of the Child
Module Three: Teaching with Core Curriculum Materials
Module Four: The Child Development Centered Community

These first four modules systematically demonstrate a rich range of instructional methods and learning tools described in the Bahá’í writings. Teachers will then be able to engage the hearts of learners through the use of these diverse instructional methods and learning tools in their own classrooms.

Following this initial period of training, an ongoing series of Teacher Development Workshops assists teachers to continue to develop their skills in classroom management; storytelling; attending to each student’s capacity, capability, and interest; and adapting lessons to local circumstances.

We warmly invite you to participate in this process of ongoing spiritual education and training. You may arrange Core Curriculum Teacher Training and Teacher Development Workshops by contacting your Regional Training Institute.

An Integrated and Comprehensive Community Approach
The spiritual education of children and junior youth includes an active role for teachers, parents, institutions, and every member of the community. Core Curriculum Training Programs encourage communities to invest their time and resources in the spiritual education of children and junior youth, described by the Universal House of Justice as “the most precious treasure a community can possess.”

In addition to providing a spiritual education program for children and training for teachers, the Core Curriculum offers training for youth empowerment, parenting, marriage and family life, race unity, equality of women and men, and a sequence of courses addressing the fundamental verities of the Bahá’í Faith.

For more information about the Core Curriculum Teacher Training program, additional classroom materials for teachers, and storybooks for children and junior youth, please visit www.core-curriculum.org online; or write the Office of Education and Schools at the Bahá’í National Center, 1233 Central St., Evanston, IL 60201; or phone (847) 733-3492; or email schools@usbnc.org.

The National Bahá’í Education Task Force
USING THIS LESSON PLANNING GUIDE

This Lesson Planning Guide provides a learning framework and detailed sample activities for the study of the Institutions of the Bahá’í Faith. Before making specific lesson plans for your class, consider reading through the entire sequence of topics, and the flow of activities within each topic, to familiarize yourself with the overall content of the Lesson Planning Guide.

Detailed instructions for writing lesson plans are provided on pages 192–97. An overview of the entire contents of the Core Curriculum is provided in the Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence, pages 198–201.

Learning Objectives and Suggested Learning Activities

At the beginning of each topic in the Lesson Planning Guide you will find a list of learning objectives for each component of the learning framework—Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception, and Eloquent Speech.

Objectives are followed by suggested learning activities. You may use these suggested activities when planning your lessons, or create additional activities using the Core Curriculum Instructional Methods and Learning Tools listed in the Appendix, pages 196–97.

Sample Activities

Following the listing of Objectives and Suggested Activities, you will find a series of sample activities created by experienced teachers of the Core Curriculum.

Each activity is designed to achieve one or more learning objectives.

Activities are designed to use a variety of Instructional Methods and Learning Tools, to address the varied capacities and capabilities of diverse learners.

A lesson may consist of only a few, or many activities, depending on the time available for your classes and the capabilities of your students.

To achieve the learning goal, address objectives from all four components of the Core Curriculum Learning Framework—Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception, and Eloquent Speech over a series of two or more lessons.

Using the Lesson Planning Template located in the Appendix, pages 193–94, you can create lessons that will engage the interest, curiosity, and attention of your students, increase their knowledge, and build their skills of service.

Additional Resources

At the end of each topic in this guide you will find a list of additional published resources that relate to that topic. In some cases stories, pictures, or other materials have been included for your convenience.

Appendix

At the end of this Lesson Planning Guide is an appendix, containing a Lesson Planning Template, a Checklist of Instructional Methods and Learning Tools, the Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence, reference information, and sources for additional information and training opportunities.
Lesson Planning Guide

World Order of Bahá’u’lláh
Institutions of the Bahá’í Faith
Level Three

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APPENDIX
Planning Lessons

1. **Reflect** deeply on the capacities, capabilities, and interests of your students.

2. **Pray** for divine assistance.

3. **Create** your own lessons for these young souls using the Lesson Planning Template provided on the following pages.
   - You may wish to begin by relying on the detailed sample activities that are provided on the preceding pages.
   - As you become more experienced, you will want to adapt the activities to the learners in your class and to develop your own activities, based on the Suggested Learning Activities.
   - To create your own lesson plans, first carefully study the Learning Objectives and Suggested Learning Activities for the lesson topic.
   - Then use the Instructional Methods and Learning Tools described on pages 198–99 to design lessons tailored to the specific needs of your learners or to take advantage of particular circumstances in your community.

**CORE CURRICULUM TEACHER TRAINING**

This Lesson Planning Guide has been created to assist you to plan and conduct Bahá'í children’s classes. You will also find that Core Curriculum Teacher Training will assist you to better implement these materials. To participate in a Core Curriculum Teacher Training in your area, contact your Regional Training Institute. For more information about the Core Curriculum visit our website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org), or you may contact the Office of Education and Schools at the Bahá'í National Center, 1233 Central St., Evanston, IL 60201, phone (847) 733-3492, or email schools@usbnc.org.
LESSON PLANNING TEMPLATE

STRAND:

Goal _______________________________  Topic _______________________________

Ages of Learners _______________________________  Number of Learners________________

Key Characteristics and Special Diversities of Learners:

Time needed to prepare to teach this lesson:
Time needed to actually teach this lesson:

Objectives for this lesson: (Use relevant objectives from the Lesson Planning Guide)

At the end of this lesson the learners will be able to:

Knowledge: (Become Informed)

Wisdom: (Understand)

Spiritual Perception: (Reflect and Apply)

Eloquent Speech: (Act/Teach/Serve)

Instructional Methods and Learning Tools: (Use the checklist on page 197 of the Appendix to ensure diverse strategies)

Materials/Resources needed to teach this lesson:
**Procedure for this lesson:**

**Opening prayers and music:**

Welcome, review previous lesson and action assignments:

**Motivating the lesson:** *(How will you engage the interest/curiosity/attention of the students?)*

Develop suggested activities and/or use sample activities: *(Which part of the learning model does each activity address—Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception, or Eloquent Speech? Not every activity will address every part of the learning model.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Materials needed</th>
<th>Time needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Closure:** *(How will you bring the activities in the lesson to an end?)*

Action assignments to be completed before the next class:

**Closing prayers and music:**
**Instructional Methods and Learning Tools Checklist**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strand:</th>
<th>Direct Study of the Bahá'í Sacred Writings</th>
<th>Groups and Consultation</th>
<th>Use of Questions and Peer Teaching</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Briefly describe your activity in the left-hand column. Then check the instructional methods or learning tools you are using. Strive to utilize the full range of instructional methods and learning tools over a series of lessons.

Look for gaps and, if necessary, revise your lesson plan to better meet the capacities and interests of your class.
Core Curriculum Instructional Methods and Learning Tools

taken from *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, pp. 152–68

**Establish a Loving Environment**
Be thou a teacher of love in a school of unity.


**Direct Use of the Bahá’í Sacred Writings**
Train these children with divine exhortations.


**Education Directed Toward the Recognition of God**
We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge. . . .

Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 129

**Involve Service to Humanity**
The honor and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world’s multitudes should become a source of social good.


To assist Me is to teach My Cause.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 196

**Engage the Mind and Heart**
The principles of the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh should be carefully studied, one by one, until they are realized and understood by mind and heart—so will you become strong followers of the light. . . .


**Private Study of the Writings**
. . . Stimulate the students to proceed in their studies privately once they return home. . . .

on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Centers of Bahá’í Learning*, p. 8

**Establish Bonds of Unity and Friendship**
Let them seek but love and faithfulness. . . .


**Use of Consultation**
Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

Bahá’u’lláh, in *Consultation: A Compilation*, p. 3, no. 1

**Use of Questioning and Peer Teaching**
Oral questions must be asked and answers must be given orally. They must discuss with each other in this manner.


**Independent Investigation and Using the Power of Reasoning**
Therefore, depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation. . . .


**Use of Memorization and Recitation**
It is . . . highly praiseworthy to memorize the Tablets, divine verses and sacred traditions.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in *Bahá’í Education*, p. 30, no. 77

Teach . . . the words that have been sent down from God, that they may recite. . . .

Bahá’u’lláh, in *Bahá’í Education*, p. 6, no. 23
Use of Meditation and Reflection
Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 174–75

The source of craft, sciences and arts is the power of reflection.

Baha’u’llah, Tablets of Baha’u’llah, p. 72

Use of Parables and Stories
Divine things are too deep to be expressed by common words. The heavenly teachings are expressed in parables in order to be understood and preserved for ages to come.


. . . Stories regarding the life of different Prophets together with Their sayings will also be useful to better understand the literature of the Cause. . . .

on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Baha’i Education, p. 53, no. 130

Use of Music
Music is an important means to the education and development of humanity. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Baha’i Writings on Music, p. 8

Use of Drama
The drama is of the utmost importance. It has been a great educational power of the past; it will be so again.


Employ Creativity and the Arts
Art can better awaken such noble sentiments than cold rationalizing, especially among the masses of people.


Engage in Science and in the Investigation of the World of Nature
Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation.

Baha’u’llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 26

And whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence.

Baha’u’llah, Prayers and Meditations, p. 272

Play and Use of Manipulatives
They should be taught, in play, some letter and words . . . as is done in certain countries where they fashion letters and words out of sweets. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Baha’i Education, p. 30, no. 78

Use of Travel
If a man should live his entire life in one city, he cannot gain a knowledge of the whole world. To become perfectly informed he must visit other cities, see the mountains and valleys, cross the rivers and traverse the plains. . . .


Use of Recreation
A wise schoolmaster should send his scholars out to play . . . so that their minds and bodies may be refreshed, and during the hour of the lesson they may learn it better.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in “Baha’i Methods of Education,” Star of the West, vol. 9, no. 8, p. 91
Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education
Scope and Sequence

Purpose – The Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence, a table found on the following pages, is designed to assist teachers and communities in planning curriculum for Bahá’í classes. It creates an integrated sequential program across all published Core Curriculum strands. Following this tool throughout the nine years of instruction ensures that the full range of content is covered, and will:

- Assist Local Spiritual Assemblies and Education Committees in providing guidance for structuring a systematic spiritual education program
- Provide teachers with a tool for sequencing curricular units of study in Bahá’í education (A Teacher’s Spiritual Education Planning document may be ordered from Louhelen Bahá’í School, (810) 653-5033, or email Louhelen@usbnc.org)
- Keep parents informed through a feedback tool that shows what a child or junior youth has studied or will study (The Student’s Spiritual Education Record may also function as a transcript. This tool can be ordered from Louhelen Bahá’í School, (810) 653-5033, or email Louhelen@usbnc.org)
- Ensure consistency in quality and content of spiritual educational program throughout the Bahá’í community
- Ensure that children and junior youth maintain a consistent spiritual education program after moving from one community to another
- Enable new Bahá’í children and junior youth to be easily incorporated into a systematic Bahá’í educational program

This sequential approach presents a well-balanced division of all available topics of study. In a community where the majority of students are children, the following age range is suggested for each level: Level 1: six – eight year olds; Level 2: nine – eleven year olds; Level 3: twelve – fourteen year olds.

The levels may also apply to an individual’s general knowledge and understanding of the Core Curriculum topics as well as to chronological age. For instance, level one is applicable to a new believer of any age. The objectives are therefore ageless and apply equally to adults and children. Lessons may be planned for mixed age groups by adapting the activities to the needs of the group.

Structure – The Core Curriculum organizes the content of spiritual education curriculum into strands, including The Central Figures of the Faith, The Principle of Oneness, and The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. Each strand may have several curriculum booklets or Lesson Planning Guides.

The Scope and Sequence is reproduced on pages 188–89. Reading across the page from left to right, the contents of the curriculum are listed in rows. Going down the table, the content of each strand is displayed across levels. Learning Goals are listed in bold type; Topics are listed in regular type. Although it is possible to find the same goal of a given booklet mentioned in more than one level, a specific topic is only assigned to one level.

For example, under the booklet The Báb, the goal of “Historical Context” appears in both Level One and Level Two, but the topics of that goal covered in Level One are different from those covered in Level Two. Every topic from every strand booklet is placed in this table; thus a student who completes this course of study will have been introduced to every topic of the entire curriculum set.
This table allows a community to plan their whole curriculum at a glance, to see where they have been and where they are going. For each strand, classes should cover the topics sequentially from one level to the next.

**Examples of Implementation** – The following three examples illustrate several ways that communities organize their classes.

*Example 1:* Community A, a small but growing community begins their classes with 14 children, organizes classes by age, and plans Level One class content for ages 6–8; Level Two for ages 9–11; and Level Three for ages 12–14. Two teachers are assigned to each age group. They determine how to divide the topics in their Level over a three-year span, ensuring that by the end of three years all of the topics in their Level will be addressed.

*Example 2:* Community B, a larger community with 57 children at the beginning of the year, also organizes classes by age, and uses class content Level One for ages 6–8; Level Two for ages 9–11; and Level Three for ages 12–14. However, they have different classes for each age. A school committee has divided the topics of each level into 3 years of study. For instance, they noted that there are 27 topics in Level One, so 9 topics have been assigned to the 6-year-old class; 9 topics to the 7-year-old class; and 9 topics to the 8-year-old class.

*Example 3:* Community C, a Bahá’í community totaling 23 members, plans 3 multi-age classes. Each class studies the same strand, but one class covers Level One topics, another class covers Level Two topics and a third class covers Level Three topics. Thus the entire community may study the Báb in the spring of the year; Bahá’u’lláh in the summer; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the fall; and Oneness of Humanity during the winter. Since each class will cover only a few topics of their Level in each strand, the cycle will repeat with new topics for the Báb in the spring of the following year; new topics for Bahá’u’lláh in the summer; new topics for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the fall; and a study of The Covenant during winter.

**Embracing a Rapid Cycle of Growth** – As more and more individuals and families become attracted to the regenerating Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í schools of all sizes must be ready to welcome these individuals with open arms. The example communities above illustrate different methods for integrating new members into existing Bahá’í classes.

In both examples 1 and 2, which divide classes by age, various solutions can be employed to ensure that students newly placed in classes can still learn topics their classmates have previously explored in previous classes. For example, a 10-year-old child of a new Bahá’í family will need to learn content elements of Level One, although the child enters a Level Two class. It is important, for instance, that every Bahá’í child study the Level One topic, “Prayers and Meditations of Bahá’u’lláh.” Community A has appointed a youth mentor to work weekly with this new Bahá’í outside of class. Community B has a formal home-study program and an adult home-study teacher to serve entering children. In example 3, the 10-year-old child of a new Bahá’í family is easily integrated into the multi-age Level One class along with other family members.

Produced by the Education Task Force of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, 2001
### Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education of Children and Junior Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND: PRINCIPLE OF ONENESS</th>
<th>STRAND: THE CENTRAL</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>LEVEL 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ONENESS OF RELIGION</strong></td>
<td><strong>BAHÁ’U’LLÁH</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding of the Oneness of God:</td>
<td>Love for Bahá’u’lláh:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Meaning of Divine Unity</td>
<td>- Prayers and Meditations</td>
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<td>Understanding of the Major Religions of the Past:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Nature and Purpose of Religion</td>
<td>- Children of His Household</td>
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<td>- No Distinction or Separation</td>
<td><strong>RACE UNITY</strong></td>
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<td>- All Are Born With Potential</td>
<td><strong>EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN</strong></td>
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<td>- To Be a True Seeker</td>
<td>- Principle of Unity in Diversity</td>
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<td>Equality and How It Differs from Being the Same:</td>
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<td>- The History, Laws, and Teachings of Major Religions</td>
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<td>The Greatest Means for Unity:</td>
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<td>- The Essential Foundation of All Religions</td>
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<td>Understanding of the Oneness of God:</td>
<td><strong>ONENESS OF RELIGION</strong></td>
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<td>- Progressive Revelation—The Prophetic Cycle</td>
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**JUNIOR YOUTH: COMING OF AGE**

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—Institutions of the Bahá’í Faith
“If... the child be trained to be both learned and good, the result is light upon light.”
— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Core Curriculum

The Principle of Oneness
- Oneness of Religion
- Oneness of Humanity
- Race Unity
- Equality of Women and Men

Central Figures
- Bahá’u’lláh
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- The Báb

World Order
- Life of Service
- Bahá’í Funds
- Guardianship and the Institutions
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