WORKING WITH POLYMERS

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WORKING WITH POLYMERS

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1. STOCK FORMS AND SECTIONS

2. POLYMERS AND STANDARD FITTINGS / COMPONENTS

3. POLYMERS AND WORKSHOP TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

4. FORMING / MOULDING OF PLASTICS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU DOWNLOAD THE TWO APPS ON PLASTICS FOUND IN THE MOBILE APP SECTION OF

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STOCK FORMS AND SECTIONS

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Polymers (plastics) are supplied in a range of forms, sections and shapes.

Companies that intend to process polymers through injection moulding, blow moulding and extrusion, order polymers in the form of

granules.



GRANULES FOR INJECTION MOULDING, BLOW MOULDING, AND EXTRUSION

Companies shaping polymers through processes such as vacuum forming and compression moulding prefer sheets.

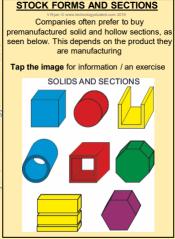


SHEET FORM. VARIETY OF SIZES AND THICKNESSES

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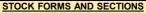






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FOAMS

Styrofoam is an excellent model making material. It is very light and easy to cut and shape using a hot wire cutter. It can also be shaped with hand tools and files. It can be painted using water based paints (emulsion paints) giving a really good finish.

Lightweight Polyurethane Model Board is another popular foam polymer.

They are order by length x width x thickness.

Tap the image for information / an exercise

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STOCK FORMS AND SECTIONS

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When ordering materials:

Granules are ordered by weight and pigment (colour) Sheets are ordered by length x width x thickness (gauge) Solid Rounds are ordered by diameter x length. Hollow round sections are ordered by diameter x wall thickness x length Solid square sections are ordered by height x width x length Square sections are ordered by height x width x wall thickness AND SO ON..... Tap the link button for a POSTER on stock forms.



POLYMERS AND STANDARD FITTINGS / COMPONENTS

Standard fittings and components used with materials such as wood and metal, can generally be used with polymers.

The following slides will take through a range of standard fittings and components

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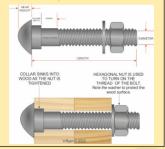


COACH BOLTS

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The coach bolt has a square collar under the domed head and this locks into the wood when the nut is tightened. A washer is normally placed before the nut to stop it sinking into the polymer as it is turned.

Tap the image for more information



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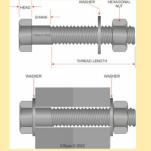


MACHINE BOLTS

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Two spanners are needed to tighten this nut and bolt. The first spanner fits round the hexagonal head of the bolt and a second spanner is used to tighten the hexagonal nut.

Tap the image for more information



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Tap the image for more information and an exercise on coach / machine bolts



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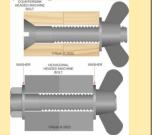
COUNTERSUNK BOLT AND WING NUT

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The countersunk machine screw fits level with the surface of the wood/metal/plastic. A screwdriver is used to keep the bolt still whilst the wing nut is tightened by hand. The 'wings' of the wing nut, are designed to be

comfortable when tightening the nut and bolt.

Tap the image for more information



Tap the blue button for the next JOINTS page.





OTHER COMMON BOLTS

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A plain washer prevents the nut sinking into the surface of the wood/plastic/metal

If there is a need to prevent a nut and bolt loosening a spring washer is used.

MACHINE SCREW - ROUND HEAD

Tap the blue button for the next JOINTS page.









Tap the blue button for the next JOINTS page. Tap the red button to return to the Contents page



POP RIVETING

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Pop riveting is a technique that is used to join thin pieces of metal and it can also be used to join plastic sheet. The rivet has two parts; the pin and the rivet. The pop rivet piers are used to pull the pin through the rivet and as this happens the rivet is deformed slightly so that it joins the metal or plastic pieces. This technique is used where the metal or plastic is thin and where the joint does not have to be very strong.

Tap the image for more information



Tap the blue button for the next JOINTS page.

POP RIVETING

The two pieces of plastic or aluminium are drilled slightly larger than the rivet. The pop rivet is passed through both holes in the sheet plastic / aluminium. Rivet pliers are pushed on to the pin of the rivet and the handles are pulled together. The pin head is pulled into the rivet and the end of the rivet expands. Eventually the pin breaks off, leaving the rivet permanently fixed in poelition, budding the two pieces of plastic.

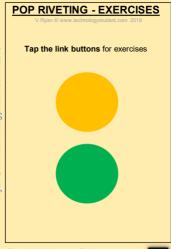
position, holding the two pieces of plastic / aluminium together.

Tap the image for more information

Tap the blue button for the next JOINTS page.







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SELF-TAPPING SCREWS

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These are normally used to cut a thread in metal. A hole is drilled in the metal, a fraction smaller than the width of the screw. The self-tapping screw is then turned into the hole cutting a thread. This type of screw works well with plastics.

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TENSOL CEMENT

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Tensol cement is a type of glue called 'dichlormethane methyl methacrylate' and produces a chemical weld between two surfaces. The glue is applied to the surfaces to be glued and they are pressed together. They should be clamped for 24 hours and this gives a permanent joint.

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CONTACT / IMPACT ADHESIVE

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Contact adhesive can be used to join plastics. The adhesive is applied to both surfaces and when the surfaces appear to be dry they are pushed together. If the two pieces of material are left for a number of hours, they are virtually impossible to take apart.

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EPOXY RESIN

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Epoxy Resin is a two part adhesive. One tube is the glue and the other is the hardener

/ catalyst. The catalyst speeds up the hardening / drying process. When the two 'glues' are mixed together the solution hardens very quickly. This is a permanent glue although it can be quite 'messy' to use. It can be used to join almost any material.

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CYANOACRYLATE (SUPER GLUE)

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Cyanoacrylate is an extremely popular glue and is found in almost every household. Some super glues are liquid which is helpful when there is a need to allow the glue to flow along a joint line.

Other super glues are in a gel form, which means more precise application can be made.

Tap the images for more information and an exercise



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CYANOACRYLATE (SUPER GLUE)

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A hot glue gun is a very useful tool for joining modelling materials and even more substantial materials can be fixed together with it. 'Sticks' of solid glue are pushed into the back of the gun, the trigger is pressed pushing the glue stick forward and molten glue comes out of the nozzle. The glue is manufactured from thermoplastics.

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CYANOACRYLATE (SUPER GLUE)

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Liquid solvent is applied using a brush or a syringe (often supplied with the glue). As it is a liquid, it is drawn along joints and surfaces through a process called capillary action. Care must be taken, as the glue damages exposed surfaces (as it melts the surfaces of the materials forming a 'weld joint').

Tap the images for more information and an exercise

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HINGES

Hinges can be regarded as a standard fitting. They are used on wood, metal and plastics. They are fitted to plastics with screws, glues and even welded through a heat treatment process. Some common standard hinges are shown below

Tap the image for information / an exercise BUTTERFLY HINGE

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FLUSH

HINGE

PIANO HINGE

BUTT

HINGE

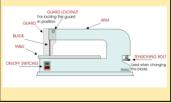
BARREL HINGE

THE FRETSAW

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The fretsaw is a general workshop machine. It is used to cut and shape light materials such as perspex, MDF and plywood. These can be used to cut very detailed shapes and they are supplied with different types of blade according to the material that is to be cut. Plastics such as acrylic, should have a layer of masking tape on the surface, before cutting, just in case the material shatters.

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THE DRILLING MACHINE

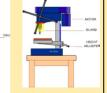
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There are two types of machine drill, the bench drill and the pillar drill. Both are used for drilling holes through materials including a range of woods, plastics and metals. The material should be clamped, placed in a machine vice or bolted down, for safety. Plastics such as acrylic, should have a layer of masking tape on the surface, before drilling, just in case the material shatters.

Tap the images for information / an exercise

MACHINE DRILL





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SUITABLE DRILL BITS

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Twist Drill Used for drilling holes. A normal drill set will include sizes from 1mm to 14mm.



Hole Saw

For large diameters a 'hole saw' can be used. Interchangeable sizes



Countersunk Bit Creates a hole that allows countersunk screws to be level with the surface



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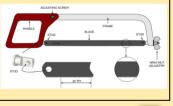




SAWS SUITABLE FOR PLASTICS

The hacksaw is used to cut steel and other metals. It can also be used to cut plastics, although it is not normally used to cut woods. It is sometimes called an adjustable hacksaw because the length of the frame can be altered to hold blades of different sizes. Blades are supplied in two lengths, 250mm and 300mm. If the adjusting screw is unscrewed, the frame can be pushed into the handle so that the smaller blades fit the hacksaw.

Tap the image for information / an exercise



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SAWS SUITABLE FOR PLASTICS

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The Junior Hacksaw. This is a small version of the full sized hacksaw. It has a smaller blade which has 'fine' teeth, making it a little easier to use when cutting plastics. Other smaller saws suitable for plastic include the 'abrafile', ideal for cutting in any direction and the piercing saw for very fine and accurate work.

Tap the image for information / an exercise



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Both the centre and dot punches are used in the same way. A ball pein hammer is used to tap the head of the punch and this delivers enough force to the point of the punch to put a small indentation into the surface of the material. This is important when drilling plastic accurately and safely.





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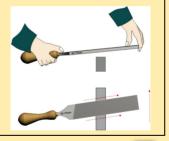


HAND FILES

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Hand files are used in the workshop to smooth rough edges. They can be used to smooth a range of materials including metails such as brass and steel to plastic based materials. They are made from high carbon steel and they are heat treated so that they are tough and durable.

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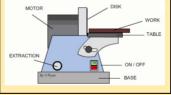


THE DISK SANDER

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The Disk Sander is used to smooth materials such as woods and **plastics**. It is also used to remove small amounts of waste material. It is a dangerous machine if safety is ignored. Goggles must be worn at all times. Hands and fingers must be kept as far away from the rotating disk as possible. A guard, making it impossible to use the wrong portion of the rotating disk must be in permanent position.

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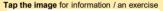
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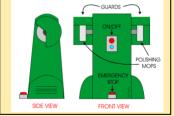




THE POLISHING MACHINE

The edge of a piece of plastic is smoothed using hand files, sanding disks, wet and dry paper and finally the **buffing / polishing machine**. It is used to polish the plastic 'edge'. The two 'mops' spin at high speed when the 'on' switch is pressed. If the material is carefully pressed against the mop and moved backwards and forwards it will be polished.



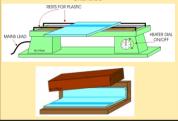




THE STRIP HEATER (LINE BENDER)

One of the most popular methods of shaping plastic materials like acrylic, is to fold (bend) it on a 'strip heater'. A heating element extends along the length of the strip heater. The plastic is warmed on the 'heater', it becomes pliable and is placed in a mould, bending / holding it to the required shape. When it cools, it can be removed, set to the angle

Tap the image for detailed information / an exercise



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VACUUM FORMING

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Vacuum forming is used when an unusual shape like a 'dish' or a box-like shape is needed. Many everyday items have been vacuum formed in this way. The process starts with making a former, over which, the plastic will be 'formed'.

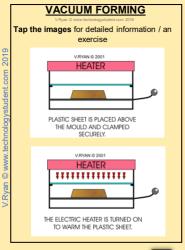
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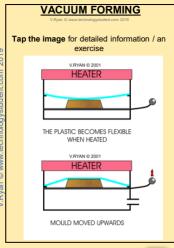






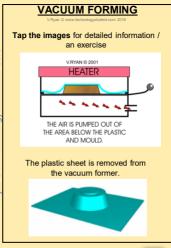
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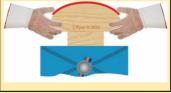


DRAPING / DRAPE FORMING OF PLASTICS

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Draping is ideal when shaping / forming plastics, as it is a relatively cheap and simple process. It involves heating a thermoplastic (e.g. acrylic) in an oven and then pressing it against a single mould (sometimes called a mandrel or former). When the plastic has cooled, it remains in the shape / form of the mould.

Tap the images for detailed information / an exercise



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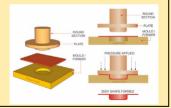


PRESS MOULDING

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Press moulding - 'pressing' a mould into a sheet of heated and pliable acrylic, so that it takes on the form of the mould. Below, a small strip of heated acrylic is placed on top of a piece of pine, directly over a 'blind' hole (the former / mould). A piece of round section of wood is pressed into the acrylic, forcing a portion of the acrylic into the blind hole, forming a 'dish' shape.

Tap the images for detailed information / an exercise



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DOMING PLASTICS

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A thermoplastic sheet, such as acrylic, is heated in an oven and formed into a dome, using pressurised air. Domes are very strong structures and are ideal for light covers and fitments, security camera covers, underwater devices including large scale submerged viewing areas and hygiene / display covers for food.

Tap the images for detailed information / an exercise



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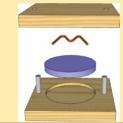


PLASTIC MEMORY

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When a thermoplastic is heated until it becomes pliable / flexible, it can be moulded into another shape. When the same thermoplastic is heated again, it will return to its original shape / form. This is called 'plastic memory'. This is a very useful physical property.

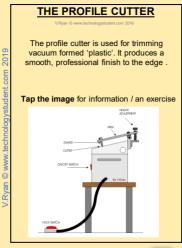
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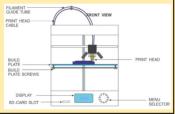
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FILAMENT SPOOL 3D PRINTERS

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3D printers construct a 'model' by building up layer upon layer of PLA, Nylon or ABS, fed from spool, usually at the back of the printer. Each layer is a fraction of a millimetre and building even a small model can take sometime. Filaments tend to be 2.85mm diameter (known as 3mm filament), rolled on to a spool. The spool fits on a roller, normally on the back of the 3D printer

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STEREOLITHOGRAPHY

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Layers are built up one at a time. A laser 'solidifies' a layer of polymer powder, layer after layer, until the product is complete.

Tap the image for detailed information / an exercise



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PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF 3D PRINTING

3D printing is a process, whereby a 3D CAD design is manufactured on a machine capable of producing a solid form / model.

3D printing is already important as an industrial process, in the production of some tools, textiles, toys, jewellery and a range of components. The technology also has been used in the medical world, in the manufacture of custom made prosthetic limbs and hearing aids. It even has a practical application in the world of dentistry. Research has been taking place for several years on 'bioprinters'. These are complex 3D printers, capable of printing bio-structures, used in surgery.

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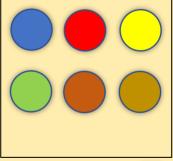




<u>3D PRINTING – LINKS TO</u> INFORMATION AND EXERCISES

Tap the link buttons for detailed information / an exercises on 3D Printing

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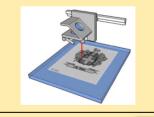


LASER CUTTING MACHINES

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Laser cutting / etching machines are quite simple in the way they work. The lens system that controls the position of the laser, is itself moved by a motorised slide control system. This allows movement in any direction. The control system moves according to the CAD design. An industrial laser cuts or etches the surface of plastics such as acrylic. NOT ALL PLASTICS CAN BE LASER CUT / ETCHED.

Tap the image for information / an exercise



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VINYL CUTTERS

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Vinyl cutters are used to cut shapes from sticky back plastic. They are ideal for making road signs, shop signs. The design is first drawn CAD software and exported to the cutter

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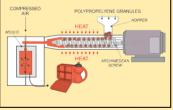


INJECTION MOULDING

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Materials such as polystyrene, nylon, polypropylene and polythene can be used in a process called injection moulding. These are thermoplastics - this means when they are heated and then pressured in a mould they can be formed into different shapes.

Tap the image for detailed information / an exercise on Injection Moulding



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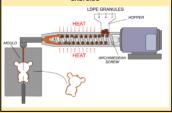
BLOW MOULDING

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HDPE (high density polyethylene) is ideal for this type of manufacturing technology. The HDPE granules / powder is placed into the hopper. It drops down on to a rotating thread and travels along its distance, being heated and becomes fluid. When it reaches the mould, **compressed air** is also blown into the mould, **compressed air** is also blown into the edges of the mould, forming a hollow shape.

Tap the image for detailed information / an exercise

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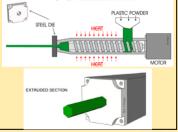
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EXTRUSION OF PLASTICS

A machine used to extrude materials is very similar to the injection moulding machine. A motor turns a thread which feeds granules of plastic through a heater. The granules melt into a liquid which is forced through a die, forming a long 'tube like' shape. The extrusion is then cooled and forms a solid shape. The shape of the die determines the shape of the tube.

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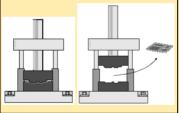


MOULDING THROUGH COMPRESSION

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Moulding through the force of compression is another very common industrial process. The materials used are melamine formaldehyde, phenol and urea. These materials can be formed into different shapes through applying both heat and pressure, other plastics do no have these properties.

Tap the images for detailed information / an exercise



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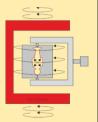




ROTATIONAL MOULDING

Ideal for the moulding of hollow products, including tanks holding liquids, flower pots, rainwater tanks, footballs, road cones, fenders, luggage trays. Polyethylene and Polypropylene are ideal polymers for this moulding process. It is particularly suitable for the manufacture of batches from 100 to 5000 units. The mould is heated to 300 degrees centigrade and rotated, forcing the polymer powder against the sides of the mould





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