

The Write Way

"Master the Word and You Shall Master Your World"

A Northwest Vista College Publication from the Staff at the Centers for Academic Reading and English Support (CARES) in Juniper Hall

January 22, 2013

Vol. II Issue I

Welcome New and Returning Students!

Springing Forward Towards a New Semester at Northwest Vista College

The Centers for Academic Reading and English Support (CARES) welcome you to the Spring 2013 semester at Northwest Vista College. The staff and faculty at the CARES labs are here to help you with your essays, research papers, reading assignments, and much more. Our friendly group of tutors love what they do and love to see you succeed.

Be sure to also stop by one of the labs and pick up a copy of our monthly newsletter, **The Write Way** at the start of each month to get some practical tips, useful information, and excellent resources. Don't let college become an overwhelming experience; get the help and support you need at CARES. We wish you all a very successful and productive Spring semester!

GoPrint Accounts: A Must to Print!

Printing for free has become a thing of the past and all students needing to print a document will first have to set up a GoPrint account.

There are two ways to access GoPrint to set up your account—when you're ready to print your document, hit the **File** button, and select **Print** which will bring you to the access and account setup window. You can also access GoPrint by placing your cursor in the task tray at the bottom right hand of the screen, clicking on the white triangle, and then on the **GoPrint** logo.

To set up an account, you will need a credit or debit card to fund your account between a

(See GoPrint on Pg. 2)



Inside This Issue:

- Pg. 2 — Student of the Month, Recipe for Success
- Pg. 3 — Goal Setting, Tips for Exams
- Pg. 4 — The Tutor's Desk, Critical Reading Tips
- Pg. 5 — The Research Paper, The CARES Labs
- Pg. 6 — Benefits of a Degree at NVC, Staying Ahead of Research

... From the English Faculty

Focus Your Studies on What You Like Best

College can be an overwhelming place. For most people, it's the place where they settle on *one* field of study, *one* career, and *one* lucrative path to last them the rest of their lives. That's a lot of pressure, and for many students, deciding on a major can be a downright frightening experience.

As an undergrad, my college experience only became meaningful when I abandoned these concerns and focused on what it was that I loved: writing. Believe it or not, before this, I considered several other fields: law, interior design, architecture, business,



English Adjunct Barbara Perez

French, or film studies. I never dreamed of becoming a writer, an editor, a composition and literature instructor, and a poet.

Sometimes I wonder what my life would be like if I'd gone into law. (I'd probably be really bored.) Instead, I have the best life ever! I love what I do. I get to write and publish literature. And best of all, I get to share my love of writing with new students each semester.

If I could pass on only one piece of advice to the students of NVC, it would be to spend a little time finding what you love. Then, study the heck out of it. Don't choose a major because you think it'll make you rich. Choose a major because you love the field of study. (Hopefully, that field will be writing, and I'll see you in my class soon!)

The CARES Labs

The College English Center

JH216 Mon -Thurs: 8AM-9PM

Fri-Sat: 9AM -2PM

Developmental English Lab

JH229 Mon -Thurs: 9AM-9PM

Fri - Sat: 9AM -2PM

Developmental Reading Lab

JH110 Mon -Thurs: 9AM-5PM

Advocacy Center

JH308 Mon - Thurs 8AM - 5PM

Friday 9AM-2PM

Visit us at:

<http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tut>



From Soldier to Student: Wood Overcomes Adversity, Excels at NVC

Surviving a combat tour of duty in Iraq and a near fatal car accident back home in Texas would be enough for some people to succumb to defeat unless they are driven to succeed in spite of overwhelming odds.

For former US Army soldier, oilfield worker, and survivor of a vehicle crash that left him in a coma for six months, Aaron Wood has overcome all of this adversity and now finds himself a dedicated and motivated student at Northwest Vista College with a 4.0 GPA, eager to further himself in life no matter what comes his way.

Because of his academic accomplishments and dedication to his studies, Wood has been selected as the CARES Student of the Month for January 2013.

"I don't think I would have even been in college if it hadn't been for the accident," he reflects on the mishap that occurred while commuting to work one day out in the oilfields in West Texas in 2011. "I woke up six months later at the Audie



Former Soldier Aaron Wood

Murphy Hospital here in San Antonio with a traumatic brain injury, but things have a way of working out, and now I am glad I chose school."

Wood, a native of San Antonio who enlisted in the Army in 2006 and served a 16 month combat tour of duty, explained that it was while he was convalescing from his injuries that he was informed of his veteran's benefits that provided money and support to attend school.

"At first I was pretty apprehensive of going to college because I had been out of high school for so long," he noted, "but with my injuries I knew that I was not going back to the oilfield, so I made the decision to go to school and try to get a degree in something that I'm going to enjoy doing."

Wood is currently majoring in General Studies, but when he completes his degree plan here at NVC, he plans to transfer to the University of Texas at Austin to seek a degree in Fine Arts.

Asked if he has any advice for his fellow veterans who are contemplating enrolling in higher education, Wood said, "Oh yes, I encourage all veterans, especially those wounded warriors, to go to school. I also encourage them not only to take advantage of their veterans educational benefits, but also the tutoring services here at Northwest Vista. Working with the tutors in the College English Writing Cen-

ter has given me a lot of confidence to earn the grades I have."

A stickler for detail, Wood places a lot of effort into his studies, especially in his English composition course assignments that he meticulously revises until it pleases him and his instructors.

Wood also has high praise for the Veteran's Services Office here at Northwest Vista College. "They've been great at helping me with just about everything when it comes to my degree plan, financial aid, books, supplies, and things like that."

GoPrint, (continued from Page 1)

minimum of \$2 and a maximum of \$20. If using cash, a kiosk on the second floor of the Cypress Building will allow you to use actual cash, but you must set up your account online first. You will be asked to create a user name and password.

Once the account is ready, print out your work by entering your user name and password when prompted. Then, print out your work by selecting your document in the **My Print Jobs** window then click **Print**. You can also keep track of accounts in this same window.



Recipes for Success

Time Management for the New Semester Starts Now!

The new semester has just started and can you believe your teachers are already assigning homework? It is easy to become quickly overwhelmed with all of your coursework, and you may be wondering how you are going to balance your schoolwork with employment, the gym, friends, family, and so on. Don't let the new semester get the best of you, but if higher education is new to you, get on the right foot with organization and time management.

Now that you have a new schedule which must accommodate your classes, as well as extra study time outside of class, the best idea to keep you on track is to work on your time management. It is an important skill to help you maintain a comfortable balance between your school, work, and personal life. Remember that these life skills that you learn in college will serve further down the road in your life.

You may feel as though you have already mastered this skill, yet keep in mind that it is easy for even experienced students to allow bad habits to creep up as the semester progresses.

Getting it Together for the Semester

Make a calendar. The first step you should take this semester is to make yourself a calendar that is not only divided by individual days, but even hours. Fill in your tasks for each day and, most importantly, indicate what time of day that you will do each task so that you can pace yourself throughout your day to make sure everything gets done and is not left to the last minute.

Focus on one task at a time. It is important that you only attempt one task at a time because studies show that if you are more focused on one idea instead of multiple ideas, then you are more likely to do a better job at each one.

Don't procrastinate! Procrastination is the most common bad habit that leads students falling behind. Avoid it at all costs by sticking to your schedule and getting things done early, so that you have time to relax later.

Set deadlines and follow them. It is especially helpful to set your deadlines earlier than what they need to be to make sure you have them done and have extra time to make up for any unexpected issues that may have taken them longer than you expected.

Schedule breaks. It is very important that you plan for breaks between busy times so that you don't get too overwhelmed and have time to enjoy yourself.

Don't get burned out. It is easy to get burned out when you have so many tasks to accomplish, but as long as you stick your schedule and make sure to save time for breaks, you should be able to accomplish everything in a comfortable pace.

Reward yourself! When you see that you have been sticking to your schedule and meeting your deadlines, you deserve to reward yourself for your hard work and dedication.

Goal Setting Brings You Closer to Your Dreams

To make your dreams a reality, you need to be realistic about your goals. Strive to reach goals you know you are capable of attaining. For example: You wouldn't try to make yourself run a marathon tomorrow if you have never trained for one, right? Don't set yourself up to fail because you will just give up on future goals.

Also writing down your goals on paper will enable you to look at them every now and again. This will help remind you of things that were once important and can keep you accountable.

Think about all that you will gain when you reach the goal (not just the materialistic things either. Think about peace of mind, happiness, comfort, a family, security, etc.). These things will keep you motivated. Own it! Dream as big as you want to because you deserve just as much as anyone else. The first step to having others believe that you deserve everything you achieve is to believe it yourself. Celebrate every time you reach a goal (no matter how small).

Meanwhile, keep these next five things in mind when setting your goals and stick to them as much as possible. Your goals need to be:

Specific—Define your goal and be as specific as possible. (Not just a nurse, but a pediatric nurse.)

Measurable—You need to be able to measure it in some way. (How will you know you reached your goal? Deadlines/ achievements/ etc.)

Action-Oriented—What are the actions needed to complete the goal? You need to have a plan to know what you need to DO to get to your goal.

Realistic—Be sure that you can reasonably do it and that the outcome is within your control.

Timely—Set deadlines to your goals and stick to them. This will prevent you from wasting time and will keep you on track.

Enthusiasm can be contagious! If you are excited about what you are doing and where you are headed, others will be excited for you! Friends and family will start asking you about how your goals are coming along. This is great for accountability and motivation!

Don't let big goals scare you; there's a fine line between being realistic about goals and dreaming big, but you can do both! Set periodic goals for yourself. Instead of saying, "I want to own a big house and a fancy car." First tell yourself,

Use S.M.A.R.T. ways to set your goals

"I want to graduate from college and get a great job." This ensures the likelihood that you will be able to get the fancy car and big house. So be **S.M.A.R.T.** and set your goals for a brighter future.



Tips To Help you Ace Your Exams

Exams will be coming up sooner than you think! Don't worry, though; the CARES labs have got you covered. Even if you cannot find time to come into the labs for tutoring, make sure your study time is truly enhancing your learning experience.

Following these eight study tips could help you maximize the time you do spend studying!

1. Do learn to say no to things that will distract you.
2. Do rank study tasks in order of priority.
3. Do make time to study every day.
4. Do reward yourself for working hard.
5. Do use your best time to study (morning, afternoon, or night?).
6. Do study in small chunks.
7. Do use your planner to keep track of study time.
8. Don't Procrastinate!

FREE!

GRAMMAR and ESSAY HANDOUTS

It seems these days that there are fewer things in life that are free, but in all of our *CARES* writing and reading labs here at Northwest Vista College, we have free grammar and essay handouts available to all students enrolled in English courses. Topics range from tips on getting started on various essay assignments to listings of common spelling errors and words often misused in our sometimes complicated English language.

In our Developmental labs, the handouts can be accessed through our tutors and they'll be happy to help you select the ones that will help the most. Because there can be sometimes a lot of tutoring activity in the Writing Center and the tutors get busy, students can help themselves to the handouts located in the center of the lab sitting above the book cases. If there is no one handout that answers your questions, please ask one of the tutors and they'll help you find the answer.

Come Prepared to the CARES English Writing Center and Save Some Time

Because you might have a hectic class schedule along with work commitments, it is important to watch every minute of how your time is spent while on campus. This also means that when you come to the CARES English Writing Center seeking help, but you are not prepared to explain what the assignment is or the type of help needed, time will be wasted not only for you, but for other students seeking help and for the tutors as well.

When you come to the Writing Center, be prepared to fully explain to the tutor what your assignment is and any additional requirements from the instructor. If you are not quite sure you understand the assignment, bring either the course syllabus or the assignment itself so that tutors can read, interpret, and explain what is being required. Once the tutors are aware of what the assignment is, they can also help brainstorm an idea and get you started. **Remember: Bring your assignments when coming to the Writing Center for clarification of what is expected of you!**

Students sometimes come to the Writing Center with an assignment paper that has either been graded by their instructor or peer reviewed by their fellow classmates. In either case, all corrections must be incorporated into the assignment before asking a tutor for help. Obviously, things can get very messy, complicated, and confusing for the student and the tutor when corrections are not made or when additional corrections are needed on top of the corrections already pointed out. See

what we mean? **Remember to incorporate all corrections made by instructors or peers into your paper before seeking help from a tutor!**

Also remember that your paper needs to be typed utilizing a Microsoft Office Word program. It is sometimes very difficult to work with handwritten assignments and equally difficult to determine if correct MLA is being used. **Remember: The Writing Center will not work with a hand-written copy of your assignment!**

When working on an essay that requires research citations, you must conduct the research first and then formulate a Works Cited page before sitting down to write. By first conducting the research, you become familiar with the subject matter being addressed in your assignment. **Remember: Never write about anything that you are not familiar with, so do the research first and become an informed writer that understands the subject matter, which in turn will be reflected in your writing and your grade!**

Meanwhile, when you do find research information that can be used to support your thesis or claim, begin formulating

the Works Cited page. When you sit down to work on an assignment and start incorporating your research sources to support your thesis, there will be no doubt how to cite your sources in-text because they will already be listed on the Works Cited page. **Remember: it is your responsibility to get the reader from in-text citations to the Works Cited page, and if you have not cited your in-text sources correctly, instructors will not find it until they hunt for it and precious points will be deducted!**

Finally, when you come to the Writing Center, give us your undivided attention; no incoming or outgoing phone calls, texting, conversations, etc. If you are coming to the Writing Center for help with an assignment that is due that same day or in a couple of hours, do not expect a good grade. While we sometimes do perform writing miracles, we cannot help a student earn a good grade if they do not put in the necessary time to complete the assignment.

Remember: The grade you receive will always reflect the amount of time you put into it!

Critical Reading Tips

Critical Reading requires more than reading the words: you must interact with the material. Critical Reading is applicable to many subjects. Critical reading means taking notes. Taking notes can help you understand a reading and keep you alert. Here are some tips to improve your reading skills:

- Start by previewing the text. Read any headings, captions, charts, and lists as these provide clues to the writer's attitude, goals, personal viewpoint or approach.
- When reading the text, read sections slowly and carefully, underlining the most important points for each section.
- Circle and look up the meanings of words you don't know. Use a dictionary or reference books.
- Briefly, list the main points in the margins or in a notebook.
- Always annotate why you highlighted those ideas and whether the ideas relate to other readings.
- Also write your personal reactions to what you have just read; writing while you read aids your memory.
- Review your notes before class or writing your response.

Gather Your Resources Before Starting Your Essay

Have you ever started a project and soon come to realize that you've not gathered all of the materials you need for completion and success? It is the same thing with writing a research paper; you have to complete and record your citation resources before attempting to write the first draft.

We'll assume that you've already developed a thesis as well as an outline that will serve as a roadmap for your essay. Remember that supporting and defending your essay is akin to attorneys proving a case before a judge and jury. Think about it; an attorney uses case law, testimony, evidence, and witnesses to prove a case. As a student you are doing the same thing, but using your research to support a thesis claim, and instead of proving your case to a judge, you will make and defend your claims to an instructor with your class peers serving as judge.

As you begin to research your topic, keep in mind that you'll want to use credible sources to give your paper validity. An instructor will not pay much attention to a source that is coming from *Ask.com* or *Wikipedia.com* (most do not accept the latter), but will take notice of cited material if it stems from an .edu website that indicates the source is from a college or university. Other credible sources come from academic databases such as ERIC or JSTOR as well as the .gov websites that are from the federal government and the .org sites, which are the non-profit organizations like PBS or NPR.

When you begin to incorporate cited sources into your essay, it is best to introduce your source to add weight to your assertions. If you begin a quote without introducing it and the instructor finds out at the end that the information is coming from a source like Wikipeda, they will feel cheated because it is not a credible source, and this will only serve to detract from your essay.

However, if you introduce a source with a phrase such as; "According to Harvard Economist Paul Krugman . . .," the reader is aware that the information being provided is from a credible source that will lend credence to your work and go a long way towards proving your thesis.

One of the main reasons to compile your Works Cited page before writing your research essay is that when you begin using your sources in text to prove the thesis claim, you can cross reference it with the Works Cited

page to ensure you have cited it correctly as it is listed. Remember: it is the student's responsibility to get their instructor from the in-text citation to the Works Cited page, and if this is not accomplished, points will be deducted.

Do's and Don'ts

Computers In The CARES Labs

If you are a student enrolled in English composition, literature, or developmental classes, the Centers for Academic Reading and English Services (*CARES*) labs can provide help in getting assignments completed from start to finish. Located in Juniper Hall, these labs also offer expert tutoring services and you can print assignments with a valid GoPrint account. However, If you are working on any assignment other than English, you will need to go to the Writing Across The Curriculum also known as the *WAC Lab*, located in room 205 at the Rosebud Learning Center (library).

When coming to the *CARES* labs, the first thing to do is sign in at the computer station located at the front entrance of the lab you are using. In the College English Writing Center, JH216, the side door in this lab is for faculty and staff use only.

"There is no Facebook, games, or cell phone conversations allowed in the English Writing Center."

The computers in these labs are programmed to allow students to work on their assignments while using the Microsoft Office Suite that includes the Word and Power Point programs, two of the most commonly used programs in English and Literature classes. Keep in mind that these computers will not allow the downloading of any programs, so save yourself the effort. Internet use on computers is strictly for researching assignments. There is no Facebook, games, or cell phone conversations allowed in the English Writing Center.

Remember that anything saved on these computers will be lost when they reboot each night. Please use a USB thumb drive to save your work, or you can save it to the Desktop and then email it to yourself as an attachment. Data can also be saved on the computer's S Drive known as the Student Drive, however, access can only be gained from the same computer you used initially.

Meanwhile, students are welcomed to come by and let our tutors help with your assignment and the coming finals. We'll help you develop your thesis and outline as well as directing you to research sources that will help prove and defend your thesis.

If you are having problems with one of the computers, please notify a tutor, but do not try to fix the problem yourself as you may end up making it worse. The IT system does go down from time to time, so please be patient. It is also a good idea while you are working on your assignment to hit the save button occasionally.

If you have left something behind in any of the *CARES* labs, there is a Lost and Found box at the front desk. If you have left something of value such as your iPhone or purse, please contact one of the tutors as the item will be stored in a safe place. One of the most common items left behind in the lab are USB thumb drives. While this may not be a big thing at the beginning of the semester, as it progresses you will have more assignments on those drives, so if you lose it, you have lost all of your hard work. **DON'T FORGET YOUR THUMB DRIVE!**

Please be respectful of others while you are using the *CARES* labs, try to keep conversations down to a minimum, and please be careful with your drinks and food.

Useful Links and Resources

Here are some Internet websites that will help all English students with their questions concerning those pesky Modern Language Association in text citations and Works Cited page entries. Also, there are a couple of websites to help you better understand general grammar rules, reading, and writing.

MLA

* The Purdue University Online Writing Lab:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/74/7/01/>

Links for Grammar

* Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Podcasts:
<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>

Links for Reading & Writing

* The Writing Portal:

<http://writeportal.ca/port/>

* Reading Improvement:

http://ww.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/videos/video_ri.html

http://ww.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/videos/video_ri.html

Benefits of Getting an Associate Degree at NVC

Earning your degree at Northwest Vista College can serve as a pathway towards not only an Associate Degree, but it serves to open many more opportunities in higher education, the job market, and personal satisfaction as well.

Job Market: More opportunities open up to you because you can apply for higher-paying jobs that require degrees or years of experience. You can substitute a degree for years of experience. Having a degree translates into several characteristics/traits that employers like, such as stamina, persistence, determination, goal-

setting, following through, etc.

Academically: When you graduate you take a degree and the entire core curriculum with you. When you earn the AA, you are core complete and cannot be forced to retake courses. (Unless going to a private college or a university with unique core curriculum requirements, ie: Capstone).

The only difference between a student with 60 hours who transfers and one with 60 hours who graduates is that the one who graduated went to the Graduation Office and filled out a form. Nothing else is required. You

are not required to even go to the ceremony if you don't want to.

Personally: Earning an AA degree is one HUGE step towards your final goal of earning a Bachelor's Degree and securing the job of your dreams. Not only will you be able to look beyond entry-level positions, you can focus on a job in the career field you plan to stay in. This would also then be a great opportunity for you to make sure you enjoy working in this field before completing your degree. Also, knowing that you are past the half-way point of earning a four-year degree will be great motivation for you to continue working hard.

Avoid 'dem Panicky Deadline Blues

Stay Ahead of Essay and Research Assignments

Nothing can be so frustrating as realizing that you are not going to complete your English essay or research assignment before deadline. Couple that with deadlines in other classes and you could soon succumb to 'dem Panicky Deadline Blues.

Tutors in the CARES labs have seen this scenario played out numerous times throughout each semester, but students can ease the panic and lose the blues. However, you have to commit to following a set of approaches that if followed, will produce great results and will also lower your stress level.

Once you receive your class syllabus, highlight dates when your assignments are due and begin to formulate a timetable that will allow you enough time to complete the assignment and garner a good grade. Students must always remember: *The effort you put in on writing assignments will show in the grade you earn.*

For each of your assignments, ensure you understand what your instructors require and if in doubt, ask them for clarification, but be sure you completely understand it before beginning. If you still don't understand the assignment, come to the Reading and Writing labs and the tutors will help you make sense of it and brainstorm ideas. This will take about 20 minutes. Once you have selected a subject to write about for your essay, formulate an outline that will serve as a roadmap for you and your reader to follow. Dedicate at least an hour for this first step.

If you are working on a research paper or any assignment that requires Modern Language Association (MLA) citations, begin your research first so that you will have sufficient knowledge about the subject in order to formulate a logical and effective thesis statement. You can also utilize our library's extensive online database, visit the Reference Desk at the library in the Redbud Learning Center, or ask the tutors at the Writing Center for further help with your research.

Gathering, reading, and selecting your sources is going to take some time, so budget at least a couple of hours to conduct your research. As you begin your research, be sure

to document those sources needed for your paper. To do this, begin your Works Cited page and list your sources there. This step will save you a lot of time and frustration when it comes time to put your paper together. When you use citations from your research, you will know exactly how to refer to them by simply by looking at your Works Cited page.

Once you've completed your research, take a day or two to digest the research information you have gathered, begin brainstorming how you are going to use it to prove thesis.

When you begin writing, do exactly that! Begin writing down your organized thoughts for the assignment and do not worry so much about grammar; the important thing is to just write. Later, the tutors in the Writing Center will help you with not only the grammar, but also with the overall requirements of the assignments.

Depending on how long your paper is supposed to be, budget at least two hours to complete your first full draft. If you are not using the Writing Center to review your assignments, at least have a fellow classmate or friend read it. One other alternative is to read your assignment out loud to yourself, but it is best to have someone else read it.

It is strongly suggested that you not spend large amounts of time working on your assignment on a computer without taking at least a ten minute break every hour. Too much time before a computer screen will cause fatigue and you. When you have completed your assignment, may miss or repeat an error over and over again if not pointed out by someone. Have a CARES tutor go over it with you and then implement any corrections. Unless you have some serious errors, budget about 45 minutes to review the essay yourself.

A day or two before your paper is due, review it once again, and if you are satisfied that you have done your best, print it, turn it in, take in a deep breath, and feel the sense of relief that your best effort was turned in on time. Go ahead and make a plan to write your paper, follow through and say goodbye to 'dem Panicky Deadline Blues!

Who Can Help You Graduate?

When you are ready to leave NVC, don't just transfer to a four-year college. Go see the Graduation Team for a degree audit, to submit your graduation application, and leave NVC with a degree!

Graduation Team

Cypress Campus Center
(CCC), 108C

486-4340

Nvc-graduation@alamo.edu

Health and Wellness Tips

For Students

With upcoming exams, papers and assignments it's normal for many students to begin to neglect their health and well-being as they feel there is no time for themselves. Take precautions early and don't let this happen. Follow some of the tips below, and you can keep your sanity and health during this busy semester.

Eat breakfast: Start your day off right with a healthy breakfast. If you're short on time, make a healthy fruit smoothie, have a cup of Greek yogurt with fresh berries or have a couple of hard-boiled eggs and a slice of whole-wheat toast to keep you going.

Take a quick walk: Walking is the easiest way to incorporate some exercise into your hectic lifestyle. Not only will walking help you lose weight if needed, but will also allow you to relax before and after classes. We have a beautiful campus, so take advantage of the walking trails.

Use the gym on campus: If you have long breaks between classes, or at school early trying to beat the parking rush, consider joining our excellent gym on campus.

The CARES Newsletter Staff
for January 2013 was comprised of English Composition,
Developmental Reading, and
Writing instructors and tutors.

Layout, Design, and Editing

By:

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John Schulze,

and

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