



**Department of
Civil Service**

Test Guide

for the

Program Aide

Includes the following titles:

00-519 Program Aide
00-520 Program Aide (Spanish Language)

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction: The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this **Test Guide** to familiarize you with the multiple-choice test for the **Program Aide**. The information presented in this Test Guide may help you in preparing to take this examination.

Test question format: All of the test questions are multiple-choice questions.

Time allowance: The overall time allowance for the written test is **3 hours**. Because of the large number of test applicants anticipated for these examinations, morning and afternoon sessions will be held on multiple days.

Subject area information: This Test Guide provides a detailed description of each subject area in the written test. This includes an explanation of how questions will be presented and how to correctly answer them.

Sample questions: This Test Guide provides at least one sample question for each subject area of the written test. The sample questions are similar to what will be presented in the written test. This Test Guide provides the solution and correct/best answer for each sample question presented. You should study these carefully in order to understand how the correct or best answers were determined.

Test security: Please read the brief discussion on Test Security provided near the end of this Test Guide. It explains your obligations and responsibilities as a test candidate.

Tips for Taking the Test: Page 12 of this Test Guide provides some tips on how to prepare for and take a NYS Civil Service test.

Practice Test: At the end of this Test Guide is a Practice Test which contains the types of questions you will see on the written test for these examinations. Answers to the Practice Test are provided on page 18.

Special testing accommodations: Persons with disabilities who require special testing accommodations or arrangements must note this on their examination applications. The examination announcement includes information for candidates who require accommodations or special testing arrangements. Examination announcements can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/public/stateexam.cfm>.

Further information is available from the Test Administration Unit of the Department of Civil Service:

- In the Albany area, call 518-457-2487.
- Outside of the Albany area, call toll free at 1-877-697-5627.
- For TDD services, call NY Relay at 711 or 1-800-662-1220.

Religious accommodation: If, due to a conflict with a religious observance or practice, you cannot take the test on the announced test date, check the box under "Religious Accommodation" on your exam application. Arrangements will be made for you to take the test on a different date.

Multiple candidates in the same household: If you and other members of your household are scheduled to take this exam on different days or times, you **must** call one of the phone numbers below to notify us. Staff are available during the week and on the test date to accept your calls.

- in the Albany area at (518) 474-6470.
- or, toll free at 1-877-697-5627.

LIST OF SUBJECT AREAS

There are 4 subject areas for these examinations:

1. **UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN MATERIAL:** These questions test for the ability to understand and interpret written material. You will be presented with brief reading passages and will be asked questions about the passages. You should base your answers to the questions **only** on what is presented in the passages and **not** on what you may happen to know about the topic.
2. **PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL:** These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.
3. **UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING TABULAR MATERIAL:** These questions test your ability to understand, analyze, and use the internal logic of data presented in tabular form. You may be asked to perform tasks such as completing tables, drawing conclusions from them, analyzing data trends or interrelationships, and revising or combining data sets. The concepts of rate, ratio, and proportion are tested. Mathematical operations are simple, and computational speed is not a major factor in the test. **You should bring with you a hand-held battery- or solar-powered calculator for use on this test.** You will **not** be permitted to use the **calculator** function of your **cell phone**.
4. **EVALUATING CONCLUSIONS IN LIGHT OF KNOWN FACTS:** These questions will consist of a set of facts and a conclusion. You must decide if the conclusion is proved by the facts, disproved by the facts or if the facts are not sufficient to prove or disprove the conclusion. The questions will not be specific to a particular field.

SUBJECT AREA 1

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test for the ability to understand and interpret written material. You will be presented with brief reading passages and will be asked questions about the passages. You should base your answers to the questions **only** on what is presented in the passages and **not** on what you may happen to know about the topic.

TEST TASK: You will be provided with brief reading passages and then will be asked questions relating to the passages. All the information required to answer the questions will be provided in the passages.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

"Increasingly, aggressive driving is being viewed as a public health issue because of the number of accidents related to it. Such behavior is often a reaction to the feeling that one has not been treated courteously by another driver. It is much less likely to occur if a driver is treated courteously. Courtesy on the road includes not only the observance of traffic regulations, but also driving in a considerate manner. This kind of driving is based on respect for other drivers and on a strong desire to make the roads safe for everyone. Good highway manners should become just as much a matter of habit as other kinds of manners."

Which one of the following statements is best supported by the passage above?

- A. Courteous driving contributes to road safety.
- B. Those who are generally polite are also courteous drivers.
- C. Unlike driving courtesy, the observance of traffic regulations is a matter of habit.
- D. Being courteous when driving is more important than observing traffic regulations.

The correct answer to this sample question is A.

SOLUTION:

- **Choice A** states, "Courteous driving contributes to road safety." Choice A is supported by the statement in the passage that, "It is much less likely to occur if a driver is treated courteously." Choice A is the correct answer.
- **Choice B** states "Those who are generally polite are also courteous drivers." Choice B is not supported by the written passage. The written passage does not mention "those who are generally polite" at all. Choice B is not the correct answer.
- **Choice C** states "Unlike driving courtesy, the observance of traffic regulations is a matter of habit." Choice C is not supported by the written passage. The passage only suggests that "Good highway manners should become just as much a matter of habit as other kinds of manners." Also, the passage does not state that the observance of traffic regulations is a matter of habit; rather, the passage indicates (in the final sentence) that the observance of traffic regulations should become a matter of habit. Choice C is not the correct answer.
- **Choice D** states "Being courteous when driving is more important than observing traffic regulations." Choice D is not supported by the written passage. The passage states "Courtesy on the road includes not only the observance of traffic regulations but also driving in a considerate manner." It does not state that being courteous is more important than observing traffic regulations. Choice D is not correct.

SUBJECT AREA 2

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

TEST TASK: There are two separate test tasks in this subject area.

For the first, **Information Presentation**, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. There will be ten Information Presentation questions on the written test.

For the second, **Paragraph Organization**, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order, and then be asked to choose, from among four suggestions, the best order for the sentences. There will be five Paragraph Organization questions on the written test.

INFORMATION PRESENTATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions. His failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Which one of the following best presents the information above?

- A. Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions that caused a personal injury accident.
- B. Proper precautions, which Martin Wilson failed to take, caused a personal injury accident.
- C. Martin Wilson's failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.
- D. Martin Wilson, who failed to take proper precautions, was in a personal injury accident.

The best answer to this sample question is C.

SOLUTION:

- **Choice A** conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident. Choice A is not correct.
- **Choice B** conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident. Choice B is not correct.
- **Choice C** best presents the original information. Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions and this failure caused a personal injury accident. Choice C is the correct answer.
- **Choice D** states that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident. The original information states that Martin Wilson caused a personal injury accident; it does not state that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident. Choice D is not correct.

SUBJECT AREA 2 (continued)

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION SAMPLE QUESTION: (continued)

The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences, and then answer the question about the best arrangement of these sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a job, people usually think about several possibilities.
3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing an occupation is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 2-4-1-3
- B. 2-3-4-1
- C. 4-2-1-3
- D. 4-2-3-1

The best answer to this sample question is D.

SOLUTION:

- **Choices A and C** present the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. In both A and C, sentence 1 comes before sentence 3. The key element in the organization of this paragraph is that sentence 3 contains the information to which sentence 1 refers; therefore, in logical sequence, sentence 3 should come before sentence 1. Choices A and C are not correct.
- **Choice B** also presents the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. Choice B places sentence 4 in between sentence 3 and sentence 1, thereby interrupting the logical sequence of the information in the paragraph. Choice B is not correct.
- **Choice D** presents the information in the paragraph in the best logical sequence. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: “choosing an occupation.” Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice. Choice D is the correct answer.

SUBJECT AREA 3

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING TABULAR MATERIAL: These questions test your ability to understand, analyze, and use the internal logic of data presented in tabular form. You may be asked to perform tasks such as completing tables, drawing conclusions from them, analyzing data trends or interrelationships, and revising or combining data sets. The concepts of rate, ratio, and proportion are tested. Mathematical operations are simple, and computational speed is not a major factor in the test. **You should bring with you a hand-held battery- or solar-powered calculator for use on this test.** You will **not** be permitted to use the **calculator** function of your **cell phone**.

SAMPLE PROBLEM:

DIRECTIONS: For the following two sample questions, base your answers on the information in the table below. Missing data in the table can be filled in using other information given in the table and in the questions.

**Population of a City (in thousands),
by Age and Gender**

Age	Female	Male	Total
Under 25	70	72	142
25-34	?	27	?
35-44	?	28	53
45-54	27	28	55
55-64	30	?	57
65 and over	85	75	160
Total	261	257	518

SAMPLE QUESTION 1:

How many people in the city are between 25 and 34 years old?

- A. 51
- B. 27,000
- C. 51,000
- D. cannot be determined from the information provided

SOLUTION:

- *First, note that the numbers given in the table represent the number of people, in thousands.*
- *You are asked how many people in the city are between 25 and 34 years old. Since some of this information is missing from the table, you must calculate the total for this age group by using other information in the table:*
 - *First, add the total number of people in all the age groups other than 25-34:*
 - $142 + 53 + 55 + 57 + 160 = 467$
 - *Then, subtract this sum (467) from the total population of the city (518):*
 - $518 \text{ minus } 467 = 51$
 - *This number, 51 (in thousands), is the number of people in the city aged 25-34.*
- *There are 51,000 people in the city between 25 and 34 years old.*
- *Choice C is the correct answer.*

SUBJECT AREA 3 (cont.)

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING TABULAR MATERIAL (continued):

SAMPLE QUESTION 2:

Most nearly, what percent of the total population of the city is female aged 35 to 54?

- A. 5%
- B. 10%
- C. 14%
- D. 20%

SOLUTION:

- *You must find the number of females in the city, aged 35 to 54. This requires you to add the number of females aged 35-44, to the number of females aged 45-54.*
 - *First, determine the number of females aged 35 to 44.*
 - *Since this information is missing from the table, you must calculate it by subtracting the number of males aged 35 to 44 (28), from the total number of people aged 35-44 (53).*
 - *53 minus 28 = 25 (in thousands) females aged 35-44.*
- *Then, add the number of females aged 35-44 (25), to the number of females aged 45-54 (27), to determine how many females in the city are between the ages of 35 and 54.*
 - *25 + 27 = 52 (in thousands) females aged 35 to 54.*
- *Next, divide the number of females aged 35 to 54 (52, in thousands), by the total population of the city (518, in thousands), to determine what portion of the population is female aged 35-54.*
 - *52,000 divided by 518,000 = .100386.*
- *Finally, convert .100386 to a percentage value (10.0386%), to determine what percent of the total population of the city is female aged 35-54.*
- *10.0386% is most nearly 10%.*
- *Choice B is the correct answer.*

SUBJECT AREA 4

EVALUATING CONCLUSIONS IN LIGHT OF KNOWN FACTS: These questions will consist of a set of facts and a conclusion. You must decide if the conclusion is proved by the facts, disproved by the facts or if the facts are not sufficient to prove or disprove the conclusion. The questions will not be specific to a particular field.

SAMPLE QUESTION 1:

STATEMENTS: All file folders are delivered by the Conroy Company. Blue folders are only delivered on Mondays or Fridays; green or brown folders are only delivered on Wednesdays. Human Resources and Finance use blue folders, Legal uses green folders, and Data Processing uses brown folders.

CONCLUSION: The file folders Finance uses are delivered on Wednesdays.

- A. statements prove the conclusion TRUE
- B. statements prove the conclusion FALSE
- C. statements are INADEQUATE to prove the conclusion true or false

SOLUTION:

- *You know from the last statement that Finance uses blue folders.*
- *You know from the second statement that blue folders are only delivered on Mondays or Fridays.*
- *The conclusion says the file folders Finance uses are delivered on Wednesdays.*
- *Wednesday is neither Monday nor Friday.*
- *The statements prove the conclusion FALSE.*
- *Choice B is the correct answer.*

SAMPLE QUESTION 2:

STATEMENTS: If Zhili works overtime, the assignment will be completed. If the assignment is completed, all unit staff will receive a bonus. Zhili works overtime.

CONCLUSION: All unit staff will receive a bonus.

- A. statements prove the conclusion TRUE
- B. statements prove the conclusion FALSE
- C. statements are INADEQUATE to prove the conclusion true or false

SOLUTION:

- *The first statement says, if Zhili works overtime, the assignment will be completed.*
- *The second statement says, if the assignment is completed, all unit staff will receive a bonus.*
- *The third statement says Zhili works overtime.*
- *You know from the statements that Zhili worked overtime, so the assignment was completed, and all unit staff will receive a bonus.*
- *The statements prove the conclusion TRUE.*
- *Choice A is the correct answer.*

SUBJECT AREA 4 (cont.)

EVALUATING CONCLUSIONS IN LIGHT OF KNOWN FACTS (continued):

SAMPLE QUESTION 3:

STATEMENTS: Dave has more seniority than Isobel. Maya has more seniority than Dave. Sara has twice as much seniority as Isobel.

CONCLUSION: Sara has more seniority than Maya.

- A. statements prove the conclusion TRUE
- B. statements prove the conclusion FALSE
- C. statements are INADEQUATE to prove the conclusion true or false

SOLUTION:

- *You know from the statements that Dave, Maya, and Sara all have more seniority than Isobel.*
- *The conclusion says that Sara has more seniority than Maya.*
- *The statements give no information about the relative seniority of Sara to Maya.*
- *The statements are INADEQUATE to prove the conclusion true or false.*
- *Choice C is the correct answer.*

TEST SECURITY

The test you will be taking is the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service.

- Candidates may not remove test material from the test site and may not reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others.
- Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law and punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine.
- Candidates who violate test security may be disqualified from appointment to positions for which the examination is being held and from being a candidate for any NYS civil service examination for five years.
- You should not discuss the questions and answers, even in general terms, after you take the test.
- You should be careful that you do not inadvertently violate test security and put yourself at risk.

TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

Before the test ...

- Study and review this *Test Guide* to familiarize yourself with what the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas to be covered on the test.

On the day of the test ...

- Arrive at the test site on time.
- Bring your *Admission Notice*, two No. 2 pencils, a photo ID containing your signature, and any other **allowed** materials.
- Do **not** bring this *Test Guide* to the test site.

At the test site ...

- Do **not** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site.
- The use of such devices anywhere on the grounds of the test site, including the test room, hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, and parking lots, could result in your disqualification.

During the test ...

- Read and follow all instructions on your *Admission Notice*, test booklets, answer sheets, and *Candidate Directions*.
- Follow the Monitor's instructions.
- Keep track of the time.

After the test ...

- Do **not** remove any test materials from the test room.
- Do **not** paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way.
- Do **not** discuss the test material with others.

PRACTICE TEST

1. "A growing population and the development of new forms of transportation have resulted in increasing demands upon our highways. These increased demands have brought about congestion, confusion, and conflict. As a result, the yearly toll of traffic accidents is now very high. If all of the traffic accidents that occurred throughout the year were concentrated into one disaster, we would be horrified. The loss is no less catastrophic because it is spread out over time and space."

Which one of the following statements concerning the yearly toll of traffic accidents is best supported by the passage above?

- A. It has resulted mainly from the new forms of transportation.
- B. It does not shock us as much as it should because the accidents do not all occur together.
- C. It is increasing the demands for safer means of transportation.
- D. It has resulted in increased congestion, confusion, and conflict on our highways.

2. "Depression is one of the top public health problems in the United States, and its occurrence is on the rise. One in 20 Americans develops a case of depression serious enough to require professional treatment. The incidence of depression has been escalating among Baby Boomers (Americans born in the years 1946 through 1964). The reason for this increase is that the lifestyles of this generation have become increasingly demanding while offering little support. Also, stress and poor eating habits are now more the rule than the exception, and both can disrupt brain chemistry enough to bring on depression."

Which one of the following statements is best supported by the above selection?

- A. Depression can cause a disruption in the chemistry of the brain.
- B. Baby Boomers have the highest rate of depression in the United States.
- C. Lifestyle demands are the major cause of depression in all Americans.
- D. A small percentage of the population will require treatment for depression at some time in their lives.

3. Senator Martinez met with the county legislature. Then Senator Martinez announced that the highway subsidy program would start in June.

Which one of the following best presents the information given above?

- A. After meeting with the county legislature, Senator Martinez announced that the highway subsidy program would start in June.
- B. Senator Martinez met with the county legislature and announced that the highway subsidy program would start in June.
- C. Senator Martinez announced that the highway subsidy program would start in June after a meeting with the county legislature.
- D. Senator Martinez, who met with the county legislature, announced that the highway subsidy program would start in June.

PRACTICE TEST (continued)

4. Frank Colombo wrote the press release. He sent three copies to the Director. The Director then gave one of the copies to the Commissioner.

Which one of the following best presents the information given above?

- A. Frank Colombo sent to the Director three copies of the press release he had written, who then gave a copy to the Commissioner.
- B. Frank Colombo sent three copies of the press release he had written to the Director, who then gave one of the copies to the Commissioner.
- C. The Director gave the Commissioner one of the three copies of the press release Frank Colombo had written and had been sent to him.
- D. Of the three copies of the press release Frank Colombo had written and sent to the Director, one was then given to the Commissioner by him.

DIRECTIONS: Each of the following two (2) questions is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when they are correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph.

Read the sentences and then answer the question about the best order in which to arrange them.

5.

- 1. The phosphates in detergents are carried into sewage systems, and from there into local rivers and streams, and eventually into large bodies of water.
- 2. The algae absorb much of the available oxygen that is necessary to sustain marine life.
- 3. There is no doubt that phosphates damage the environment through a complex chain of events.
- 4. Phosphates are nutrients, and, as such, they aid the growth of the algae living in the water.
- 5. This results not only in the death of fish and other aquatic life, but also in the too-thick growth of vegetation in the water.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 1-3-4-2-5
- B. 1-4-2-5-3
- C. 3-1-4-2-5
- D. 3-4-2-1-5

PRACTICE TEST (continued)

6.

1. Never before has time been measured at a speed beyond the realm of experience.
2. Just how profound an effect it is having on society is as yet to be determined.
3. The computer has accelerated our sense of time beyond anything we have experienced before.
4. Though it is possible to conceive of an interval that brief and even to manipulate time at that speed, it is not possible to experience it.
5. It works in a time frame in which the nanosecond - a billionth of a second - is the primary measurement.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 1-2-3-5-4
- B. 1-4-3-5-2
- C. 3-2-5-4-1
- D. 3-5-4-1-2

PRACTICE TEST (continued)

DIRECTIONS: The following two questions are based on the table below:

NUMBER OF VEHICLES SOLD BY
A DEALER OVER A 4-YEAR PERIOD

PERIODS OF TIME	CARS		TRUCKS	
	NEW	USED	NEW	USED
January - June 1979	25	32	17	21
July - December 1979	21	35	23	20
January - June 1980	16	29	25	32
July - December 1980	19	24	19	30
January - June 1981	32	29	18	29
July - December 1981	30	42	22	26
January - June 1982	27	36	21	29
July - December 1982	25	37	28	32

7. The average number of new cars sold annually during the 4-year period is most nearly
- A. 24
B. 49
C. 92
D. 115
8. The average number of used vehicles sold during January - June in the 4-year period is most nearly
- A. 30
B. 59
C. 61
D. 105

PRACTICE TEST (continued)

DIRECTIONS: Each of the following three questions present a set of statements which you are to assume to be true. The conclusion is derived from **THESE** statements **only**. Each question has three possible answers. Select your answer to each of these questions in the following manner:

Select **A**, if the statements prove that the conclusion is TRUE.

Select **B**, if the statements prove that the conclusion is FALSE.

Select **C**, if the statements are INADEQUATE to prove the conclusion EITHER TRUE OR FALSE.

Base your answer to each question solely on what is presented in the set of statements and **NOT** on what you may happen to know about the subject discussed.

9. **STATEMENTS:** Deion processed more applications than Dave who processed more applications than Ellen. Jacob processed the same number of applications as Ellen but processed more applications than Juan.

CONCLUSION: Juan processed more applications than Dave.

10. **STATEMENTS:** Whenever Aisha attends a seminar, Aisha forwards her telephone calls to the section clerk. Aisha has forwarded her telephone calls to the section clerk today.

CONCLUSION: Aisha is attending a seminar today.

11. **STATEMENTS:** All public utilities are regulated by the Public Service Commission. Some companies listed on the American Stock Exchange are public utilities.

CONCLUSION: Some companies listed on the American Stock Exchange are regulated by the Public Service Commission.

THIS IS THE END OF THE PRACTICE TEST

PRACTICE TEST ANSWER KEY

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. D
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. C
11. A

For more information about multiple-choice tests, go to:

<http://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/statetestguides.cfm>

This webpage contains links to test guides for a variety of examinations and to the two general test guides listed below:

- *A General Guide to Multiple-Choice Tests*
- *How to Take a Multiple-Choice Test*

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN TESTING

It is the policy of the Department of Civil Service, in accordance with the New York State Human Rights Law and the Americans with Disabilities Act, to provide qualified persons with disabilities equal employment opportunity and equal opportunity to participate in and receive the benefits, services, programs, and activities of the Department. It is the policy of the Department to provide such persons reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications as are necessary to provide equal opportunity. Persons with disabilities who require an accommodation to participate in an examination must note this on their application. Further information is available from the Test Administration Unit of the Department of Civil Service. In the Albany area, call 518-457-2487. Outside of the Albany area, call toll free at 1-877-697-5627. For TDD services, call NY Relay at 711 (requires a fee) or 1-800-662-1220.

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information to individuals with disabilities. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make this information available to you, please contact the New York State Department of Civil Service Public Information Office at (518) 457-9375.



**Department of
Civil Service**

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