

## Potential Instruments for Evaluating the Success of your TAH Program

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**This article outlines instruments and resources related to the measurement of student and teacher content knowledge, student and teacher interest and motivation, and student analytical skills in learning history.**

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The following instruments were compiled to give Teaching American History program directors and evaluators an idea of the types of potentially relevant instruments that are available. This is not a complete list of all available instruments nor is it a list of instruments that you must use. In choosing a test to use for your specific program it is essential that you assess the extent to which the proposed test measures the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are important and relevant to YOUR program. Prior to choosing an instrument it is important that you understand what you are testing, who you are testing, and why you are testing. All of these should guide your choice of instrument.

**What you are testing:** You first need to determine what you are testing. In American History it may be such things as: post-Civil War, the Industrial Era or the history of the Presidency. You need to be cognizant of this area when you are searching for an instrument and make sure that the instrument you choose closely aligns with the major objectives of the program you are evaluating.

**Who you are testing:** Once you have determined what you are testing you need to decide who you are testing. Is it 4<sup>th</sup> graders? 8<sup>th</sup> graders? 10<sup>th</sup> graders? Non-English speaking students? Special education students? You need to make sure that the test you choose fits the age, ability, and level of the students who will be taking it.

**Why you are testing:** You also need to determine why you are testing. If it is to determine the satisfaction level of the curriculum used then you will use a very different instrument than you would if you are testing the knowledge of 8<sup>th</sup> graders on colonization. If you are using the same instrument over the course of three years then you need to determine if you will use the same identical instrument or change the items using an available pool of potential items.

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Very careful choice of an instrument is essential to an evaluation. If you choose the wrong instrument then it is likely that the evaluation will have erroneous results. Please take this in consideration when determining which instrument to use.

## Student Content Knowledge

### **National Center for History in the Schools:**

<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards>

The development of the History Standards was administered by the National Center for History in the Schools at the University of California, Los Angeles under the guidance of the National Council for History Standards. The standards were developed with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the U.S. Department of Education. This publication does not necessarily represent positions or policies of the United States government, and no official endorsement should be inferred. This publication may be freely reproduced and distributed for educational and research purposes.

You may purchase the printed editions of the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* by writing to the National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, Dept. of History, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024-1473; email: [nchs@history.ucla.edu](mailto:nchs@history.ucla.edu). The fax number is (310) 267-2103. To order the National Standards for History, Basic Edition online, see order information: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/order.html>

### **National Assessment of Educational Progress:**

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls/>

<http://www.nagb.org/pubs/hframework2001.pdf>

In 2001, NAEP administered the latest U.S. history assessment to approximately 29,000 students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in the nation. The national sample assessed 365 schools at grade 4, 369 schools at grade 8, and 374 schools at grade 12.

The NAEP Questions Tool provides easy access to NAEP questions, student responses, and scoring guides that are released to the public. Both national and state data, where appropriate, are presented. See how many questions are in the tool by looking at the [tables below](#). Grades 4, 8, and 12.

Since some questions must be kept secure for use in future NAEP assessments, only a small portion of each NAEP assessment is released. Consequently, the released questions in this tool do not represent complete coverage of the content, cognitive skills, and range of difficulty in the NAEP assessment for a particular subject area. Therefore, these questions will not serve as a practice test for future NAEP assessments. The history data can be accessed at the following address: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ushistory/usedata1.asp>

The table that follows contains the number of released questions in each assessment by subject, year, and grade for main NAEP. The same information is available for long-term trend, but by age. There are now more than 1,400 questions available in this tool.



## Released Main NAEP Questions by Subject, Year, Grade

Year	1990			1992			1994			1996			1998			2000			2001			2002			2003																													
Grade	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12	4	8	12																											
Subject																																																						
Civics													30	37	38																																							
Geography													43	46	48																31	49	33																					
History													47	50	53																30	30	34																					
Mathematics	33	38	41	59	69	53																25	29	29																59	57													
Reading													11	19	10																10	8	15	9																12	10	8	21	19
Science																												31	45	38																								
Writing																												3	4	4																3	3	3						

### (McRel) Mid-continent Research for Education & Learning:

[www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp](http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp)

The History Standards Project, directed by the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS), first published three sets of standards: *National Standards for History for Grades K-4*, *National Standards for United States History*, and *National Standards for World History* (NCHS, 1995). Publication of the standards drew immediate criticism, launched by Lynn Cheney who, as former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, had approved funding for the project ("History Standards," *Education Daily*, January 1995). Others joined the debate, either condemning the history standards outright or making recommendations for their improvement. A group of historians, practitioners, and public figures, convened by the Council of Basic Education (CBE), reviewed the documents and concluded that the "overwhelming majority of criticisms was targeted at the teaching examples in the documents, rather than at the actual standards for student achievement" ("Review panels," CBE, October 1995). The teaching examples are absent from a new, basic edition of the standards, *National Standards for History* (NCHS, 1996). This edition also takes into account recommendations from the group convened by CBE, as well as recommendations from other interested individuals. In addition to addressing the traditional content of history studies, the standards documents from NCHS share a treatment on Historical Thinking, which includes such standards as Chronological Thinking and Historical Comprehension.

There are a number of other useful resources available for the articulation of standards in a history curriculum. One document is *Lessons From History: Essential Understandings and Historical Perspectives Students Should Acquire* (Crabtree, Nash, Gagnon, & Waugh, 1992), a comprehensive description of K-12 history education. It was on the basis of this noteworthy work that NCHS was funded to develop national standards. Another well-received guide is *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in the Schools* (Bradley Commission on History in the Schools, 1988). Although this document is general in scope, it does offer a useful focus on the historical perspective that students should acquire in their study of history. Recently the National Council for History Education published the first in a planned series of standards documents, *Building a U.S. History Curriculum: A Guide to Using Themes and Selecting*



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*Content.* Companion booklets in western civilization and world history will be published in the next two years, as well as a guide for history in the early grades. Three companion documents will be published in the next two years: booklets in western civilization and in world history and a guide for history in the early grades.

Other useful documents include two works from NAEP: *Framework for the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress U.S. History Assessment* (n.d.) and *Provisional Item Specifications for U.S. History* (1992). As in other recent work from NAEP, the framework organizes its subject matter into themes such as Change and Continuity in American Democracy, The Gathering and Interactions of Peoples, Cultures and Ideas, and The Changing Role of America in the World. The framework recommends some preliminary achievement levels (basic, proficient, and advanced) at 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. The descriptions of subject matter are fairly general. For example, an 8th-grade student at the basic level should, among other things, "have a beginning understanding of the fundamental political ideas and institutions of American life, and their historical origins" (p. 38). The *Item Specifications*, however, provide a greater level of detail in "defining questions," organized by theme, for students at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades.

**Exit Level Texas Assessment of Academic Achievement End-of-Course Exam:**

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/release/>

This statewide assessment program includes the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS™), the State Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA), the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE), and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS™). The Student Assessment Division includes, Released Tests, Answer Keys, and Scoring Guides for the U.S. History Assessment.

**The University of the State of New York Regents High School Examination, United States History and Government:**

<http://www.nysedregents.org/testing/socstre/ushg-805.pdf>

This examination, available at the above URL, has three parts.

**Part I** contains 50 multiple-choice questions.

**Part II** contains one thematic essay question.

**Part III** is based on several documents:

**Part III A** contains the documents. Each document is followed by one or more questions.

**Part III B** contains one essay question based on the specific documents.

**Subject Area Testing Program U.S. History from 1877 Test:**

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/osa/usindex.html>

The U.S. History from 1877 Test measures not only important historical knowledge, but also real-world skills by having students read and interpret statistical data, maps, charts, and tables. The test consists of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Practice tests are available at the URL address given above. Some of the multiple-choice questions include a chart, map, or other stimulus that must be interpreted accurately in order to



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answer the questions correctly. The open-ended questions require students to analyze a question and respond in writing. Questions from the following assessment strands are distributed throughout the test: International Relations; Domestic Affairs; Geography; Economics; and Civics.

**CLEP History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present:**

[www.ecs.org/qna](http://www.ecs.org/qna)

The History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present examination covers material that is usually taught in the second semester of what is often a two-semester course in United States history. The examination covers the period of United States history from the end of the Civil War to the present, with the majority of the questions on the twentieth century.

The examination contains 120 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time candidates spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

A database of questions and the test can be accessed at the above web address. This database is intended to help research and design officers, administrative supervisors, school district officials, evaluators or researchers (including graduate students) and state and district leaders assess how their schools or districts are performing in terms of civic knowledge and skills, the dispositions that students are developing, and the students' views of their schools and classrooms. Teachers also could use these instruments to assess individual classrooms on civic knowledge, skills or dispositions.

**Virginia SOL Review and Practice:**

<http://www.solpass.org/7ss/USHistory1877on.htm>

Virginia SOL Review and Practice 6th-7th Grade U.S. History - 1877 to the Present.

**The SAT II U.S. History Test:**

<http://www.sparknotes.com/testprep/books/sat2/history/>

<http://www.sparknotes.com/testprep/books/sat2/history/chapter2section1.rhtml>

The SAT II U.S. History Test covers 600 years of United States history, beginning with the period before Columbus's discovery of the New World and continuing to the present. There are two ways to organize and think about the 600 years of U.S. history covered on the test: by chronological eras, and by different aspects of history, such as political, social, or economic history.

**The Civic Education Study (CivEd):**

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/cived/>

The Civic Education Study (CivEd), conducted in 1999, provides information on U.S. ninth-graders' knowledge of democratic practices and institutions and on how it compares with the knowledge of students in 27 other participating countries. In addition, CivEd provides data about U.S. ninth-grade students' attitudes toward democracy, national identity, international relations, and social cohesion and diversity.



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### **Center for Civic Education- National Standards for Civics and Government:**

[www.civiced.org/stds.html](http://www.civiced.org/stds.html)

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational corporation dedicated to fostering the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy.

The Center specializes in civic/citizenship education, law-related education, and international educational exchange programs for developing democracies. Programs focus on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights; American political traditions and institutions at the federal, state, and local levels; constitutionalism; civic participation; and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Today, the Center administers a wide range of critically acclaimed curricular, teacher-training, and community-based programs. The principal goals of the Center's programs are to help students develop (1) an increased understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, (2) the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and (3) the willingness to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict.

The Center's headquarters are in Calabasas, California with an office in Washington, D.C. Since its origin in 1969, Center materials have been used in all fifty states and the District of Columbia, the trust territories, and a long list of foreign countries.

## **Teacher Content Knowledge**

AP<sup>®</sup> U.S. History

[http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub\\_ushist.html?ushist](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub_ushist.html?ushist)

[Download](#) the Course Description (.pdf/964K)

The AP program in United States History is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in United States history. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those made by full-year introductory college courses. Students should learn to assess historical materials- their relevance to a given interpretive problem, their reliability, and their importance- and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. An AP United States History course should thus develop the skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of an informed judgment and to present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in an essay format.



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## **Praxis II: Subject Assessments:**

<http://www.ets.org> Tests at a Glance (TAAG)

The Praxis Series Assessments provide tests and other services that states use as part of their teaching licensing certification process. Praxis I measures basic academic skills; Praxis II measures general and subject-specific knowledge and teaching skills; and Praxis III assesses classroom performance.

## **Student Motivation and Interest**

### **Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ):**

Paul R. Pintrich; Elisabeth V. De Groot, 1990, Journal of Educational Psychology

The authors here report findings related to the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). They found that motivation is highly correlated to the use of cognitive strategies and academic achievement. Five scales along two dimensions emerged from a factor analysis. Related to motivational beliefs, the scales are: 1) Self-efficacy ("I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in this course"); 2) Intrinsic value ("I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things"); and 3) Test anxiety ("I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test"). Related to self-regulated learning strategies, the scales are: 1) Cognitive use strategies ("When I study for a test, I try to put together the information from class and from the book"); and 2) Self-regulation ("I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying"). There are a total of 56 items in this self-report measure, and items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all true of me, 7=very true of me). The motivational beliefs scales would, perhaps, be most useful in a character education program evaluation.

Copies of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) are available for \$10 each from

Paul Pintrich  
School of Education  
University of Michigan  
2002 SEB  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259  
Telephone: (313) 936-2741

For a PDF version of the questionnaire, go to:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~p540alex/MSLQ.pdf>

For an computer-based version of the questionnaire, go to:

<http://www.ulc.arizona.edu/cgi-bin/MSLQ.exe?option=generatetest>



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### **Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS)**

[http://www.umich.edu/~pals/pals/PALS%202000\\_V13Word97.pdf](http://www.umich.edu/~pals/pals/PALS%202000_V13Word97.pdf)

The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales have been developed and refined over time by a group of researchers using goal orientation theory to examine the relation between the learning environment and students' motivation, affect, and behavior. Student scales assess 1) personal achievement goal orientations; 2) perceptions of teacher's goals; 3) perceptions of the goal structures in the classroom; 4) achievement-related beliefs, attitudes, and strategies; and 5) perceptions of parents and home life.

## **Teacher Interest and Motivation**

### **Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS):**

The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales have been developed and refined over time by a group of researchers using goal orientation theory to examine the relation between the learning environment and students' motivation, affect, and behavior. Student scales assess 1) personal achievement goal orientations; 2) perceptions of teacher's goals; 3) perceptions of the goal structures in the classroom; 4) achievement-related beliefs, attitudes, and strategies; and 5) perceptions of parents and home life.

[http://www.umich.edu/~pals/pals/PALS%202000\\_V13Word97.pdf](http://www.umich.edu/~pals/pals/PALS%202000_V13Word97.pdf)

### **Bandura's Teacher Efficacy Scale:**

*For a PDF copy of the Bandura's Teacher Efficacy Scale, click here*

<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/researchinstruments.htm#Sense>

In the midst of the confusion about how to best measure teacher efficacy, an unpublished measure used by Bandura in his work on teacher efficacy has begun quietly circulating. Bandura (1997) pointed out that teachers' sense of efficacy is not necessarily uniform across the many different types of tasks teachers are asked to perform, nor across different subject matter. In response, he constructed a 30-item instrument with seven subscales: efficacy to influence decision making, efficacy to influence school resources, instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, efficacy to enlist parental involvement, efficacy to enlist community involvement, and efficacy to create a positive school climate. Each item is measured on a 9-point scale anchored with the notations: "nothing, very little, some influence, quite a bit, a great deal." This measure attempts to provide a multi-faceted picture of teachers' efficacy beliefs without becoming too narrow or specific. Unfortunately, reliability and validity information about the measure have not been available.

### **The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale:**

Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary & Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University

*If you want a PDF copy of this scale including the long and short form and scoring directions, click here.*

<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/TSES.pdf2.pdf>



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### **Abstract**

Teacher efficacy has proved to be powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers' persistence, enthusiasm, commitment and instructional behavior, as well as student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy beliefs. However, persistent measurement problems have plagued those who have sought to study teacher efficacy. We review many of the major measures that have been used to capture the construct, noting problems that have arisen with each. We then propose a promising new measure of teacher efficacy along with validity and reliability data from three separate studies. Finally, new directions for research made possible by this instrument are explored. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/AERAefficacyMeasure%20.pdf>

### **The Teaching Confidence Scale:**

*If you want a PDF copy of the Teaching Confidence scale, click here*

<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/OSU%20confidence%202000.pdf>

This scale was developed in order to devise a program-specific measure of efficacy. In an attempt to identify an appropriate level of specificity for assessing efficacy in our pre-service teacher preparation program, we surveyed all the instructors who worked with the prospective teacher cohorts, asking the instructors what students should be able to do after completing the coursework. After removing redundancies, the result was a list of 32 teaching skills such as manage classrooms, evaluate student work, use cooperative learning approaches, teach basic concepts of fractions, and build learning in science on children's intuitive understandings.

We then designed a questionnaire, named the Teaching Confidence Scale (initially called the OSU Teaching Confidence Scale because it focused on skills in our program), that asked students to rate on a 6-point scale how confident they were in their ability to accomplish each skill, the higher the score, the more confident. We then calculated a total average score for each respondent. In our first study, based on the average score for the entire 32-item scale, the alpha coefficient of reliability was in the .95.

In order to create a measure appropriate for your program, you would have to determine what students should be able to do after completing your requirements and then build a scale based on these expectations.

### **Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument:**

*For a PDF copy of the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument, click here.*

<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/Science%20TE.pdf>

This instrument could be adapted to- History Teaching Efficacy Belief.

Science educators have conducted extensive research on the effects of efficacy on science teaching and learning. Riggs and Enochs (1990) developed an instrument, based on the Gibson and Dembo approach, to measure efficacy of teaching science--the *Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument* (STEBI). Consistent with Gibson and Dembo they have found two separate factors, one they called *personal science teaching efficacy*



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(PSTE) and a second factor they labeled *science teaching outcome expectancy* (STOE). The two factors are uncorrelated. Exploring an even greater level of specificity, Rubeck and Enochs (1991) distinguished chemistry teaching efficacy from science teaching efficacy. They found that among middle-school science teachers, personal science teaching efficacy (PTE for teaching science) was correlated with preference to teach science, and that chemistry teaching self-efficacy (PTE for teaching chemistry) was related to preference to teach chemistry. Chemistry teaching self-efficacy was related to science teaching self-efficacy, and science teaching self-efficacy was significantly higher than chemistry teaching self-efficacy. Science teaching self-efficacy was related to the teacher's experiences taking science courses with laboratory experiences and to experience teaching science, while chemistry self-efficacy was related to chemistry course work involving lab experiences and chemistry teaching experience. This instrument has been used in several studies (see Enochs, Posnanski, & Hagedorn, 1999).

## Student Historical Understanding and Critical Thinking

### Historical Understanding:

(McRel) Mid-continent Research for Education & Learning:

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/SubjectTopics.asp?SubjectID=3>

McRel was also discussed in more detail in the Student Content Knowledge section of this article. The above link offers useful information regarding historical understanding. Historical understanding standards include, 1.) understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns and 2.) understands the historical perspective. This site includes resources on topics applicable to historical understanding such as calendar time, chronological thinking, historical timelines and the influence of ideas on society.

### Critical Thinking:

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking-about any subject, content, or problem-in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

#### To Analyze Thinking:

Identify its purpose, question, information, conclusion(s), assumptions, implications, main concept(s), and point of view

#### To Assess Thinking:

Check it for clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, significance, logic, and fairness.



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## What is Critical Thinking?

William Graham Sumner (1906)

[Critical thinking is]...the examination and test of propositions of any kind which are offered for acceptance, in order to find out whether they correspond to reality or not. The critical faculty is a product of education and training. It is a mental habit and power. It is a prime condition of human welfare that men and women should be trained in it. It is our only guarantee against delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension of ourselves and our earthly circumstances

{Sumner, W. G. (1940). Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals, New York: Ginn and Co., pp. 632, 633.}

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>

### Other critical thinking resources are available at:

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/resources/tgs/>

This website provides resources related to critical thinking and access to the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (Facione, Facione and Sanchez, 1994).

<http://www.insightassessment.com/>

Insight Assessment provides you with the tools and the support services to evaluate reasoning skills and to explore the willingness of people to use reasoning skills in working and learning. Insight Assessment experts stand ready to assist you in crafting the package of assessment programs and options that are the best for you.

### Washington State University:

<http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ph.htm>

In 1996, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT), the General Education Program, and the Writing Programs collaborated to develop a seven-dimension critical thinking rubric derived from scholarly work and local practice and expertise to provide a process for improving and a means for measuring students' higher order thinking skills during the course of their college careers.

In addition, there are resources at this link with adaptations of the rubric and other helpful sites.

<http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ctr.htm>

### Brenau University:

The Brenau University website has several rubrics and additional resources for addressing critical thinking:

<http://intranet.brenau.edu/assessment/content/ct/default.asp>



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