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Examiners' Report

June 2011

GCSE Religious Studies 5RS09 01

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Introduction

This is the second year the new specification Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies has been assessed and numbers have greatly increased from last year.

The specification introduced a few new topics and some different ways of approaching some topics from the legacy specifications. It should be noted that the weighting of the assessment objectives has changed from the legacy specification.

Unit 9 covers Christianity. The unit requires candidates to study the nature of Christianity and its effect on the life of Christian believers in the UK. This requires candidates to study different denominational beliefs and practices to some topics. A wide variety of centres enter candidates for this unit. It seems centres see the benefit of candidates studying Christianity from a number of different Christian perspectives as centres from both faith and non- faith backgrounds enter candidates for this unit. Many candidates engage well with exploring the place and importance of Christian beliefs and practices as well as applying the key beliefs and teachings to life in the UK today.

Question 1(a)

The majority of candidates who attempted this question gained full marks. This was an easy question to gain full mark on by using the glossary definition but like the example candidates can still gain full marks by not reproducing it word for word or paraphrasing the definition.

Write your answer here:

(a) Catechism is the official teachings of the catholic church.



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Examiner Comments

This is a correct answer. The answer does not have to include "official" to gain full marks.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should learn the glossary definition, they do not need to answer in full sentences to gain full marks.

Question 1(b)(c)(d)

Most candidates who answered part(b) were able to give two reasons why all Christians should or not believe in the Virgin Birth but found it harder to give developed reasons. Some candidates who focused on whether a virgin birth is possible often failed to gain more than two marks. There were some very good answers that showed a good understanding of different theological viewpoints of the Virgin Birth.

Part(c) was answered well by many candidates, it was obvious they knew about and understood the importance of Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit. Some candidates included unnecessary descriptions about symbols of the Holy Spirit or Bible passages about the Holy Spirit. This question is assessing the candidates understanding so they need to give reasons rather than descriptions.

There were many interesting and insightful responses to part(d) question. Many candidates made comparisons of the role of an "earthly father" with that of God and whether they thought this was appropriate today or not. Candidates who gained higher marks on this question made good use of their knowledge of when, where and why Christians use the term "Father".

(c) It is important to believe in the Holy spirit because it is a part of God and we are taught about it in the bible. The Holy spirit guides and strengthens Christians to lead a

good christian life and make sensible choices. The holy spirit is God's presence in the world today and can be seen through people and their actions. The holy spirit is symbolised in the form of a dove, meaning purity and hope. The dove ~~appeared~~ ^{was} present at Jesus' baptism. The symbol of fire means purification as the holy spirit is present ~~at~~ at many Sacraments. Finally it is described as the wind, unseen, but the consequences and presence felt. Also the holy spirit is a life giver as in the bible ~~he~~ Jesus was conceived through the holy spirit. In the bible and creeds we are taught about all three aspects of God, the holy Spirit being one of them.



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Examiner Comments

In answer to "why" style exam questions the use of the word "because" can help students to focus on giving reasons rather than descriptions.



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Examiner Tip

For part(c) the candidate gave four brief reasons. A common error is to include description about the symbols of the Holy Spirit. This does not answer the question.

Question 2(a)

This was a popular question and many candidates gave the correct definition of incarnation but a significant number gave the definition for reincarnation or resurrection.

Write your answer here:

(a) Incarnation is when you can be something else.



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Examiner Comments

An incorrect answer



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Examiner Tip

Study the glossary definition

Question 2(b)(c)(d)

Most candidates recognised part 2(b) was a question about the importance of believing in God as Unity and Trinity and then answered the question well giving relevant reasons. Candidates who focused on issues surrounding the existence of God or whether Christians believe in one God failed to gain the higher marks.

There were many good answers to question 2(c) showing that candidates had a good understanding of reasons why it is important for Christians to love God. Many candidates used a wide range of reasons drawn from different sections on the specification. Some answers lost focus and repeated the same reason a number of times.

Better candidates gave some excellent response to question 2(d). They demonstrated informed insights and were able to give differing viewpoints about salvation from sin. A significant minority of candidates just referred to the Salvation Army and missed the point of the question.

This example shows how a candidate can gain full marks on part(c) and part(d) questions.

(c) It is a fundamental Christian belief to love God because our love for God enables us to have eternal life in heaven. In addition, it is one the first of the

two most important commandments to 'love your God with all your heart, soul and mind' because Jesus said to love God and your neighbour are the two most important commandments. Also, through

Loving God Christians strengthen their relationship with God through praying to God because God is our Father figure who loves us unconditionally so we should love him back. Also, God is our creator, so we must thank him for creating the universe and everything in it because through praying to God we receive guidance on how to live a good Christian life which we can use to carry out God's will on earth.

(d) (i) Yes, I believe salvation comes through being a member of the Church and attending mass because we can pray to God for forgiveness. In addition, I think that Christians receive salvation through the sacraments such as reconciliation because we are being forgiven for our sins and trying to lead a better life. Also, salvation is achieved through helping others because the ^{story of Zachary} ~~parable of the Good Samaritan~~ shows how we achieve salvation, so Christians cannot achieve salvation on their own.

(ii) People may disagree with me because God is omnipresent so we can pray for forgiveness anywhere. In addition, through praying to God for forgiveness we can receive eternal life. Also in the bible

it says we can pray anywhere and God will listen. Also, ^{protestants believe that} salvation comes through reading the bible and coming to our own conclusions and interpretations.



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Examiner Comments

Part(c) has a full mark answer that gives four reasons why it is important for Christians to love God. The four reasons are: to have eternal life, it is one of the commandments, Jesus said to and God loves unconditionally so we should love Him back. Also, the answer is coherent in regards to QWC.

For part(d)(i) the candidate gave own opinion and three reasons are given illustrating three ways salvation **cannot** be achieved "on their own".

For part (d)(ii) the candidate gave reasons all linked to why and how salvation can be achieved "on their own".



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Examiner Tip

In part(d) questions it is a good idea to use such words as "in addition" "also" as this candidate does to introduce the fact that a different reason is being given.

Question 3(a)

In question 3(a), while many candidates knew the glossary definition for Nonconformist Churches. A number of candidates confused the different traditions within Christianity and gave the definition for the Church of England or gave an example of a practice from the nonconformist tradition so gained no marks.

Write your answer here:

(a) a none conformist church is one separate of roman catholics, christianity for example; methodist.



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Examiner Comments

The first part of the answer is incorrect but the example is correct. Therefore, this is a partially correct answer according to the mark scheme.



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Examiner Tip

Knowing an example to illustrate the glossary definitions can help candidates both understand the term and gain marks in an exam.

Question 3(b)(c)(d)

In part 3(b) candidates did well if they knew the difference between the role of a bishop priest and the Pope. The best answers made good use of their knowledge especially about the role of the Pope in the Catholic Church and the role of the priest in the local area. Less able candidates were unclear who and what bishops did, so often gave invalid reasons in response to the question.

For part 3(c) many candidates did not achieve the higher levels as they either just described how a church can lead to faith or gave reasons why a church is a means to faith. The question was about **the Church not** a church in a local area. The question required candidates to respond to the specification bullet point in the section on Community and Tradition; "The meaning, and importance for Christians, of the Church being a means to faith and salvation."

In part 3(d) most candidates recognised this was a question about the celibacy of the clergy and were able to relate the traditional arguments well to the world today. Some candidates who focused on the issue of freedom of choice for individuals found it hard to relate this argument to the question.

(b) No I do not. The pope has a more important role than the Bishops because the Pope is believed to be the direct successor of ST Peter who was appointed by Jesus. Also everyone should have an equal role in the RC Church because we are all made in the image and likeness of God so we are all equal and should have equal roles.

(c) Through going to Church, Christians receive a better knowledge of God and the life of Jesus and ~~what is morally~~ acceptable our ~~morals~~ ^{moral teachings} are because not

everything is written down in the bible because the authors even admitted that parts of Jesus' life were missing ~~from~~^{from} the bible. In addition, many Christians believe that through going to Church we receive salvation because salvation is possible through the sacraments such as reconciliation. Also, Christians become part of the Church community by going to Church which enables them to pray for others because Christians ~~are~~ carrying out Jesus' mission. God said 'Whatever you do to the least of my children you do for me.' Also, the church was founded on the apostles so by going to church ~~we~~ Christians are continuing to spreading the good news because we are strengthening our faith. The church also has various organisations which ~~you~~ ~~donat~~ raise money for charity ~~or~~ ~~we~~ ~~are~~ because we are taught to help others in the Parable of the good Samaritan.

(d) (i) Yes I do agree because marriage is a distraction to priests ~~and~~ ~~priest~~ because a priest should be married to the Church. Also, the priest represents Jesus at the altar so therefore as Jesus was celibate, the priest should be celibate. Also by not being married the priest

has more time to help other people
and he also has an open approach
to ^{other peoples} problems

(iii) People may disagree with me because
through being married the priest has
a better knowledge of family life and
therefore can relate to family based
problems. Also, it does not say in the
bible that a priest ~~should~~ ^{can not} be married.
In addition, not being married could
be a ~~kindness~~ hard for the priest
to cope with because all humans have
a sex drive and it could lead to
the priest looking for someone else's
wife



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Examiner Comments

part(b) knowledge about the role of the Pope in the Catholic Church and the role of the priest in the local area.

part(c) describing how a church can lead to faith or gave reasons why a church is a means to faith.

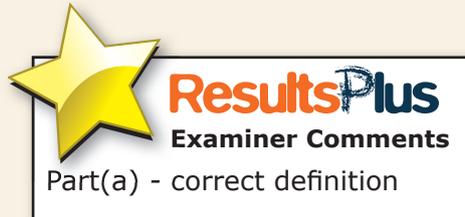
part(d) shows good arguments

Question 4(a)

The vast majority who answered this question gave a correct answer. The most common mistake was to refer to the Papacy as "the Pope's office" not the correct definition of "the office of the Pope."

Write your answer here:

(a) The office of the Pope.



Question 4(b)(c)(d)

Most candidates answered part 4(b) question well giving a wide variety of different responses. However, some candidates did not seem to understand what authority means and just gave reasons why the Bible is not reliable. The question asks should it be the only authority for Christians. Some candidates ignore the 'for Christians' and give reasons why atheists do not accept the Bible today which does not answer the question. The more able candidates made good reference to other sources of authorities for Christians drawing examples from this and other units on this specification.

The majority of candidates attempted part 4(c) question well. The more able giving clear and well explained reasons, it was clear they had engaged well with this topic. Some candidates besides giving reasons for why the clergy should be celibate also offered reasons why they should not be as well; they could gain no marks for these reasons. A common error was to confuse the role and teachings of St Peter and St Paul.

Most candidates responded well on part 4(d) question and demonstrated they had a good understanding of the different attitudes to the role and importance of the Virgin Mary. Most were able to give alternative role models for Christians the most common being Jesus and examples of modern day Christians.

(c)
The clergy should be celibate because, when they perform mass, and they become Jesus with the Eucharist, Jesus

was celibate so if they truly want to take Jesus place during the mass, they must be celibate.

Also if the clergy have a family and are married then they will get distracted from their duties towards the church and its followers. The church community should already be like a family to the clergy.

Jesus did not marry or have any sexual activity; the clergy should follow his example. Also by staying celibate the clergy are showing their dedication, love and passion for God.

By staying celibate they can focus on loving and serving God. By staying celibate they can truly follow in Jesus's footsteps.

Also with the clergy being celibate they are setting an example to the rest of the people in the local community, that you can be like Jesus.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives three reasons one is developed. The developed reason includes, representing Jesus at the Mass and following his example. Level 4 was awarded.

How this candidate sets the response makes it clear where they are starting a different reason.



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Examiner Tip

When writing answers it may help the candidate to consider how best to set them out so they include all the relevant information.

Question 5(a)

The candidates who answered this question usually knew the meaning of the term but a significant number of those who gave an alternative definition to the glossary definition by describing it as "the time" before Christmas gave the wrong number of days or weeks.

write your answer here:

(a) Advent is the 4 weeks leading up to christmas day (Jesus' birthday).



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Examiner Comments

Correct definition.

Question 5(b)(c)(d)

Most candidates responded well to part 5(a) question recognising it was a question about transubstantiation. There were some interesting responses some basing their answers on their personal faith experiences and others referring to the different views within Christianity to answer the question.

It was evident in part 5(c) question that candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of the features of a Nonconformist church but a significant number either gave reasons for the features of a Roman Catholic church, reasons for non-liturgical worship or left the question blank.

Most candidates responded well to part 5(d) the quote and were able to give reasons for both supporting and not supporting the statement. The better responses often were awarded full marks on this as they could give reasons that showed they could evaluate the significance and importance of the different festivals in Christianity. Weaker responses still confused Good Friday and Easter and referred to Good Friday as the day Jesus rose from the dead.

This is an example of one of the better answers to part 5(c).

(c) Non-conformist have chairs or benches which can be moved easily because have non-liturgical worship and because their worship has no structure they need to be able to move the chairs round if they are having performing

hymns etc.

Non-conformists ~~don't share~~ central beliefs come from their own ~~an~~ individual interpretations of the Bible, and so they have the Bible positioned centrally in the church to represent that.

Another feature is the church is simply designed because it doesn't need to be principally designed as long as everyone is loving their neighbour and loving God. They also try to give as much money to charity rather than spending it on their church.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives three features of a Nonconformist church and the reasons for them, so gains level 3. There were a number of features and reasons that could have been included, see the mark scheme.



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Examiner Tip

When studying the different types of churches candidates need to ensure they know the key features for each of the church buildings and the reasons why they are there.

Question 6(a)

This was a popular question and many candidates could give the glossary definition or an alternative correct answer. Those giving a partially correct answer did not make reference to the Catholic Church through the belief in transubstantiation in their answer

This is an example of alternative wording to the glossary definition.

Write your answer here:

(a) mass is the name given to the catholic ceremony where the eucharist is given.



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Examiner Comments

This answer was awarded full marks as the mark scheme gives, "A Catholic name for the Eucharist".

This an alternative correct answer to the glossary definition.

Question 6(b)(c)(d)

In part 6(b) candidates engaged well with the question and there were many good answers. The better answers were where candidates thought all Christians should be confirmed; the reasons often given were related to a public declaration of faith and taking on the baptismal promises for themselves. Candidates who did not think all Christians should be confirmed often confused confirmation with baptism and focused on why people in general, not Christians, should not be confirmed. A minority of candidates made reference to an alternative to confirmation such as believers' baptism.

For part 6(c) many candidates answered the question well giving four reasons or clearly gave developed reasons. Some candidates just described the practices of Lent rather give reasons for why Lent is important.

For part 6(d) the vast majority of candidates who attempted the question were able to give at least a reason supporting the statement and a reason for not supporting the statement. The best answers demonstrated good evaluation skills by being able to give reasons for both sides of the argument. Many candidates gave developed reasons by good use of examples of statues and pictures found in a church and how they reflect Christian beliefs.

(b) I believe that all christians should be confirmed because the candidate makes a public declaration of their faith and confirms for themselves the promises made for them at infant baptism.

Also the candidate becomes a full member of the Church and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the tradition of the church to ~~keep~~ confirm Christians and therefore a good teaching to follow.

In addition a course of preparation is usually undertaken which strengthens a person's faith and relationship with God whilst teaching about the Church, bible ~~and~~ traditions and teachings of Jesus.

(c) Lent is important for ^{most} Christians because it remembers the 40 days and 40 nights which Jesus spent in the ~~the~~ desert fasting and resisting temptation. We seek to be like Jesus and we

do this by ~~fasting~~ fasting or giving up a luxury for 40 days. It brings ~~the~~ Christians closer to God and purifies them whilst the money saved is often put to charity. During Lent Christians are also encouraged to give alms like Jesus taught us to be charitable in the bible and to love our neighbour as ourselves. By giving alms we are following the second Great Commandment. In addition Lent is a time to spend in prayer with God and to strengthen our relationship with him. ~~the~~ Christians reflect ~~on~~ upon their lives and try to improve it to live the best Christian life possible. It is also a time of spiritual preparation for Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(d) (i) I believe churches should not have statues and pictures because the church should be plain and simple to focus upon God without distractions. It can be seen as a form of idolatry and therefore breaks the commandment "you shall worship nothing ~~other than God but me~~ other than God." I believe that it is a waste of money also and that the money could be put to a better use, such as ~~giving~~ giving to charity which we are encouraged to do in the bible.

(ii) Some people may disagree and say that statues and pictures can focus you on God and be a reminder of the important Christian beliefs. They believe that churches should be decorated for God. Also that having statues is not idolatry as they do not worship or pray to the statues. They are only used as a reminder and to focus upon God. For example the Stations of the cross displayed in catholic churches are a reminder of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.



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Examiner Comments

Good explanation and development on all parts (b), (c) and (d).

Question 7(a)

While many candidates could give the glossary or correct definition, a significant number did not refer to a religious order or community in their answer so only gained partial mark.

(a) A religious community, who as well as pray
doing prayer and worship, help in ^{Society!} ~~charity~~
e.g. Missionaries of Charity.



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Examiner Comments

Correct definition/explanation

Question 7(b)(c)(d)

Part 7(b) was a popular question and many candidates could give brief reasons why charity should or should not be given in secret but found it harder to give developed answers. Some candidates made good use of teachings from the Bible to help them develop their answers.

Even though part 7(c) question was a popular question it caused problems for candidates for a number of reasons. A number of candidates referred to **all** the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount not just those about judgement, or included teaching not in the Sermon on Mount. A significant number answered this as a "explain **why** question" and not a "explain **how** question".

There were many interesting and thoughtful responses to part 7(d) question. Many candidates used their knowledge and understanding of the specification to give balanced answers. Some candidates seem to ignore the fact that the question asked about Christians not about just any one.

This is an example of a candidate who has not developed reasons given in part(b) question.

(b) Yes I do think giving to Charity should be done
in secret because it says in the bible give to charity
privately and boasting about giving to charity could
be pride (a deadly sin) by making yourself look better than
others.



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of a candidate who gives two brief reasons.

This candidate could have developed the first reason by referring to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon of the Mount, as it is found in the Bible.



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Examiner Tip

To develop the reasons in part(b) questions candidates can give examples or refer to teachings.

Question 8(a)

Many candidates gave correct answers to this question. Some just referred to Law of Moses being the Ten Commandments which was only partially correct.

(a) The Law of Moses are the ten commandments
~~The~~ God gave Moses ~~on the mount~~



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Examiner Comments

Part (a), partially correct because candidate only referred to Law of Moses as being the Ten Commandments .

Question 8(b)(c)(d)

Most candidates were able to give their opinion and brief reasons for part 8(b) question. Better responses developed their answers by referring to Christian beliefs or teaching or linking it to the demands of living in the modern world and the impact on religious practices.

Part 8(c) is a new topic on the specification and better responses were able to explain why Christians think it is important to work for social and community by referring to Christian beliefs and teachings. Some candidates showed a lack of understanding of the term "social and community cohesion".

Candidates responded well to part 8(d) statement with many responses showing a insight into Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount and its implication for Christians today. It appeared some timing issues prevented some good candidates from finishing or doing this question justice.

This is an example of how a response gained full marks on part(d) question.

(d) (i) Yes I agree as I believe the thoughts and feelings can lead to the action and it is better to get rid of the cause than treat the problem afterwards.

A second reason is one a christian may say and that is that Jesus said that looking at a woman lustfully was as bad as adultery and I believe what Jesus says.

A final reason is that if more gods out about it God will still not know and it will upset him and stop you getting into heaven so the punishment is the same for both so they must be as bad.

(ii) some people may say that if more gods out about feelings there is no harm done so they are better

A second reason is that feelings are internal and the act against the law whereas some actions are so clearly breaking the law is worse

a final reason is in the 10 commandments God only mentions actions not feelings so if feelings were that bad God would have mentioned and banned them at the same time as actions.



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For part (d)(i) and (d)(ii) The candidate gives 3 clear reasons in each part of the question.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates always need to make it clear that it is their view in part d(i) and others in part d(ii). The clearest way is to say "I agree" and "Some disagree".

Paper Summary

Candidates produced some very interesting answers to the questions posed. This indicated that they and their teachers had not only studied the topic but importantly had linked them to their everyday life.

Teachers and candidates should note these general points in order to improve candidate's achievement in future years:

There is a choice of two questions per section, each of these has four sub-questions, and candidates can either attempt the sub-questions in the top questions (odd numbers) or the sub-questions in the bottom question (even numbered). Candidates who choose questions from a mixture of the top and bottom questions will not receive marks for all their responses and as such are at a clear disadvantage.

Candidates are asked to indicate which question they have answered by putting a cross in a box at the top of the paper. Some candidates did not do this and they should be reminded to do this as part of examination preparation.

The amount of space on the question paper is more than adequate for candidates to achieve maximum marks. There is no need for candidates to write more than this. Almost all the candidates who used extra paper had already achieved the maximum marks of that question. Any candidate who needs extra space can use the space allocated to other questions as long as they clearly indicate on their paper that this is what they have done.

A number of candidates did not complete the final section due to timing difficulties. Candidates should be encouraged to spend about twenty minutes per question leaving ten minutes to check through their work at the end of the paper.

Some general points can be made on how best to answer the various question types:

Maximum marks on the part (a) questions are easily gained by learning the Edexcel glossary definitions.

Only the candidate's point of view is credited in part (b) questions. The easiest way to gain full marks is for candidates to concentrate on stating their opinion and writing two separate reasons for it, each in a distinct paragraph, and then to develop each of the reasons with an example or a quote.

Candidates can gain the higher mark within the level on part (c) questions by writing coherently. Part (c) questions test AO1 and so will either ask for candidates to 'Explain why' or to 'Explain how'.

Many of the part (d) questions this year produced interesting answers. However, candidates should ensure that they start by stating their own view and reasons for it in the part (d) (i) and state reasons why someone might hold a different view in (d)(ii) rather than mixing the two halves.

Teachers who would like to learn more about the specification should attend one of the Edexcel training events, details of which can be found on the Edexcel website. Specific queries can be answered through the Ask the Expert service which can also found on the Edexcel website.

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