

Introduction to Longeing for C2s

Information compiled by

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Longeing

Word origin: The origin of the word *longeing* likely comes from the French, *longe* - meaning a halter, and *longer* - meaning to run along beside

- Longeing is also correctly spelled lungeing

Definition: Longeing is a form of training and exercise wherein the horse circles the unmounted rider

Note that ***longeing done correctly is essentially longeing done safely*** for the horse AND the person longeing

- sadly, correct longeing is often a rare thing to see
- there are many longeing practices that you can see at horse shows, etc. that are highly inadvisable
 - from a training perspective philosophically
 - for the long and short-term safety of the horse
 - for the people in the vicinity (that includes person longeing as well as others nearby)
- it is best not to employ these practices
- longeing (as with many other things we do with horses) does have inherent dangers
- following ***best practices*** as recommended by Pony Club will help to reduce those dangers; however, be aware that horses are unpredictable

Reasons for longeing

The practice of longeing forms the larger part of the young horse's primary education

It is also used as a training aid for both a more advanced horse, and for the development of the rider

There should be a clear relationship between what happens on the longe and what the horse is working on under saddle

For upper level Pony Club testing, you will need to longe:

C2 - *longeing own horse for exercise* (sidereins on the saddle but not attached to the bit)

- condition, fit and purpose of equipment - 10 marks
- handling of line and whip; technique - 10 marks
- longe for 10 minutes

B - *longeing own horse for improvement* (demonstrating how to use sidereins)

- identify equipment, use and fit of equipment
- demonstrate longeing to show improvement

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- longe for 10-15 minutes

B2 - *teaching on the longe*

- warm up horse and help student mount
- lunge student safely
- correct and strengthen rider's position
- longe for 20 minutes, including warm up, only going in one direction

HA - *longeing the unknown horse*

- longe with confidence and authority
- know when to stop
- 60 marks

HA - teaching a student how to longe

- 80 marks

Six main purposes of longeing:

1. for training:

- when
 - first starting a horse under saddle
 - first introducing a horse to wearing tack while in motion
 - the rider/trainer wants a visual on where the horse is at in its training and how it is moving
- young horses to
 - calm and settle the horse prior to riding
 - improve discipline
 - improve obedience
 - get rid of excess energy
 - train the horse to listen to the voice and body aids
- more experienced horses to
 - improve acceptance of the bit
 - get rid of excess energy prior to riding
- to develop and improve the horse's
 - rhythm
 - tempo
 - balance
 - suppleness

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- movement and way of going
- calmness and looseness
- impulsion
- forward movement and engagement
- steadiness on contact
- the horse to teach it to
- stretch and use the back
- go forward to contact
- complimentary to and completes the work done by the trainer

2. the re-training of spoiled horses

- to re-introduce the horse to work
- if he is coming back after a lay-off to help improve fitness
- to train the horse to listen to the voice and body aids
- when re-schooling a difficult horse to ensure he has some basics prior to getting on him
- to assess a horse's frame of mind on any given day prior to mounting
- to re-introduce him to tack if he has been off for a while, or introduce him to schooling tack (sidereins, etc.) that can help improve him

3. the exercising of horses that cannot be ridden

- maintain or improve fitness when the horse cannot be ridden
- when the horse has a sore back and exercise is helpful in the rehabilitation
- to maintain or continue to improve the horse if the rider is unable to ride as a substitute for riding
- when there is not enough time to ride but the horse still needs exercise
- useful for warming up a horse with neck or back issues prior to being ridden

4. the training of riders

- to introduce a rider to the horse while in motion without them having to worry about control
- to improve a rider's seat and position
- to achieve a balanced and supple seat
- to build confidence
- to eliminate stiffness
- to improve security

5. advanced work

- work in hand
- to introduce advanced schooling tack to the horse (chambon, etc.)
- when first using sidereins or other devices to improve the horse's way of going

6. Other

- to assess a horse's movement for soundness
- during a vet check
- as part of a rehab program when a horse is coming back from an injury
- some use the longe to introduce new concept such as work over poles, etc.

Objectives:

- promotes muscular development
- equally on both sides of the body
- makes horse supple through equal stretching and contraction of the muscles
- encourages horse to extend and lower the head and neck
- promotes working with increased engagement of the hind quarters
- increases the flexion of the joints
- improves balance
- refines gaits more in terms of cadence, rhythm and tempo

Successful longeing

Preparation:

- the horse needs to have basic leading skills
- ideally he should be able to be led from both sides
- the horse should be (at least somewhat) accustomed to tack
- with a green horse it is **not advisable** to put tack on for the first time and then put him on the longe to *'buck it out'*
- seek out a knowledgeable person who can help you with your longeing if you have never longed before
- you may want to lead the horse in a circle in the area you want to longe him in prior to commencing your longeing

- this will acquaint him with the area
- this will also give him an idea of the form of exercise to be undertaken

Who will longe:

- longeing is as difficult as riding, and as such, needs to be undertaken by someone who knows what they are doing
- the person wanting to learn how to longe needs to seek advice and instruction from someone who is experienced with longeing a horse correctly
- some basic considerations are to match the experience of the horse with the experience of the person longeing
- having an inverse relationship is advisable:
 - an experienced person should longe the inexperienced horse
 - an inexperienced person would be best to start with an experienced horse
- size of horse in relation to size of person longeing is another consideration to make with a person who is less experienced at longeing
- a small or very light person could easily be taken advantage of, pulled off balance or intimidated by a large, rambunctious horse
- ***for longeing at the C2 test, you will need to longe your own horse***
- ***this is the introductory level for longeing in Pony Club testing***

Dress:

- the person longeing needs to be dressed in:
 - boots with a heel (riding or paddock boots)
 - in case the horse pulls, it is helpful to have a boot with a heel to give the person longeing more purchase on the ground
 - spurs removed
 - spurs can get hooked together as the person longeing rotates, causing the person to lose balance or fall
 - helmet
 - even if one is not planning on riding after, it is advisable to wear a helmet as a horse may kick while being longed
 - gloves
 - the hands must be protected in case the horse is startled or bolts, to help prevent friction burn from the longe line
 - watch

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- time must be noted, as longeing a horse for too long can be harmful
- *for the C2 test, the person longeing will also need to wear:*
- breeches
- polo shirt or short sleeved shirt with a collar
- medical armband

Goal:

- Set a goal prior to longeing
- are you longeing for exercise?
- are you longeing for improvement?
- other reasons?

Time:

- plan for no more than 20 minutes on the longe
- any longer can be hard on the horse's legs
- excessive longeing can be boring for the horse
- ***for the C2 test, you will be longeing your horse for 10 minutes***

Process:

- choose an appropriate location

Setting:

- longeing should take place in an fenced-in arena with gates closed
- there should be no obstructions in the arena such as jumps or barrels
- ideally, there should not be other horses working in the arena, or else the arena should be large enough that you can easily stay out of each other's way
- minimize distractions such as:
- large machinery working nearby
- horses acting up in paddocks nearby
- horses receiving their regular feeding as part of their schedule
- green or unruly horses acting up in the arena
- green riders who may have steering issues

- etc.
- good footing
- not deep
- not too hard
- consistent footing
- not slippery
- avoid puddles and wet areas

Position:

- the trainer stands in the middle of the circle while the horse is out on the larger circle on the longe line
- the trainer stands at a 45-50% angle to the horse's shoulders
- the trainer's attention is focused on the horse's quarters
- the trainer generally stands still or walks a small circle
- the horse moves around the trainer on as large a circle as possible
- smaller circles will stress the joints of the horse more
- smaller circles put the trainer into a potential kicking zone should the horse misbehave
- a more advanced horse/trainer combination may have the trainer dropping a heel into the ground and pivoting on the spot with the horse rotating around on the circle
- this will help to promote a round circle
- the trainer employs the *longeing triangle*
- the horse creates the base of the triangle
- the trainer is the apex of the triangle
- the longe line is one arm of the triangle
- the longe whip is the other arm of the triangle
- ideally, the triangle will be close to an equilateral triangle with the trainer centred directly across from the middle of the horse, looking at the saddle
- if the horse is *lazy*, the triangle becomes more of a right angle triangle as the trainer moves back closer to the quarters of the horse to drive it forward
- now the distance between the horse and the trainer are greater in the longe line arm, and shorter in the longe whip arm
- if the horse *needs to be slowed down*, the inverse happens with the trainer moving toward the head, creating more of a right angle triangle with the trainer positioned closer to the front of the horse to help slow it
- here the whip is less active/may be put into a neutral position behind the person longeing

Philosophy:

- when longeing, the trainer is simulating what is happening when the horse is under saddle
- the horse is working from behind into contact in front
- *the longe line takes the place of the reins* in:
 - directing the horse
 - asking for bend
 - controlling forward motion
- the contact may come just from the longe line, or can come from a combination of the longe line and the side reins (in a CPC test, sidereins at B level or higher)
- the majority of the work on the longe is done at the trot
- at the start of the school, the horse will be in walk but too much time spent at the walk can be counter-productive
- it is not advisable to canter on the longe as this can result in soundness issues
- *the longe whip takes the place of the rider's legs* in driving the horse forward
- the longe whip drives the horse forward to the contact
- the longe whip is used as though it is an extension of the hand

The horse should:

- be relaxed
- signs of relaxation include:
 - the horse travelling in a regular rhythm at a steady but purposeful speed
 - swinging of the tail
 - relaxing the rib cage, as evidenced through the horse blowing/snorting and breathing in a regular rhythm
 - stretching with the topline
- be attentive and obedient to the signals given by the person longeing
- the ear on the inside of the circle should be directed to the person longeing at least part of the time
- the horse's focus should be on the job at hand, not what is going on around him
- he should not be distractible or overly reactive to outside stimuli
- track up (the back feet should step up into the footprints left by the front feet)
- show engagement
- bend to the inside of the circle on the same arc as the circle
- the hind feet should follow in the tracks of the forefeet
- be balanced
- an unbalanced horse on the longe can stress his joints, interfere or fall down

- an unbalanced horse on the longe will often track with the hind quarters on a larger circle than the one the front feet are travelling on

The horse should not:

- canter
- unless you need to do so for a few strides to create some impulsion
- cantering on the longe for any length of time is very hard on the horse's hocks
- canter can quickly escalate and the horse can become unbalanced and harder to control

Tack:

Tack must be:

- well fitting
- supple
- strong enough to withstand sudden strain
- have good stitching
- safe, offering nothing either the horse or a person can get caught up in

Equipment required for the horse:

- longe line
- 10.5 m (30-35') long
- 2.5 cm (1-2") wide
- tubular linen webbing
- avoid:
 - nylon as it can cause friction burns
 - longe lines with a loop at the end that a person can become caught up in
 - longe lines with chains
- longe whip
- the longe whip should be long enough that the lash can reach the horse
- boots
- the horse needs to wear bell boots in front
- the horse needs to wear front and back brushing boots
- saddle
- for Pony Club testing, the saddle should be presented with stirrups

- *this is simply because one of the criteria you are being marked on is how to secure your stirrups; at home, if one wanted to longe without stirrups, that is fine*
- sidereins
- snaffle bridle
- (optional) Longeing Cavesson
 - must fit perfectly to be effective
 - a jowl strap is essential
- (optional) coupling
- (optional) longeing surcingle
 - can be used instead of or in conjunction with a saddle
 - is a good introduction for a horse to having tack on prior to introducing the saddle
 - it was the fashion for a while to use a breast girth with a roller, which would allow the surcingle to be fitted less tightly
- (optional) Dog Collar

Boots

- boots are for the protection of the horse
- they help to prevent over-reaching and brushing
- they will also provide support to the tendons, which can be stressed during longeing
- boots must be substantial enough to provide full protection
- boots should be secure
 - if Velcro is used to secure boots, ensure that it is in good shape
- some boots like Yorkshire boots will absorb moisture, so make sure that the boots being used are appropriate to the weather and footing
- bell boots should be well fitted
 - bell boots should not be so big that the horse can step on them and trip
- check cleanliness of boots, as if sand gets inside the boots it can chafe the horse



Stirrups

- must be secured:



1. Run the stirrups up, then take the stirrup leather loop and extend it forward
2. Loop the stirrup leather back over top of the stirrup iron, then pass the stirrup leather under the vertical stirrup leather strap
3. Continue with the excess part of the stirrup leather back and under the stirrup iron
4. Take the part of the stirrup leather that usually goes through the surcingle loop; put that through the loop at the end of the stirrup leather, and then replace through the surcingle loop



Reins

- Securing the reins:



1. Put the snaffle bridle on the horse
2. Place the reins over the horse's head as though you are riding
3. Take the reins that are under the horse's neck and twist them against each other
4. Take the throatlatch and pass it through one of the loops you have created, then secure the throatlatch strap as normal



Sidereins:

- Securing the sidereins:
 1. Take the loop at the end of the siderein and pass it through the last girth billet; secure the girth billet by doing up the girth
 2. Extend the sidereins forward from there, place the front girth billet (choose only one if there are three) over top of the siderein; secure - *this will help to stop the siderein from sliding up or down*
 3. Ensure that the height of both sidereins is the same on either side
 4. Height of sidereins will be determined by the horse's level of training - the more advanced, the higher the siderein will be fitted
 5. For the C2 test, the sidereins need to be fitted but will not be attached to the bit as the horse is being longed; for the B level, the sidereins will need to be attached following the warm-up



Siderein length:

- Checking the length of the sidereins:



1. Extend the siderein forward
2. At full extension, the metal clip of the siderein will be able to make contact with the bit
3. For the C2 level, *you will not be attaching the sidereins to the bit* while longeing
4. You still need to have sidereins attached to your saddle, however, and do expect to have the fit of your sidereins checked by your examiners
5. Once your sidereins are the correct length, then secure the sidereins by taking the near-side siderein and crossing it over the withers to secure the clip to the D ring near the pommel on the off-side; take the off-side siderein, cross it over the withers, then secure the siderein clip to the D ring on the near-side by the pommel

Attaching the longe line:

There are many acceptable ways to attach a longe line to a horse, including:

- Barnum Method aka Gag Method
- longeing cavesson
- coupling
- Dog Collar Method



The method demonstrated above is referred to as the **Barnum Method**, aka *Gag Method*.

- the Barnum Method works by applying pressure to the bit on both the left and right sides of the horse's face
- it also applies pressure to the poll, and will act similar to a gag bit (raising the bit in the horse's mouth) when under high tension, such as when the horse is misbehaving
- with this method, there is little likelihood that the bit will be pulled through the horse's mouth, or that the tack will shift around to interfere with the horse's face
- this method is suitable for a strong horse that pulls or may bolt or otherwise be harder to control
- this method is not suitable for a very green or sensitive horse, or one who has recently had a bit or mouth injury
- This method is potentially the most severe

- advantages of this method:
 - no additional equipment is required other than the longe line
 - this method affords good control if a horse is difficult
- disadvantages of this method:
 - this method can be very hard on a horse's mouth and can cause a horse to panic
 - you will lose about 1-2 metres of the length of your longe line as it is taken up over the horse's head
 - you will have to undo the longe line completely and re-thread it on the other side every time you change direction
 - this takes a lot of time
 - it is also a security risk as the horse will not be attached to the line at one point, so care must be taken to ensure that the horse is held firmly by the bridle



Fitting the longe line using the Barnum Method:

1. Take the longe line and put the clip through the bit ring on the near-side
2. Run the longe line up beside the cheek piece on the near-side
3. Run the longe line under the throatlatch strap on the near-side
4. Run the longe line over the headpiece/crownpiece and down the off-side (may go under the throatlatch again, but this is not completely necessary)

5. Affix the clip to the off-side bit ring with the clip facing out, away from the horse
6. To attach the longe line for the horse to go in the opposite direction, reverse the procedure, starting with the off-side ring and ending with the near-side ring

The Longeing Cavesson



The longeing cavesson is an additional piece of equipment that can be purchased for use when longeing

- the longeing cavesson is fitted over top of the bridle
- sidereins would be affixed to the bit if used
- the longeline is attached to the longeing cavesson, not to the bit
- the centre ring is used for the longe line

Advantages:

- no pressure is placed on the mouth by the longeline
- all pressure is on the nose
- the noseband of the cavesson noseband is usually well padded

- longeing the horse off of the centre ring of the longe line is supposed to encourage better balance and the production of a rounder circle
- the longe line stays attached to the centre ring of the longeing cavesson through the whole longe school, and does not need to be detached/re-attached when changing direction, therefore:
 - saves time
 - provides more security

Disadvantages:

- the longeing cavesson is another piece of equipment to be purchased and can be pricey
- longeing cavessons can be hard to fit
- longeing cavessons, if not well fitted, can slide around into the horse's outside eye, which cannot be observed by the person longeing

Fitting the Longeing Cavesson:

- the longeing cavesson is put on over top of the cavesson bridle
- the reins of the bridle need to be twisted up out of the way
- the noseband of the bridle may be removed if it interferes with the noseband of the longeing cavesson
- the noseband of the longeing cavesson is fitted underneath the cheekpieces of the bridle
- the noseband of the longeing cavesson must be fitted very snugly to prevent slipping or twisting
- the rest of the longeing cavesson goes over the bridle
- the jowl strap is affixed firmly to prevent twisting
- the throatlatch is attached as a bridle throatlatch would normally be
- the longeline is then attached to the centre ring of the cavesson, and can stay there throughout

Dog Collar Method

- the dog collar method uses an actual dog collar (usually of nylon, in a small dog size)
- the dog collar is anchored around the cavesson noseband where the vertical strap meets the horizontal strap and from there through the snaffle bit ring
- the longeline is affixed to the metal ring that the dog leash would be attached to
- this method works off of both nose and mouth pressure, minimizing the pressure on the mouth
- it helps to prevent the bit from being pulled through the mouth

- it provides a very safe, stable connection to the horse
- it is good for more green or sensitive horses
- can only be used with the cavesson noseband

Coupling

- a coupling is an additional piece of equipment that can be purchased
- it is a short, flat piece of leather with clips on either end and a ring in the middle
- the strap is situated under the horse's chin groove with the clips on either end being attached to the each bit ring
- the longe line is attached to the ring in the centre of the coupling strap
- all the pressure is on the mouth
- all the pressure originates from underneath and would accentuate any nutcracker action of a single jointed snafflebit
- the leather strap is usually fitted very loosely
- it often is quite freely swinging and has a lot of movement
- it is the least sophisticated in its ability to transfer the aids of the person longeing to the horse
- pressure tends to be downward and slightly sideways

Considerations When Longeing

Sequence at Your Test:

- half of your mark is on your tack, so the first thing you will need to do is present your horse for a tack inspection
- next you will proceed out to the arena to longe your horse
- typically you will be fully in charge of where you choose to longe and what you are going to do
- you need to comment that *you have done an arena check* and that *the gates are closed*
- explain *why you have chosen to longe in this particular section* of the arena
- expect to give a running monologue of what you are doing, why you are doing it and what you are observing
- be prepared to answer questions from the examiners
- pay attention to the questions, as they are often clues about what you need to attend to
- demonstrate that you can longe your horse at the walk showing obedience and relaxation
- discuss signs of relaxation in the horse, and reflect on what you are seeing from your own horse
- proceed to the trot

- ensure that your horse is on as big a circle as you can manage effectively
- comment that one of the things you should look at when you first put your horse out on the longe is soundness
- you would not continue to longe a horse if it is unsound
- demonstrate some walk/trot transitions
- once you have longed the horse for about 4 minutes in the first direction, change direction
- there are a number of acceptable ways to change direction:
 - 1. Have the horse halt out on the circle, then walk out to him
 - move around to the offside of the horse
 - with one hand on the bridle, use your hand against his side to do a small turn on the forehand, ensuring his head moves toward the outside of the circle
 - 2. Lead the horse through a small half circle to reverse at the walk, turning him to the outside of the circle rather than the inside of the circle
 - 3. If the horse is in a large arena, the person longeing can move to the off-side of the horse and proceed to longe the horse in a new circle
 - this is the least desirable method of changing direction
- once the horse has reversed, demonstrate a short, relaxed, obedient walk
- proceed to trot
- demonstrate a few walk/trot transitions
- keep an eye on your time, and if you feel you have achieved your goal, ask the examiners if they would like to see any more or if they would like you to wrap it up

Holding the longe line:

- There are two acceptable ways:
 - 1. hold the longe line in the hand in the same way as one would hold the reins
 - the longe line comes into the hand from the bottom and exits out the top between the thumb and forefinger
 - the hand nearest the front of the horse will have the section of the longe line that comes in from the horse
 - the hand nearest the back of the horse will hold the excess part of the lines
 - the excess part of the lines will be butterflied back and forth over the hand
 - the longeline should not be looped around the hand
 - some people prefer to hold all of the longe line in the hand nearest the front of the horse, and the longe whip in the hand nearest the back of this horse, but this method is a little less secure than having the line in two hands
 - if there is a sewn loop at the end of the longe line, the trainer should never put his/her hand through the loop
 - cutting the loop or taping the loop may be advisable

- 2. hold the longeline in the hand with the line coming in through the top of the hand by the thumb and index finger, and out the bottom of the hand
- this is referred to as a *driving rein*
- all else will be as above

Using the longe whip

The longe whip is an aid, not a punishment

- the longewhip will be held in the hand situated closest to the rear of the horse
- you may also be holding the excess longe line in this hand at the same time

The longe whip can be held in a number of positions

- *driving position*
- here the longe line is pointed toward the horse's mid-section, hindquarters or hock
- the purpose is to send the horse out on the circle, or forward with more impulsion
- the lash of the whip can be shaken or flicked at the horse to stimulate the horse
- *neutral position*
- here the point of the whip is near the ground, inactive, but tracking the horse as it circles
- *passive position*
- the whip is tucked under the trainer's arm and held behind the trainer so it is largely out of the horse's field of vision
- this method will be used when the horse is being too reactive and needs to be calmed
- *forward position*
- in limited situations, the whip can be used toward the front of the horse
- in cases where the horse is having difficulty stopping, the whip can be used in front of the chest
- the whip should never be raised above the point of the shoulder
- Note:
- **at no point should the longe whip be dropped on the ground**
- this creates a potentially dangerous situation as the horse could kick at the trainer's head as he/she bends over to pick up the whip
- having the whip inadvertently stepped on and broken is another potential hazard if the whip is dropped on the ground
- when the trainer is walking toward the horse to change rein, the lash of the whip needs to be secured so it is not dragged
- when the trainer is working with the horse to change direction or adjust tack/sidereins, the longe whip is held in the passive position under the arm, behind the back, with the lash secured

- care must be taken that the handle of the whip does not extend forward and poke the horse in the face while tack is being adjusted

Evasions and problems:

- falling in on the circle
- point the longe whip toward the horse at his midsection/saddle area
- consider where in the arena you are longeing; horses often fall at the same spot
- bulging out on the circle
- longe in a corner
- use sidereins
- move the horse to a smaller arena
- too slow, lacking impulsion
- be effective with your aids
- body:
 - move towards the rear of the horse, creating a right angle triangle to drive the horse forward
 - consider the angle at which you face your horse
 - you can step toward your horse with authority to drive him away
- whip:
 - use the whip pointed toward the hindquarters and hock
 - shake the lash
 - crack the whip judiciously
 - flick the horse with the whip near the fetlocks carefully
- voice:
 - use your voice with enthusiasm
 - upward inflection indicates the horse should go faster:
TrrrrOTTTT!
 - downward inflection indicates the horse should slow down:
AND Waaaaalk.
 - cluck
- location:
 - move your circle around the arena - sometimes the horse is just bored
 - do parallel longeing
- transitions:
 - ask the horse to canter for a few strides to energize the trot
- put a rider up:
 - have an assistant help you by riding the horse while you longe it to reinforce your aids

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- this would be a schooling thing you do at home, not during your test
- too fast and tense
- body:
 - move closer to the front of the horse and keep the line a little shorter
- whip:
 - put the whip in a neutral position, with the point and lash down near the ground
 - put the whip in a passive position, behind your back
- voice:
 - use your voice in a calming way, talking to your horse and reassuring him
- location:
 - find the place in the arena where your horse is most comfortable
 - you can use the wall to help the horse slow down/stop
- transitions:
 - focus on slower work, doing frequent down transitions
 - do not canter
 - don't force your horse to spend too much time at the walk if he is very energetic; sometimes they just need to get going and trot out their excess energy
- put a rider up:
 - reinforce your aids with the help of someone in the tack

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