

B. Sanami ([www.SanamiOnline.net](http://www.SanamiOnline.net))

Lesson Syllabus A: Teaching Foreign Language as Cross-cultural Curriculum

# Cross-Cultural Curriculum



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**Ben Sanami**  
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## Cross-Cultural Curriculum

- **Format**

- For upper elementary students, use class 1 and 2 only.
- For junior high school and above, include class 3.

- **Syllabus**

- **Class 1 Realizing differences**
  - ✧ W activity
  - ✧ Who is it?
  - ✧ Material World Family Pictures
  - ✧ The elephant picture. (Elementary students)
- **Class 2 Cross-cultural mock experience activities**
  - ✧ Find Your Friends
  - ✧ Chatter
  - ✧ First Impressions
- **Class 3 Wrap-up**
  - ✧ Is That a Fact (responsibility)
  - ✧ How Accurate is it (responsibility to question)
  - ✧ Is it Correct?

- **Follow Up**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| International calendar | Show the holidays and anniversaries of the world for every day of the year.   |
| Journal                | Encourage students to write their thoughts down, and read them out loud.  |
| Challenge Question     | Use the last 5 – 10 minutes of class and tell a story with the students about a topic that relates the activity of the day. |

- **Activities:**

*The W tragedy activity (10 minutes)*

- **Materials:** blackboard
- **Purpose:** To show the diversity of viewpoints.
- **Introduction:**

Recently the word “viewpoint” frequently comes up in international trade and human rights curriculum. In this activity, students are introduced to various viewpoints in an easy to understand way.
- **Procedure:**

Jot down the symbol “W” on the blackboard and ask the class to look at it. Notice that for 10 people there will be 10 colors, the same symbol will look the same but interpretation of the symbol will be different for each. This “W” according to different ways of viewing it can be seen as the English letter W, or M, MacDonald’s, rabbit ears, anything is possible. The important thing here is that students realize that there is no right answer.
- **Wrap-up:**

First listen to the students. Next ask, “Which is correct?” When no answer is decided is given begin talking about how human beings are very diverse.

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*Who is it?* (10 minutes)

- Materials: The teachers
- Purpose: To realize the diversity among the teachers.  
To understand ones own stereotypes.
- Procedure:
  - A. The teachers stand in a line in front of everyone.
  - B. The students think of various questions for the teachers. Read the questions and the students match the questions with the teachers.
    - (i.) What country is s/he from?
    - (ii.) Which one speaks English?
    - (iii.) Which one speaks Chinese and French?
    - (iv.) Which 2 are good at baseball?
    - (v.) Which 2 speak Mongolian?
    - (vi.) One of them played judo, which one?
    - (vii.) Which one has been to Hawaii?
    - (viii.) Which one has been to Hong Kong?
    - (ix.) Who is good at cooking? Who is not?
    - (x.) Who has the tallest mother?
    - (xi.) Who is good at computers?
    - (xii.) Which on speaks 6 languages?
    - (xiii.) Which one has children?
  - C. The activity starts again.
- Wrap-up:

Talk about how each teacher is different from one another, and no two teachers are alike. Did a student match a question to the wrong teacher? Explain stereotypes: Something you thought is true but is not really true.

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*Material World Family Pictures (25 minutes)*

- Materials:  
World family's photo language publication from [www.eric-net.org](http://www.eric-net.org)  
World map
- Purpose: To realize differences and to develop an interest in differences.
- Introduction:  
It is often thought that for students to realize differences experiencing the situation is often better than words. It would be good to take them on a world tour experiencing each culture but this is impossible; therefore, we use pictures of different families and their possessions of different countries around the world. The photographer, Peter Mensell has taken the photographs of different families around the world. ERIC Center for Cross-Cultural Education has published "Earth Family Photo Language", which consists of the families of 30 different countries and their possessions all in front of their home. Allow students to see the photos and see the differences and similarities between themselves and to one another.
- Procedure:
  - (i.) Split the class into groups.
  - (ii.) Give each group a photo of a family who has few possessions and a family who has a lot.
  - (iii.) Allow the group to select a leader to present to the whole class. (Optional)
  - (iv.) Allow each group to discuss amongst themselves the differences and similarities and/or use attached questions.
  - (v.) Allow each group to present their findings.
  - (vi.) Allow each group to guess the names of the countries.
  - (vii.) Using a map tell the students the correct answers.
- Wrap-up:  
Allow students to write their thoughts on paper.  
If you were to put all of your possessions in front of your house, what would you put right out in front? How would you like to show your house and possessions to someone in another country?

## Earth Family Photo Language publication

Look at the pictures, investigate and present!

1. What is your first impression?
2. Where is the TV?
  - ① How many TVs are there? What about you?
  - ② Where is the TV in the picture? Is there any kind of meaning as to where the TV is placed? Please explain, if there is or isn't.
3. How many people are in the family?
  - ① Whose family is larger? What about your family?
  - ② If your family has the same number of members, what are the good and bad points?
4. Where is the house?
  - ① Whose house is bigger? What about your house?
  - ② Do you think living in this kind of house would be interesting or difficult?
5. What kinds of things do they have?
  - ① What is probably the most important thing?
  - ② How is different from what you have?
  - ③ If there is something interesting in the pictures what is it?
6. What country do you think this is?

Expressions, bed, clothes, relation to nature, what kind of job do they do?

## Earth Family Photo Language publication

Look at the pictures, investigate and present!

1. How many electrical appliances are there?
    - a. Whose house has more?
    - b. Who has more TVs?
  2. Look at the clothing.
    - a. Whose clothes may be more expensive?
    - b. Do you like these kinds of clothes?
  3. What do you think they eat?
    - a. Is it different from what you eat?
    - b. What did you eat for supper last night? What do you think they ate?
  4. What kind of house do they live in?
    - a. Is it big or small?
    - b. Compared to your house, which do you think is easier to live in?
  5. Look at the family.
    - a. Whose family is bigger?
    - b. As a member of that family do you think it would be interesting?
1. Was there anything that surprised you the most?

*The Elephant Picture* (30 minutes)

- Materials:  
Copies of the Blind men and the elephant story  
Blackboard
- Purpose: To understand that people's sensitivity to things may be related to the opinions of others. To understand the importance of collecting all the information from different sources before making a conclusion.
- Introduction:  
This old story from India is an example of how everyone's perceptions of things are different. There were several blind men explaining what is an elephant but when they saw the elephant they could only imagine what it was. So the image of the elephant was always subject to debate. From this story the students learn that the way things are seen and felt differ according to language, culture and experience.
- Procedure:
  - (i.) Read to story to the students.
  - (ii.) If there are few students form a circle. If large class form smaller groups.
  - (iii.) Use the following sample questions to simulate discussion.
    1. Questions can be answered orally or written down.
      - ① When the man touched the elephant what happened?
      - ② Why were the images of the 6 men different?
      - ③ Did anyone have a correct image of the elephant?
      - ④ Was there anyone with a completely wrong image?
      - ⑤ If there was no same way of seeing the elephant how would you feel?
    2. Feel free to use the following in free discussion or in a written assignment. You may use make up your own questions.
      - ① What did the men learn from the king?
      - ② What should we ought to understand from listening to this story?
      - ③ Could the problem that came out of this story happen in real life?
      - ④ Do you know of anyone (including yourself) who may have had a fight as a result of a different point of view?
      - ⑤ What happened as a result of #4 above?
      - ⑥ Would the story be different if the men were not blind?
      - ⑦ Does anyone have any other ideas of what this elephant looks like?
      - ⑧ After listening to this story do you have any good solutions as to how the problem might be solved? How should you understand the other person's point of view?
    3. An active interpretation maybe good. For example:
      - ① Allow the group to paint a picture of the story. Or include all the parts of the men's imagined elephant pieces to create an sculpture.
      - ② Talk about the student's disputes. Use role-play to come to a solution.
- Wrap-up:  
Other thoughts:  
Think about the men's way home.  
Write down the viewpoints of yourself or another person.  
Put on a play about the theme of the story, invite other classes to watch and ask them questions like those above.
- Ask 5-6 students to volunteer to be the blind men using blind folds, ask them to leave the class. Ask another student to volunteer and stand at the front of the class. By touch alone, allow each of the blind folded students to come in one at a time to describe to the class who is s/he? And/or use a subject to feel.
- Put something in a bag and pass the bag around the classroom and ask students to describe what it is.

## The Blind Men and the Elephant

Long ago there lived 6 men in a small village in India. They were all blind from birth. The people of the village liked the men very much so they protected them all from dangers. But since the men were blind they could not see the world. So the men could not imagine the beauty of the world. They wanted to know about the outside world so they listened to the stories of travelers.

The story that they heard from the travelers that interested them the most was the one about the elephant. Elephants could destroy forests and lift very heavy things and its' roar would scare everyone from children to the elderly. However, the men knew that the king's daughter rode an elephant to travel the country. They could not understand why would the king allow his daughter ride such a scary animal or even get near one.

Every day the men would argue about the elephant. The first man said, "the elephant is very strong, it's not human..., I heard many times that the elephant can be used to reclaim land from the forest and build roads". "No you're wrong", said the second man. "if the king allows his daughter to ride it, then isn't it gentle and elegant", continued the second man. "You're wrong, I heard that it has tusks that can stab a man in the chest", said the third man. Then the fourth man said, "You're all wrong. The elephant is just a big cow. People just exaggerate it a little". The fifth man said, "The elephant is without a doubt a magical animal. So the king can let his daughter travel the country safely". The sixth man said, "I can't believe that such an elephant exists. Isn't it possible that the travelers here have deceived us?"

One day, the villagers had enough of the men's arguing. So in order to clearly show this concept of an elephant the villagers took the men to get approval to go to the palace. A young village man was chosen to lead the men. With the hand of the first man on the shoulder of the young man to lead, the other men followed with a hand on the shoulder of the man in front forming a chain. After the preparations were made, the young man led the men to the beautiful palace.

When the men arrived at the palace, the king's resident gardener greeted them and led them to the center of the garden. There was the elephant. So one at a time the men were allowed to go up to the elephant to touch. Until now the elephant was the origin of the disputes.

The first man touched the elephant's stomach and said, "the elephant is like a wall, firm and smooth. So it is very strong". The second man touched the nose and said, "the elephant is like a very big snake. The elephant is as dangerous an animal like a spear". The fourth man touched on side of its' foot and said, "Like I said it is like a very big cow". The fifth man touched its' big ear and said, "I think the elephant is like a big fan or a carpet that can fly over the mountains and forest". The sixth man touched its' tail and said, "it's probably just an old rope, not dangerous at all". Then the resident gardener returned and led the men to some shade by a tree. "Since your trip back will be far, please take a moment to rest here. I will fetch some water", said the gardener.

While they waited the six men spoke about the elephant. The first man said, "the elephant is like a wall", the second man said, "a wall? No. The elephant is a big snake", the third man said, "a spear", the fourth man said, "it's definitely a big cow", the fifth man said, "without a doubt it's a flying carpet", the sixth man said, "Doesn't anyone know? Someone is using a rope to deceive us".

While talking about the story voices began to get louder, again they began to argue. "Wall! Snake! Spear! Cow! Carpet! Rope!" and then they heard a sudden, "Shut up!". It was the king who was awoken from his noon nap. "Why do you all think that you are all each right?" the king said. The men were about to ask the king a question but since they knew the king was very smart they decided not to ask the question. The king said, "the elephant is a very big animal. Everyone only touched one part of the elephant. Maybe if all the parts that everyone touched were to be combined you could see the reality. That will be enough for now as I was interrupted from my noon nap...". Then the resident gardener returned with water. While drinking their water in the shade by the tree, they all thought about the king's advice. Then the first man said, "the king is right, to know the truth we must put all the parts together. On our way back, let's think about this together". Then they assembled their chain. The first man put his hand on the young man's shoulder and continuing with the others as before, they proceeded to return home.

## Find your Friends

### **Objective:**

This activity generates thought about what it means to be accepted, rejected, or in any way treated as “different” or “same” based on circumstances beyond the control of the participant.

**Keyword Descriptions:** Identity, Rejection/acceptance, Difference beyond your control

**Number of participants:** best with 12 or more

**Space Requirements:** Large open space, Can be done outside

**Be prepared for participants:** who experience feelings of rejection; cannot/ do not find a group to belong to; who are frustrated at not being able to communicate verbally.

**Best used as:** An opening activity but can be used successfully at any time.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** different colored stickers

1. Facilitator asks for participants' co-operation and to close their eyes for a short time.
2. A colored sticker is stuck on the forehead of each participant.
  - a. For a group of 30 participants distribute stickers as follows:  
10 red, 9 yellow, 11 blue, 1 green
  - b. Distribute colors randomly.
  - c. Distribute stickers making sure they do not find out their color.
3. The facilitator signals to allow the participants to open their eyes and proceed to move around the room looking for their friends keeping in mind that the participants must not speak or write anything, gestures are ok. When they have found their friends please sit down where you are.
4. Discussion: (talking permitted)  
Facilitator asks the one wondering around the room:  
Where are your friends?  
Do you have any friends?  
How did it feel to be left out?  
Why were you left out? Most like the answer will be, I don't know so pose the same question to the group: Why was s/he left out?  
So you try to get the group to admit the fact that they separated each other by color. Then you say, “I didn't ask you to separate by color”, try to get them to respond that you wanted them to find their friends.
5. Wrap-up:  
The facilitator explains that when we are placed in a situation where we are unsure of what to do we tend to classify people based on outer appearances – this is a natural human tendency. So from the activity where the participants were asked to find their friends there is a:  
-Consciousness or awareness of friends  
-The awareness of friends leads to group thinking  
-Awareness of a group is where one tends to throw away what is different about ourselves to be with this group and this leads to discrimination and feelings of rejection. So when choosing our friends a separation can lead to discrimination.
6. The participants are asked to do the activity one more time, what would you do if told, “find your friends”?
7. Further Discussion Questions/ Important points to cover:  
How did you feel being unable to communicate verbally?  
Did anyone help you to find your group? How did that make you feel?  
Did you feel rejected at any time?  
Can you compare this experience/ these feelings with any of your past life experiences?  
How do you think someone else might feel when they are rejected based on something they cannot control (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, etc.)?  
Think, take responsibility and participate. Stop un-thoughtful judgment based solely on appearance.

*Chatter* (40 minutes)

- Materials:
  - Chatter rule sheet
  - Whistle
  - Stopwatch
- Purpose:
  - Cultural mock experience:
    - To understand the hidden side of communication.
- Introduction:
  - In cross-cultural mock experience activities, it is difficult to experience the real essence of a clash of cultures. Different cultures have different ways of communication so we have to be cautious.
- Procedure:
  - (i.) Cut the Chatter rule sheet into long narrow strip cards and distribute to the students. Try to distribute so that nobody gets the same one.
  - (ii.) Move the desks away.
  - (iii.) Make a 2-3 person group of spectators. Put the rest of the class in groups of about 4-6 people each.
  - (iv.) Distribute one rule card per student. Distribute cards so that others cannot see the contents.
  - (v.) Explain that they are all at a party with people from different cultures. Your culture's manners are indicated on the card. Do not show the rules to one another. While keeping the rule secret go about speaking to as many people as possible. The spectators will watch and take notes.
  - (vi.) Give several topics for the students to talk about. Keep the contents of the rule cards private and secret. (It is possible to make business cards for each student to hand out, so they have something to talk about.)
  - (vii.) Give them about 7 minutes to talk then blow the whistle and get them to return to their groups.
  - (viii.) Allow them to chatter once more in the same way.
  - (ix.) After 7 minutes or so, ask them to stop chatting.
  - (x.) Discussion
    - ① Ask the students about the rule cards.
    - ② Ask the students to think about what was the other person's rule like?
  - (xi.) Ask the students, if a card with a "be yourself" rule be ok? Ask the students if they can guess who had the "be yourself" rule card.
  - (xii.) Read the rule cards out loud.
- Wrap-up:
  - Tell the students that these were real manners of certain countries.
  - For example, in certain Latin American countries they have a custom of giving a kiss.
  - Write down your thoughts about today's lesson.

## **Chatter Rule Cards**

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Loud voices are rude. It is better to whisper. Without listening, don't talk in a loud voice.

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A gentle person is excellent. Whatever is said, answer with "Thank you"

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Before chatting with someone, it is important to get their attention. For this, clap 3 times. When you get their attention, ask a question or comment. Getting their attention like this is the only way to be polite.

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The space between people is very important. Do not get too close to the person you are speaking to. At most, not keeping at least an arms length distance away is strange. If they do not keep at least an arms length distance away, not backing away would be rude.

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Do not look at the face of a stranger. At a party, always show your back and talk.

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## **Chatter Rule Cards**

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Staring at people is extremely rude. Do not look at the person you are speaking to. It is better to look at the floor or the person's shoes. Be careful not to look at their face!

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Hold their hands and make them feel at ease. It should be more comfortable to hold hands while chatting.

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Look at the person in the face while chatting to them. It is best to stand facing the person you are talking to.

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You must get close to the person you are talking to. Everything they say is humorous so whatever they say laugh in a loud voice.

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Cold thinking is the worst. Stand as close as possible to the person you are talking to. If the person backs off, it is better to get closer.

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Be yourself is best! Make yourself at a party with friends and act the way you think is best.

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*First Impressions* (30 minutes)

- Materials:  
First Impressions worksheet
- Purpose: To understand that when judging various first impressions we often make mistakes. To allow the participants to get to know each other.
- Introduction:  
Making first impressions is often a poor thing to do but human beings immediately tend to make these judgments. We all often are faced with judging information based on appearance and are consequently mistaken. In this activity, the dangers of judging people by appearance becomes evident.
- Procedure:
  - (i.) In groups of two, allow the participants to write down a list of things they like. Keeping the list private and hidden from one another.
  - (ii.) Try to make pairs so that the participants don't know each other very well.
  - (iii.) Distribute one worksheet per participant.
  - (iv.) Tell the participants the following:
    - ① Without using words, think about 5 observations about your partner. Just use their appearance and try to judge them. (For example, their favorite colors, food, sports, etc.). Write this in the first column on the worksheet.
    - ② In the next column write down why you thought so.
  - (v.) Then tell each other what you each thought of one another. Confirm if it is true or not.
  - (vi.) Write down the conclusions in the third column. (The teacher should make up a story as an example if necessary.)

Wrap-up:

Ask the participants to write down their observations.

Discuss whether or not the participants have had this kind experience.



*Is That a Fact* (30 minutes)

- **Materials:**  
Is that a fact? 1 worksheet for a group of 4-5 students.  
Purpose: to be able to judge fact and opinion and when watching the news be able to take responsibility for your own interpretations.
- **Introduction:**  
Being able to distinguish subjectivity and fact is important to objectively judge the news and other information. When hit with an event, human beings will, without thinking, formulate a bias in the information or the point of view. To realize that how truthful or how subjective ones' own understanding is cannot be judged or found to be wrong by oneself.

**Procedure:**

1. Define the difference between fact and opinion.  
**Fact:** Occurs in reality or exists. Real things.  
**Opinion:** The personal thoughts of a single person.
2. Example: Tell the difference between fact or opinion for the following:
  - Today is hot.
  - Canada has 10 provinces.
  - The best cars in the world are Japanese.

3. Distribute the work sheet, whether each is a fact, opinion or not sufficient information.

事実 Fact	意見 Opinion	どう見ても情報不足 Not sufficient Info
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Note: Not true false but fact or opinion.

4. Present findings to the class as a group.

Look for similarities and differences between groups.

Why were there differences?

What made something not sufficient in information?

5. Wrap-up discussion:

Discuss why is this activity important?

How often does something you read and thought was fact but was actually opinion occur?

Where would it be potentially dangerous to make a mistake between fact and opinion?

Use newspaper articles and discuss.

Write down 3 things factual and 3 things subjective from the news on TV.

Write down impressions of today's lesson and why is this lesson important.

Sample work sheet:

## Is that a fact?

Question	Fact?	Opinion?	Not sufficient
1月1日はお正月。 January first is new year's day.			
障害を持っている人はかわいそうだ。 Disabled people have a hard life.			
唐辛子を使った料理は辛い。 Food with chili's is hot.			
男の子よりも女の子の方は頭がいい。 Girls are smarter than boys.			
今日すばらしいお天気だ！ Today is a beautiful day.			
生の魚を食べる国は日本しかない。 Japan is the only country that eats raw fish.			
アフガニスタンの人は不幸せ。 Afganistani's are unhappy.			
100年前よりも今の世界の方が優れている。 The world is a better place now than it was a 100 years ago.			
日本製の車は世界最高の車だ。 Japanese cars are the best in the world.			
都会のほうがいい生活送れる。 Life in the city is better.			
背が高い方がいい。 Taller people are better off.			
$10 \div 2 = 5$			

*How Accurate is it?* (30 minutes)

- Materials:
  - 1 worksheet for a group of two
  - Paper and pencil
- Purpose: to be able to distinguish a generalization, and to be able to change a generalization.
- Introduction:

In this activity the difficult concept of a generalization will be introduced. When we are bombarded by so much information we tend to accept it without thought and formulate generalizations. The danger lies when these generalizations lead to stereotyping.
- Procedure:
  - (i.) Introduce a general story and a clear story. Use something in the classroom to introduce the stories. For example, All balls are round vs. This ball is round (a rugby ball).
  - (ii.) Write, “Snakes are dangerous animals” on the black board. Then ask participants to agree or disagree by indicating by show of hands or writing yes or no on the blackboard.
  - (iii.) Now ask their responses to the following in the same way as (ii.) above.
    1. All snakes are dangerous animals.
    2. Most snakes are dangerous animals.
    3. A lot of snakes are dangerous animals.
    4. Certain Snakes are dangerous animals.
    5. Few snakes are dangerous animals.
    6. Do you know everything about snakes?
    7. Is it true to say that snakes are dangerous animals?
  - (iv.) Discussion:
    1. How many people wrote, “yes” at first?
    2. On the seventh time, how many people wrote “yes”?
    3. Find out how many changed their opinion and why they changed their opinion?
    4. How would you make the statement “snakes are dangerous animals” more correct?
      - ① Some snakes, rattlesnakes, certain location, etc.
    5. How would you say the statement if you did not know a lot about snakes?
      - (a.) I don’t know but..., According to what I know..., etc.
  - (v.) In small groups do the worksheet. Proceed to an active idea exchange.
  - (vi.) Present the findings to the class. If a conclusion is wrong, why was it decided in that way?
  - (vii.) In class, determine if the generalization can be changed to be more correct.
- Wrap-up:

Encourage participants to write down their impressions about the lesson.  
Write down about ten generalizations from watching TV or reading the newspaper.  
Make a chart for homework of present events in the news that occur.

## Is it correct?

Instructions: Read the following and indicate at what level do you think each of the statements are correct.

Subject	What level?					
	All Most	half	A lot	A certain amount	few	I don't know
Baseballs are white						
Elephants are strong						
Fish have gills						
Spiders are poisonous						
Candy is bad for the teeth						
Babies cry						
Politicians are untruthful						
Teachers are smarter than children						
Americans are rich						
The poor are lazy						

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