Introduction

There are many fun and exciting careers available for theatre majors. People who study theater should be prepared to gain practical experience in the theatre as well as completing relevant coursework. In addition to performance and production, theatre careers include those in advertising, television, film, recreation, education and management. So roll up your sleeves and get to work on finding a theatre career that excites you!

Functional Skill Set for Theater Majors:

Good work ethic
Presentation, public speaking skills
Adaptability
Imagination & creativity
Flexibility
Attention to detail
Appreciation of aesthetics
Strong communication skills
Basic reading, writing and editing skills
Interpersonal skills
Interpretive skills

Many occupations today require a college educated individual who can write and solve problems, learn new information quickly and work well with others on a team. Talent, commitment, energy, and discipline are key personal qualities for successful theater careers.
### Career Titles for Theater Majors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accounting</th>
<th>Coordination of Volunteers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting Coach</td>
<td>Copy Writer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Costume Designer</td>
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<td>Actress</td>
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<td>Administration of Arts Programs</td>
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<td>Admissions Director</td>
<td>Critic-Print Media</td>
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<td>Advance Agent</td>
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<td>Advertising/Marketing Specialist</td>
<td>Dance Therapist</td>
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<td>Amusement Park Entertainer</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
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<td>Animal-Talent Coordinator</td>
<td>Dancing Instructions Sales Representative</td>
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<td>Announcer</td>
<td>Dancing Instructor, Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Director</td>
<td>Dancing Instructor or Ballet</td>
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<td>Art Education-Theater Arts Professor</td>
<td>Development Officer/Fund Raiser</td>
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<td>Arts Journalism-Critic, Broadcasting</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background Singer</td>
<td>Draftsman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behind The Scenes: Lighting Person, Production Hairstylist, Wardrobe Dresser</td>
<td>Drama Coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Booking Manager or Band Booker</td>
<td>Drama Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadcast Journalist</td>
<td>Dramatic Coach (coaches performers to pass auditions)</td>
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<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>Dramatic Reader</td>
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<td>Facilities Manager</td>
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<td>Choreographer</td>
<td>Fashion Model</td>
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<td>Faux Painter</td>
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<td>Comedian</td>
<td>Foreign Correspondent</td>
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<td>Communication Technology Specialist</td>
<td>Fund-raising and Development</td>
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<td>Community Affairs Officer</td>
<td>Health Educator</td>
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<td>Community Liaison</td>
<td>Human Resource Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compact Discs and Tape Recordings Salesperson</td>
<td>Humorist, Comedy Writer or Gag Writer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company Manager</td>
<td>Impersonator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Instrumental Musician (mostly short-term jobs)</td>
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<td>Continuity Writer (writes material that is read by an announcer to connect parts of a musical program)</td>
<td>Journalist/Broadcasting</td>
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<td>Labor Relations Specialist</td>
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<td>Librettist (writes text for musicals or operas and adapts words to music)</td>
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<td>Lighting Designer</td>
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- Lighting Operator
- Lobbyist
- Lyricist (song writer)
- Magician
- Make-up Artist
- Management (Agents)
- Marketing
- Mime
- Music Director
- Music Education Director
- Music Teacher
- Music Therapist or Creative Arts Therapist
- Music Writer (writes directions on how to play musical instruments)
- Musical Instruments and Accessories Sales Representative
- Orchestra Conductor
- Performing Artists: Ballet Dancer, Chorus Singer, Conductor-Symphony Orchestra, Opera Singer, Show Musician
- Pianos and Organs Salesperson
- Private Dance Teacher
- Producer
- Production Manager
- Production, Directing & Design: Casting Director, Scenic Designer
- Program Assistant, Production Assistant, Associate Director
- Prompter
- Prop Attendant
- Prop Manager
- Public Affairs
- Public Relations Representative (develops favorable image, write copy about client for use by different media)
- Public Relations Specialist
- Publicist (prepares copy about client and persuades press to use it in editorial space)
- Publicity
- Puppeteer
- Radio Director (selects performers, integrates program, directs rehearsals and broadcasts)
- Radio/TV Announcer
- Recruiter
- Research
- Rigger
- Sales Representative
- Scene Painter
- Screenwriter of Scriptwriter (writes program scripts, news and commercials)
- Script Coach
- Script Manager
- Scriptwriting
- Section Member
- Set Designer
- Sheet Music Salesperson
- Singer (mostly short-term jobs)
- Sound Designer
- Sound Person
- Special Effects
- Special Events Coordinator
- Stage Manager
- Stage Technician
- Stand-in
- Stereo Equipment Salesperson
- Student Affairs Specialist
- Studio Musician
- Stunt Coordinator
- Stunt-person
- Support Staff
- Talent Manager
- Talent Scout
- Teacher
- Technical Director
- Television Schedule Coordinator
- Television/film production assistant
- Theater Manager
- Theatre technician/craftsperson
- Theatrical Administration: Box Office Theater, Theatrical Press Agent
- Theatrical Press Agent Apprentice
- Therapy
- Ticket Sales Coordinator
- Tour Guide
- Tourism Director
- Training & Development Specialist
- Video Store Manager
- Writer/Editor
- Writing and Composing for the Performing Arts: Composer-Musical Theatre/Opera, Orchestrator, Songwriter

**Some Organizations that Typically Employ Theater Majors:**

Advertising agencies
Amusement and theme parks
Arts councils
Broadway theaters
Business & industry
Colleges/universities
Corporations
Design studios
Government
Industrial shows
Industrial studios
Motion picture studios
Musical theaters
Newspapers/magazines
Opera companies
Orchestras
Performing arts centers
Public and private schools
Public relations firms
Radio/television
Show groups
Showcase comedy clubs
Telecommunications organizations
Theaters: commercial, regional, community, summer stock, children’s and dinner
Touring companies
University theater groups

**Start a Strategic Plan:**

Participate in acting workshops, courses, and seminars to get advice and experience and to make contacts with others in the field.
Join unions or actors’ guilds to stay abreast of opportunities and developments in the field.
Get as much acting experience as possible. Perform in school productions, community theater, etc. to hone acting skills.
Prepare a professional resume that lists your acting experience. It’s helpful to have your resume attached to or printed on the reverse side of an 8”x10” photograph of yourself.
Be prepared to make the rounds: Distribute your resumes to numerous agencies and offices.
Follow up your resume with several personal visits.
Be aware that more opportunities exist in large cities such as New York and Los Angeles.
Learn about the entertainment industry as a whole: take courses on entertainment law, business, management, etc.
An extensive network of contacts is essential. Get to know people working in your field and related areas.
Obtain certification for the state in which you wish to teach.
Obtain a graduate degree to teach on the college level. Many performing arts centers have outreach programs to get students involved in the arts. For example, students may be offered ticket discounts to a theater production. Become involved in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). This organization can give you information about becoming an apprentice as well as help you make valuable contacts.

Get experience: Offer your services to school and local theaters. Read industry magazines and books to learn about your area. For sound design: Become familiar with computer technology as digital sound effects and electronic music replace traditional means of sound design. For costume design: Supplement your program with courses in art history and fashion design. Learn about different eras in history so that they can be recreated on stage. A basic knowledge of history and architecture is helpful. Review plays, movies, and TV shows for your school or local newspaper. Join your school’s radio or television station. Theatrical press agents publicize and promote theatrical productions. They write press releases, arrange press conferences, and other media events. Take courses in related areas such as public relations, advertising, and business. Reporters spend time on the set absorbing everything. They interview actors as well as craftspeople. Get as much writing experience as possible: Write for the college newspaper, enter play writing contests, etc. See many different productions and shows and read a variety of scripts to see how scripts are developed. Researchers gather information for movie writers. They may also track down photographs or historical documents to make the film more authentic. Many corporations sponsor arts programs and have “giving” department for this purpose. Secretarial/clerical positions in theaters and studios are often stepping-stones to higher ambitions and a good way to make contacts. Take business courses to supplement your program. Obtain a working knowledge of computers. Participate in the Director’s Guild Training Program. Supplement your program with business courses. Experience with fund-raising is important: Volunteer to do this with local theaters and arts councils. Learn what types of permits and insurance are needed to film or perform in certain areas. Volunteer with directors in local theaters to become familiar with the environment. Serving as someone’s assistant is a great way to get started in this area. Gain directing experience by participating in college productions. Participate in Internships, Field Experience Placement and Day on the Job. Sample UD Field Experiences: Glimmer Glass Opera, New York Theatre Workshop, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Do an internship or an apprenticeship with a local theater. Network: Talk with people working in the field to find out about jobs and opportunities.
Read newspapers and periodicals related to the theater to keep up with new developments. 
Read the “trades”-magazines and newspapers that report events in the entertainment industry. 
Read the “Theater” section of daily newspapers to find out about upcoming productions. 
Get your foot in the door: Get involved with productions in any way you can, and be prepared to do various tasks assigned by stage managers or producers. 
Join professional groups as an opportunity to make contacts. 
Get as much exposure as you can: Participate in local productions, volunteer with fund-raising efforts for the arts, etc. 
Be aware of scams: Check out the legitimacy of agencies and companies before paying any sort of fees. 
Have a back-up plan: Develop skills that qualify you for other jobs while you wait for opportunities in acting. Be aware that the unemployment rate for actors hovers around 85%. 
Be prepared to move to a metropolitan area where more opportunities exist.

Professional Organizations and Associations for Theater Majors:

Actor’s Equity Association  
165 West 46th Street  
15th Floor  
New York, NY 10036  
http://www.actorsequity.org

American Association of Community Theatre  
4712 Enchanted Oaks Dr.  
College Station, TX 77845-7649  
http://www.aact.org

National Dance Council of America  
PO Box 2432  
Vienna, VA 22183  
http://www.ndca.org/index.html

Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers  
1501 Broadway  
Suite 1701  
New York, NY 10036-5653  
http://www.ssdcd.org

American Alliance for Theatre and Education  
4811-B Saint Elmo Ave.  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Fax: 515-474-1720  
http://www.aate.com
American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers
1 Lincoln Plaza
New York, NY 10023
http://www.aact.org

Screen Actors Guild
5757 Wilshire Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90036
http://www.sag.com

Stage Managers Association  www.stagemanagers.org

Clarkstown Summer Theatre  http://www.summertheatrefestival.com

Conference of Drama Schools  http://www.drama.ac.uk/

Episcopal Actor’s Guild  http://www.actorsguild.org/

Glasgow, The Cecilian Society  http://www.gla.ac.uk/Clubs/Cecelian/

Illinois Theatre Association  http://www.illinoistheatreassociation.org

Institute of Outdoor Drama  http://www.unc.edu/depts/outdoor/

International Playback Theatre Network  http://www.playbacknet.org

League of American Theatres and Producers  http://www.broadway.org/

Playbill Online  http://www.playbill.com

Solo Together  http://www.gis.net/~mtf/solo.htm

United Stage of America  http://www.unitedstage.com/

National Association of Broadcasters  www.nab.org

Public Relations Society of America, Inc.  www.prsa.org

American Women in Radio and TV, Inc.  www.awrt.org

Theater Education Association  http://www.edta.org

Women in Film  http://www.wif.org

Theater Musicians Association  www.afm-tma.org/

Revised 12-7-10
# Theater

## What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

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<td>Stage</td>
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<td>Television</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motion Picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### EMPLOYERS

- Community theaters
- Regional theaters
- Commercial theaters
- Summer stock theaters
- Dinner theaters
- Children's theaters
- Repertory companies
- University theater groups
- Touring companies
- Industrial shows
- Show groups
- Amusement and theme parks
- Television/film studios
- Radio stations
- Nightclubs
- Cabarets
- Cruise lines
- Acting conservatories
- Public or community programs

### STRATEGIES

- Participate in acting workshops, courses, and seminars to get advice and experience and to make contacts with others in the field.
- Join unions, e.g. Actors Equity Union, or actors' guilds to stay abreast of opportunities and developments in the field.
- Get as much acting experience as possible. Perform in school productions, community theater, summer stock, etc. to hone acting skills.
- Pursue training through acting conservatories or mentoring from a drama coach.
- Develop a wide range of skills, such as singing, dancing, or acrobatics to be more versatile.
- Gain related experience by working in a college radio or television station.
- Consider getting modeling experience.
- Learn a foreign language and train with a dialect coach.
- Prepare a professional resume that lists your acting experience. Have your resume attached to or printed on the reverse side of an 8” x 10” photograph of yourself.
- Be prepared to make the rounds. Distribute your resume to numerous agencies and offices. Follow up with several personal visits.
- Secure an agent or manager to help find jobs.
- Be aware that more opportunities exist in large cities such as New York and Los Angeles.
- Learn about the entertainment industry as a whole. Take courses on entertainment law, business, management, etc.
- An extensive network of contacts is essential. Get to know people working in your field and related areas.
- Consider whether you want to pursue acting as a full-time job or as an avocational interest.
### BEHIND THE SCENES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
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<th>Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directing</td>
<td>Theaters of varying types</td>
<td>Seek formal training and experience in acting first.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Television and motion picture studios</td>
<td>Develop leadership skills through participation in campus and community organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Direction</td>
<td>Video production companies</td>
<td>Gain both directing and technical experience by participating in college productions. Gain technical experiences in local theaters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casting</td>
<td>Other performance venues</td>
<td>Participate in the Director's Guild Training Program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set Design/Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer with directors in local theaters to become familiar with the environment. Serving as an assistant is a great way to get started in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property Design</td>
<td></td>
<td>Experience with fund-raising is important. Volunteer to do this with local theaters and arts councils.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting Design</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learn what types of permits and insurance are needed to film or perform in certain areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Design</td>
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<td>Broadcast Technology</td>
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<td>Riggers</td>
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<td>Electricians</td>
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<td>Carpenter/Scenic Artist</td>
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### DIRECTING

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage Management</td>
<td>Community theaters</td>
<td>Learn to work well on a team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage Director</td>
<td>Regional theaters</td>
<td>Develop a sense of artistry and creativity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set Design/Construction</td>
<td>Commercial theaters</td>
<td>Become involved in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). This organization can give you information about becoming an apprentice as well as help you make valuable contacts.</td>
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### Areas

#### Writing
- Scriptwriting
- Playwriting
- Screenwriting
- Journalism
- Publicity (Press Agents)
- Research

#### Employers
- Theaters
- Television/film studios
- Television stations
- Radio stations
- Video production companies
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Freelance

#### Strategies
- Take courses in English and journalism to hone writing skills.
- Review plays, movies, and TV shows for school or local newspaper.
- Get as much writing experience as possible. Write for the college newspaper, enter playwriting contests, etc.
- See many different productions and shows. Read a variety of scripts to see how they are developed.
- Gain experience as a freelance writer or editor in other employment settings.
- Learn how to film shoot because screenwriters will typically “shoot script” in which a synopsis of a story is prepared so directors can make recommendations.
- Theatrical press agents publicize and promote theatrical productions. They write press releases and arrange press conferences and other media events. Take courses in related areas such as public relations, advertising, and business to prepare for this field.
- Reporters spend time on the set absorbing everything. They interview actors as well as craftspeople.
- Researchers gather information for movie writers. They may also track down photographs or historical documents to make the film more authentic.

#### Business
- Producing
- Management Agents
- Marketing and Advertising
- Fundraising and Development
- Coordination of Volunteers
- Administration of Arts Programs
- Box Office Sales
- Promotions

#### Employers
- Theaters
- Arts councils
- Television/film studios
- Broadway
- Road company productions
- Regional theaters
- Stock productions
- Dinner theaters
- Cabarets

#### Strategies
- Secretarial/clerical positions in theaters and studios are often stepping-stones to other positions and a good way to make contacts.
- Gain undergraduate training in business, public relations, communications, advertising, and theater.
- Complete an internship in area of interest.
- Develop skills in leadership, negotiation, budgeting, and fundraising.
- Get as much experience on the college and local level as possible to develop a strong resume.
### GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Complete an internship or an apprenticeship with a local theater. Participate in summer stock. Gain as much experience as possible.
- Network: Talk with people working in the field to find out about jobs and opportunities. Join professional groups to make contacts.
- Read newspapers and periodicals related to the theater to keep up with new developments. Read the "trades"—magazines and newspapers that report events in the entertainment industry. Read the "Theater" section of daily newspapers to find out about upcoming productions.
- Join a relevant union or guild to be eligible for work assignments.
- Get your foot in the door and get involved with productions anyway you can. Be prepared to do various tasks assigned by stage managers or producers.
- Volunteer with fundraising efforts for the arts.
- Be aware of scams. Check out the legitimacy of agencies and companies before paying any fees.
- Be prepared to move to a metropolitan area where more opportunities exist.
- A career in the arts takes patience, dedication, and luck!
- Have a back-up plan. Be aware that actors and directors may face frequent and long periods of unemployment. Develop skills that qualify you for other jobs while you wait for opportunities. Consider pairing theater with another career interest or major to open up more career possibilities.
- Theater helps students develop verbal and written communication, public speaking, and teamwork skills. These transferable skills are valued by many types of employers. In particular, positions in sales, marketing, management, and public relations may be open to students with theater degrees.
- There are many ways to be involved in theater arts while working in another career field if you choose not to pursue theater as your way to make a living.

### AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Instruction</td>
<td>Public and private schools, K-12</td>
<td>For K-12, obtain certification for the state in which you wish to teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Colleges and universities</td>
<td>Obtain dual certification for more teaching opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Performing arts centers</td>
<td>Get experience in various areas of theater and working with young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various types of theater</td>
<td>Obtain a graduate degree to teach on the college level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>Join the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts or the Association for Theater in Higher Education.</td>
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