

Northstar 4 listening and speaking achievement tests Textbook

Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests

Introduction to Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests

The Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests are integral components of the Northstar series, a comprehensive set of English language courses designed for adult learners seeking to improve their proficiency in real-world communication. Positioned at the advanced level, the Northstar 4 tests aim to assess learners' abilities to understand and produce spoken English in a variety of contexts, reflecting both academic and everyday situations. These assessments serve as vital tools for educators and learners alike, providing measurable indicators of language development and readiness for more complex communicative tasks.

Overview of the Northstar Series

Development and Design

The Northstar series, published by Pearson, is renowned for its contextualized approach to language learning, emphasizing authentic communication skills. Northstar 4, the final level in the series, is crafted to challenge learners with high-level listening and speaking tasks that mirror real-life scenarios.

Objectives of the Achievement Tests

The primary goal of the Northstar 4 listening and speaking achievement tests is to evaluate learners' competence in:

- Comprehending spoken language in various contexts
- Producing clear, coherent spoken responses
- Demonstrating fluency and accuracy
- Applying language skills in academic, professional, and social settings

Structure of the Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Tests

Format and Components

The tests are designed to be comprehensive and reflective of real-world language use. They generally comprise the following components:

- Listening Section
 - Multiple-choice questions based on audio recordings
 - Short answer questions
 - Listening for specific details and main ideas
- Speaking Section
 - Individual tasks that require spontaneous speech
 - Paired or group discussions
 - Structured prompts for presentation or opinion sharing

Timing and Duration

Typically, the entire assessment lasts approximately 30 to 45 minutes, allowing sufficient time for both sections without causing fatigue.

Key Features of the Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Tests

Authentic Materials

The tests utilize authentic audio recordings, including interviews, lectures, conversations, and broadcasts, to simulate real-life listening situations.

Varied Question Types

To gauge different listening and speaking skills, the assessments incorporate diverse question formats such as:

- Multiple-choice
- Fill-in-the-blanks
- Short responses
- Extended speech tasks

Focus on Communicative Competence

Beyond grammatical accuracy, the tests prioritize learners' ability to communicate effectively, appropriately, and confidently across contexts.

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

Scoring System

The Northstar 4 achievement tests utilize a detailed scoring rubric that assesses:

- Comprehension accuracy
- Fluency
- Pronunciation
- Grammar and vocabulary usage
- Coherence and cohesion in speech

Scores are often presented as percentages or proficiency levels aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Feedback and Reporting

Results provide both quantitative scores and qualitative feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. This informs subsequent instruction and learner self-assessment.

Preparing for the Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Tests

Effective Strategies

Learners can enhance their performance by adopting specific preparation techniques:

- Engaging in regular listening practice with diverse audio materials
- Practicing spontaneous speaking with peers or language partners
- Recording and analyzing their speech for pronunciation and fluency
- Familiarizing themselves with test formats and question types

Resources and Practice Materials

Preparation is supported by various resources, including:

- Audio exercises from the Northstar 4 curriculum
- Practice tests available online or through instructor materials
- Language learning apps and multimedia resources
- Study groups and conversation clubs

Benefits of the Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests

For Learners

- Objective assessment of language proficiency
- Increased motivation through measurable progress
- Identification of specific areas for improvement
- Confidence building in real-world communication

For Educators

- Accurate evaluation of instructional effectiveness
- Data-driven decision-making for lesson planning
- Tailored feedback to support individual learner needs
- Benchmarking learner progress against international standards

Challenges and Considerations

Test Anxiety and Confidence

Some learners may experience anxiety during spoken assessments, which can affect performance. Preparing in a supportive environment helps mitigate this issue.

Cultural Relevance

Authentic materials should consider cultural diversity to ensure fairness and accessibility for all learners.

Technological Accessibility

Online or computer-based versions require reliable technology; disparities in access can impact performance and fairness.

Innovations and Future Directions

Technological Integration

Advancements include the incorporation of artificial intelligence for automated scoring, virtual reality environments for immersive testing, and adaptive testing formats that adjust difficulty based on learner responses.

Emphasis on Intercultural Competence

Future iterations aim to assess learners' ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, reflecting the globalized nature of English usage.

Conclusion

The Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests represent a comprehensive, authentic, and rigorous assessment tool for advanced English learners. They serve to measure critical listening and speaking skills vital for academic success, professional development, and social integration. By leveraging authentic materials, diverse question types, and clear evaluation criteria, these tests provide valuable insights into learner proficiency and readiness for real-world communication challenges. For both learners and educators, they are instrumental in guiding progress, informing instruction, and fostering confidence in English language mastery. As language learning continues to evolve with technological innovations and changing communicative demands, the Northstar series and its achievement tests remain relevant and essential components of advanced English education.

Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests: An In-Depth Review

In the evolving landscape of English language assessment, the Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests have garnered attention from educators, students, and language program administrators alike. Developed as part of the Northstar series by Pearson, these assessments aim to measure learners' proficiency in listening and speaking skills aligned with the Northstar curriculum. This review delves into the structure, content, scoring, pedagogical implications, and practical utility of these tests, providing a comprehensive overview for stakeholders considering their implementation or seeking to understand their place within language assessment frameworks.

Understanding the Northstar Series and Its Context

The Northstar Series Overview

The Northstar series is a well-established curriculum designed for adult English language learners, focusing on academic, workplace, and social language skills. It emphasizes communicative competence, critical thinking, and real-world language use. Northstar 4, as the fourth level in the

series, targets learners aiming to refine their listening and speaking abilities for authentic interactions.

Alignment with Language Proficiency Frameworks

Northstar 4 aligns with internationally recognized standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), typically corresponding to B2 or upper-intermediate levels. This alignment ensures that the assessments measure skills relevant to real-world communication and academic contexts, making them valuable for both classroom evaluation and credentialing.

Structure and Content of Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests

Assessment Format and Components

The Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking achievement tests are designed to evaluate learners' abilities through interactive and task-based formats. The assessments are divided into several components, each targeting specific skills:

- Listening Components:
 - Multiple-Choice Listening Tasks: Learners listen to recordings and select the correct answer.
 - Note-Taking and Summarizing: Tasks requiring learners to listen and produce summaries or notes.
 - Dialogues and Monologues: Audio recordings reflecting authentic speech in varied contexts.
- Speaking Components:
 - Personal Responses: Expressing opinions or sharing experiences.
 - Descriptive Tasks: Describing images, scenarios, or processes.
 - Interactive Tasks: Role-plays or simulated conversations.
 - Extended Speech: Providing longer, coherent responses on given prompts.

Task Design and Authenticity

The tasks are crafted to mimic real-life situations, incorporating authentic materials such as interviews, discussions, and presentations. This authenticity enhances the relevance of the assessment and encourages learners to demonstrate practical language use. Tasks are scaffolded to progressively challenge learners, from basic comprehension to more complex, spontaneous speech.

Scoring Criteria and Band Descriptions

The evaluation relies on detailed rubrics that assess various dimensions:

- Fluency and Coherence
- Pronunciation and Intelligibility
- Grammar and Vocabulary Usage
- Interactive Communication Skills
- Listening Comprehension Accuracy

Band descriptors range from beginner to advanced, providing clear benchmarks for learners' proficiency levels.

Psychometric Properties and Validity

Reliability and Consistency

Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Tests have been subjected to rigorous psychometric analysis. Internal consistency measures (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) indicate high reliability across different administrations. The tests demonstrate stability over time and produce consistent results across diverse populations.

Validity Considerations

Content validity is assured through alignment with curriculum goals and real-world language use. Construct validity is supported by evidence that the assessments accurately measure listening and speaking skills independently. Concurrent validity has been established by correlating test scores with other standardized measures of language proficiency.

Fairness and Accessibility

Efforts are made to ensure fairness, including accommodations for learners with disabilities and considerations for linguistic diversity. The test design minimizes cultural bias and promotes equitable assessment for diverse learner populations.

Pedagogical Implications and Practical Utility

Use in Classroom Settings

Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking achievement tests serve as diagnostic tools to identify learners'

strengths and areas for improvement. They can inform instruction, guiding teachers to tailor activities that target specific skills such as pronunciation, fluency, or comprehension.

Summative and Formative Assessment

The tests are versatile, suitable for both formative assessment?monitoring ongoing progress?and summative evaluation?certifying achievement at the end of a course or program. Their task-based format promotes active learning and authentic skill demonstration.

Preparation and Support Materials

Pearson offers comprehensive preparation resources, including sample tasks, practice tests, and scoring guides. These materials help learners become familiar with test formats, reducing anxiety and improving performance.

Strengths of Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests

- Authentic and Contextual Tasks: Reflect real-world language use, enhancing relevance.
- Comprehensive Skill Coverage: Address multiple facets of listening and speaking.
- Clear Rubrics and Band Descriptors: Facilitate transparent evaluation and goal-setting.
- Alignment with Curriculum: Ensures coherence between instruction and assessment.
- Robust Psychometric Properties: Backed by research and validation studies.

Limitations and Critiques

- Resource Intensive: Requires trained assessors and recording equipment.
- Subjectivity in Scoring: Despite rubrics, some elements like pronunciation or fluency may involve subjective judgments.
- Limited Focus on Writing and Reading: While specialized for listening and speaking, it does not assess other language skills.
- Cultural Bias Potential: Tasks may favor learners familiar with Western contexts or accents, although efforts are made to diversify materials.

Practical Recommendations for Implementation

- Training Assessors: Ensure evaluators are calibrated to maintain scoring consistency.
- Incorporating Practice Tasks: Use sample assessments to familiarize learners with formats.
- Balancing Assessment and Instruction: Use results to inform targeted teaching interventions.

- Continuous Review: Regularly analyze assessment data to validate and refine test use.

Conclusion: The Role of Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests in Language Learning

The Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests represent a thoughtful, standards-aligned approach to measuring upper-intermediate learners' communicative competence. Their focus on authentic tasks and comprehensive evaluation criteria make them a valuable tool for educators seeking to assess practical language skills. While they do come with resource considerations and potential biases, their strengths—particularly in providing clear benchmarks and fostering authentic language use—make them a noteworthy option in the landscape of ESL assessment.

As language learners prepare for academic, professional, or social interactions, tools like Northstar 4 assessment tests can serve both as motivators and as diagnostic instruments, helping learners and teachers chart progress and set realistic goals. For institutions aiming to certify proficiency or tailor instruction, these tests offer a meaningful, validated measure of listening and speaking skills, contributing to a more holistic understanding of language competence.

In summary, the Northstar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests are well-designed, valid, and practical assessments that support authentic evaluation of upper-intermediate English learners. Their integration into curricula can enhance pedagogical effectiveness and provide learners with a clear understanding of their communicative strengths and areas for growth.

Question What are the main components of the NorthStar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests? The tests primarily assess students' listening comprehension and speaking skills through various tasks such as dialogues, conversations, and spoken responses aligned with the NorthStar 4 curriculum standards. **Answer** How can teachers effectively prepare students for the NorthStar 4 listening and speaking achievement tests? Teachers can prepare students by incorporating regular listening exercises, engaging speaking activities, practicing test formats, and providing feedback to build confidence and improve their communicative abilities aligned with test criteria. What scoring criteria are used in the NorthStar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests? The tests typically evaluate students based on their accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, comprehension, and ability to communicate ideas clearly, with scoring rubrics provided to ensure consistent assessment standards. Are there any digital resources available to assist with NorthStar 4 listening and speaking test preparation? Yes, educators can access online practice tests, audio recordings, and interactive activities through the NorthStar digital platform to supplement classroom instruction and enhance student readiness. How do the NorthStar 4 Listening and Speaking Achievement Tests align with language proficiency levels? These tests are designed to measure students' progress within the NorthStar 4 level, corresponding to intermediate language proficiency, and help track improvements in listening and speaking skills as students advance.

Related keywords: Northstar 4, listening comprehension, speaking skills, achievement tests, language proficiency, ESL assessment, integrated skills, student evaluation, communication skills, academic English

Retired act tests

Retired ACT Tests: A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding, Using, and Preparing for Past ACT Exams

Introduction to Retired ACT Tests

Retired ACT tests are former versions of the American College Testing (ACT) exam that are no longer administered in their original format. These tests, often referred to as "retired" or "old" tests, provide valuable resources for students preparing for the current version of the ACT. They serve as a window into the exam's evolution, allowing students to familiarize themselves with question types, formatting, and content areas. In this guide, we'll explore what retired ACT tests are, their benefits for test preparation, how to access them legally, and strategies to incorporate them effectively into your study routine.

Understanding Retired ACT Tests

What Are Retired ACT Tests?

Retired ACT tests are previous editions of the exam that have been phased out or replaced over the years. Since the ACT undergoes periodic updates to reflect current college readiness standards and content emphasis, older tests are retired from active administration. However, these tests are preserved and shared as study resources because they still provide insight into the exam's structure and question style.

History and Evolution of the ACT

The ACT has evolved since its inception in 1959, with changes aimed at better assessing college readiness. Key milestones include:

- Transition from paper-based to computer-based testing in recent years.
- Introduction of new question formats and item types.

- Adjustments in scoring and timing.

These changes mean that older tests may differ in format or content emphasis but remain useful for practice.

Why Use Retired ACT Tests?

Utilizing retired tests offers several benefits:

- **Practice with Real Questions:** They provide exposure to actual questions used in previous exams, helping students become familiar with the question style and difficulty.
- **Understanding Test Format:** Students can learn the structure, timing, and flow of the test sections.
- **Identify Strengths and Weaknesses:** Practice allows students to assess their knowledge and focus on areas needing improvement.
- **Cost-Effective Study Material:** Many retired tests are available for free or at low cost, making them accessible study tools.

Accessing Retired ACT Tests Legally and Safely

Official Sources for Retired ACT Tests

The most reliable and legal sources for retired ACT tests include:

- **Official ACT Website:** The ACT organization offers official practice tests, some of which are retired versions. They often provide free samples or paid practice books containing past exams.
- **ACT Prep Books:** Reputable publishers produce prep books that include retired tests, such as The Official ACT Prep Guide.
- **School or Library Resources:** Many educational institutions have licensed copies of retired tests for student use.

Important Tips for Accessing and Using Retired Tests

- Always ensure you are obtaining tests through authorized sources to respect copyright laws.
- Avoid pirated or illegal copies, which may contain errors or be incomplete.
- Use official or reputable prep materials to ensure accurate and reliable practice.

How to Effectively Use Retired ACT Tests for Preparation

Creating a Study Plan

Incorporate retired tests into your study schedule by:

- Assessing your baseline score with an initial practice test.
- Identifying weak areas through detailed review of your answers.
- Scheduling regular practice sessions using retired tests to build familiarity and confidence.
- Simulating test conditions to improve timing and endurance.

Practice Strategies

To maximize the benefit of retired tests, consider the following approaches:

- **Timed Practice:** Always simulate real test conditions by adhering to time limits.
- **Detailed Review:** Analyze incorrect answers to understand mistakes and prevent repetition.
- **Section Focus:** Practice sections individually to target specific skills such as math, reading, or science reasoning.
- **Progressive Difficulty:** Start with easier retired tests and gradually move to more challenging ones.

Incorporating Retired Tests into Broader Preparation

While retired tests are valuable, they should be part of a comprehensive study plan that includes:

- Reviewing fundamental concepts in math, English, reading, and science.
- Practicing question strategies and time management.
- Using official ACT prep resources for targeted practice.
- Taking full-length practice exams periodically to track progress.

Differences Between Current and Retired ACT Tests

Understanding the differences helps in effectively using retired tests:

Format and Content Changes

- Recent tests may feature updated question types, such as more data interpretation or integrated science questions.

- The number of questions and time allocations may have shifted.
- Some sections may have been added, removed, or modified.

Scoring and Difficulty

- Since scoring scales and difficulty levels evolve, compare scores on retired tests with current benchmarks cautiously.
- Use retired tests primarily for practice rather than exact score predictions.

Relevance for College Admissions

- While retired tests are excellent practice tools, always focus on current test formats and scoring to align with college admission expectations.

Additional Resources for Retired ACT Tests

- Official ACT Practice Resources: Available on the ACT website and through official prep guides.
- Third-Party Prep Books: Many publishers include retired tests with answer explanations.
- Online Practice Platforms: Some websites host retired ACT tests for free or for purchase.
- Test Prep Courses: Many prep courses incorporate retired tests into their curriculum.

Conclusion

Retired ACT tests are invaluable tools for students aiming to excel on the current ACT. They offer authentic practice questions, insights into the exam's structure, and opportunities to refine test-taking strategies. By accessing these tests through reputable sources and integrating them into a well-rounded study plan, students can boost their confidence, identify areas for improvement, and ultimately achieve their target scores. Remember that while retired tests are highly beneficial, they should complement other study methods, including reviewing content, learning test strategies, and taking full-length practice exams. With dedication and strategic preparation, retired ACT tests can be a stepping stone toward college admission success.

Retired ACT Tests: An In-Depth Review and Analysis

The retired ACT tests represent a significant aspect of standardized testing history, offering insight into the evolution of college admissions assessments and providing valuable resources for students preparing for the current exam. These tests, which are no longer administered but remain accessible through various channels, serve as a vital tool for understanding test patterns, question styles, and

scoring methodologies. For students, educators, and test prep professionals alike, analyzing retired ACT tests can enhance preparation strategies, identify recurring themes, and develop better approaches to mastering the exam.

Understanding What Retired ACT Tests Are

Definition and Background

Retired ACT tests are previous versions of the American College Testing (ACT) assessment that have been discontinued from active administration but are still available for practice and study. These tests were initially used in real testing environments and are now stored in archives or released officially for practice purposes. The ACT, introduced in 1959, has undergone numerous updates, and the retired tests reflect the exam's historical structure, question styles, and content focus.

Why Are They Important?

- Historical Insight: They provide a window into how the ACT has evolved over decades.
- Practice Material: They serve as high-quality resources for students to simulate real testing conditions.
- Test Pattern Recognition: Analyzing past tests helps students identify recurring question types and themes.
- Scoring Trends: They help in understanding how scoring standards and benchmarks have shifted over time.

Features of Retired ACT Tests

Content and Structure

Retired ACT tests typically mirror the structure of current exams but may differ in question difficulty, phrasing, or emphasis.

- Sections Covered: English, Math, Reading, Science, and sometimes an optional Writing (Essay).
- Question Types: Multiple-choice questions with a variety of formats, including sentence correction, algebra, interpretation, and scientific reasoning.
- Difficulty Levels: Vary across different retired tests, providing a spectrum from easier to more challenging questions.

Availability and Accessibility

- Official Sources: The ACT organization occasionally releases retired tests for practice, often as part of prep packages or sample sets.
- Third-Party Platforms: Many test prep companies and educational websites compile and sell collections of retired tests.
- Public Domains and Archives: Some retired tests are available freely through libraries or online archives.

Scoring and Analysis

- Scoring Methods: Retired tests are scored using the current ACT scoring scale, though some older tests may require conversion for comparison.
- Answer Keys and Explanations: Most come with detailed answer keys, sometimes including rationales for correct answers.
- Difficulty Calibration: They offer a way to calibrate one's skill level by comparing performance across different versions.

Pros and Cons of Using Retired ACT Tests

Pros

- Rich Practice Material: They provide extensive practice opportunities without the need for expensive new tests.
- Historical Perspective: Understanding how the test has changed helps tailor preparation.
- Cost-Effective: Many retired tests are available for free or at low cost.
- Test-Taking Strategy Development: Repeated exposure to various question types enhances strategic thinking.

Cons

- Potential Obsolescence: Older tests may not reflect current question styles or content emphases.
- Differences in Difficulty: Variability across different retired tests might lead to inconsistent practice experiences.
- Limited Relevance: Some retired tests may contain outdated language or scientific knowledge not reflective of current standards.

- Availability Issues: Not all retired tests are readily accessible, especially for free.

How to Effectively Use Retired ACT Tests for Preparation

Step-by-Step Approach

- Identify Reliable Sources: Use official ACT releases or reputable test prep platforms to access authentic retired tests.
- Simulate Real Testing Conditions: Take tests timed, in a quiet environment to mimic actual test day.
- Analyze Results Thoroughly: Review incorrect answers to understand mistakes and identify patterns.
- Track Progress Over Time: Keep records to see improvement and adjust study strategies accordingly.
- Focus on Weak Areas: Use specific retired tests to target sections where improvement is needed.

Integrating Retired Tests into a Study Plan

- Incorporate full-length retired tests periodically to build stamina.
- Use sections or questions from retired tests for targeted practice.
- Combine with other resources like practice questions, tutorials, and review books for comprehensive prep.

Case Studies and Student Experiences

Success Stories

Many students report significant score improvements after practicing extensively with retired tests. For example, a student aiming for a 30+ score found that repeated practice with older tests helped them recognize question patterns and improve pacing, leading to higher accuracy.

Challenges Faced

Some students experience frustration with the outdated language or question formats, which can cause confusion or misalignment with current exam standards. To mitigate this, it's essential to supplement retired test practice with current exam materials.

Future Trends and Considerations

Technology and Accessibility

- As digital platforms expand, more retired tests are becoming available online, making practice more accessible.
- Adaptive learning systems might incorporate retired tests into personalized study programs.

Updating Practice Resources

- Test prep companies are increasingly integrating retired tests into their offerings, often adding commentary and analysis.
- The challenge remains to ensure that practice materials stay aligned with current test standards and content emphases.

Legal and Ethical Use

- Always use retired tests obtained from authorized sources to avoid copyright violations.
- Using genuine retired tests enhances the validity of practice sessions.

Conclusion

The retired ACT tests serve as a vital resource in the landscape of standardized testing preparation. They provide invaluable insights into the evolution of the exam, offer extensive practice opportunities, and help test-takers develop effective strategies. While they may sometimes lag behind current test formats due to their age, their benefits—especially when used judiciously—far outweigh potential drawbacks. For students committed to achieving their best ACT scores, incorporating retired tests into a well-rounded preparation plan can make a significant difference. As the landscape of standardized testing continues to evolve, these historical tests remain a cornerstone of effective, strategic study, bridging past and present to empower future test-takers.

Question What are retired ACT tests and how are they different from current tests? Retired ACT tests are previous versions of the ACT exam that are no longer administered but are often available for practice. They differ from current tests in content, format, and question styles, reflecting the exam's evolution over time. **Why should students practice with retired ACT tests?** Practicing with retired ACT tests helps students familiarize themselves with the exam format, improve time management, and identify areas needing improvement, ultimately boosting their confidence and scores. **Where can I find official retired ACT practice tests?** Official retired ACT practice tests can often be found through the ACT organization's website, official prep books, or authorized test prep providers. Some may be available for free, while others might require purchase.

Are retired ACT tests still relevant for current exam preparation? Yes, retired ACT tests are still relevant as they mirror the types of questions previously used and can help students develop test-taking strategies, though students should also focus on the latest practice materials for the most current content. How should students incorporate retired ACT tests into their study plan? Students should use retired ACT tests to simulate real testing conditions, analyze their performance, and identify patterns in their mistakes, integrating these sessions into a comprehensive study plan. Can retired ACT tests help improve my score in the science section? Yes, retired ACT science tests provide valuable practice with data interpretation, experiment analysis, and reasoning skills, which can help improve performance in the science section. Are there any drawbacks to relying solely on retired ACT tests for preparation? Relying solely on retired tests may not address recent changes in the exam format or content. It's important to supplement practice with current materials and official resources to ensure comprehensive preparation. How do retired ACT tests compare in difficulty to current tests? The difficulty of retired ACT tests can vary, but generally they are comparable to current tests. However, newer tests may include updated question styles or topics, so it's beneficial to practice with both retired and current materials.

Related keywords: retirement planning, actuarial tests, pension calculations, retirement benefits, retirement age, pension fund management, retirement eligibility, actuarial assumptions, retirement strategies, retirement policy

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