

big history tv series

big history tv series has emerged as a groundbreaking approach to exploring the vast timeline of the universe, connecting various disciplines such as astronomy, geology, biology, and human history into a cohesive narrative. This genre of educational programming offers viewers an expansive perspective on the origins and development of everything from the Big Bang to the present day. By integrating scientific discoveries with historical events, big history tv series provide a unique learning experience that appeals to a wide audience interested in understanding the complexity of existence. These series often feature expert interviews, detailed animations, and compelling storytelling techniques that make complex concepts accessible and engaging. As the demand for interdisciplinary knowledge grows, big history tv series continue to gain popularity on educational networks and streaming platforms. This article delves into the significance, content, and impact of big history tv series, highlighting their role in modern education and media. Explore the following key sections to gain in-depth insights into this fascinating subject.

- Overview of Big History TV Series
- Key Themes Explored in Big History TV Series
- Notable Big History TV Series and Their Features
- Educational Benefits of Big History TV Series
- Production Elements and Storytelling Techniques
- Audience Reception and Cultural Impact

Overview of Big History TV Series

The big history tv series genre is defined by its interdisciplinary approach to telling the story of the universe and humanity's place within it. Unlike traditional history documentaries that focus primarily on human events, big history expands the scope to include cosmic and geological phenomena, creating a timeline that spans approximately 13.8 billion years. These series are designed to bridge the gap between various academic fields, synthesizing information to reveal the interconnectedness of natural and human history.

Origins and Development

The concept of big history originated in academic circles in the late 20th century, spearheaded by historians and scientists who aimed to present history on a universal scale. The transition to television began as educational broadcasters sought to bring this ambitious framework to a wider audience. Early programs laid the groundwork by focusing on key scientific milestones, while recent productions have incorporated cutting-edge research and technology to enhance viewer engagement.

Core Objectives

Big history tv series aim to foster a comprehensive understanding of the past

by:

- Highlighting the sequence of major events from the Big Bang to modern civilization.
- Demonstrating the links between cosmic, biological, and human processes.
- Encouraging critical thinking about humanity's impact on Earth and the future.
- Promoting a multidisciplinary perspective that transcends traditional academic boundaries.

Key Themes Explored in Big History TV Series

Big history tv series cover a wide range of themes that collectively illustrate the evolution of the universe and life. These themes are organized into chronological and conceptual segments to guide viewers through complex topics.

The Cosmic Beginning

This theme focuses on the origins of the universe, covering the Big Bang, formation of galaxies, stars, and planetary systems. It explores fundamental concepts in physics and astronomy that set the stage for all subsequent developments.

The Emergence of Life

Here, the series examines the conditions that allowed life to arise on Earth, including chemical evolution, the formation of early cells, and the development of biodiversity. This segment draws heavily on biology, paleontology, and geology.

Human Evolution and Civilization

This portion traces the rise of Homo sapiens, the development of language, culture, agriculture, and complex societies. It integrates anthropology, archaeology, and history to contextualize human achievements within the broader big history framework.

Modern Challenges and Future Prospects

Many series conclude by addressing contemporary issues such as climate change, technological advancement, and global interconnectedness, encouraging viewers to consider humanity's role in shaping the future of the planet.

Notable Big History TV Series and Their Features

Several big history tv series have gained recognition for their comprehensive content and innovative presentation styles. These series often serve as reference points for educators and enthusiasts alike.

“Big History” (The Great Courses)

This acclaimed lecture series offers a detailed academic perspective on big history, presented by renowned scholars. It features in-depth discussions supported by visual aids and is designed for learners seeking a thorough understanding of the subject.

“Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey”

While primarily focused on astronomy and science, this series shares big history’s expansive approach by exploring the universe’s origins and humanity’s place within it. Its high production values and engaging narration have helped popularize scientific knowledge.

“Connections” by James Burke

An earlier but influential series, “Connections” explores historical and technological developments through a big history lens, highlighting how discoveries and inventions are interrelated across time.

Key Features of These Series

- Use of visual effects and animations to illustrate complex phenomena.
- Integration of expert interviews and scientific commentary.
- Chronological storytelling combined with thematic analysis.
- Educational supplements such as discussion guides and interactive materials.

Educational Benefits of Big History TV Series

Big history tv series serve as powerful educational tools that cater to diverse audiences, including students, educators, and lifelong learners. Their value lies in simplifying intricate scientific and historical information into accessible narratives.

Enhancing Interdisciplinary Learning

By combining insights from multiple disciplines, these series encourage holistic thinking and help viewers appreciate the interconnected nature of knowledge. This approach supports curriculum development that moves beyond siloed subjects.

Improving Critical Thinking Skills

Big history tv series challenge viewers to analyze cause-and-effect relationships over vast timescales, fostering analytical skills and a deeper understanding of complexity in natural and social systems.

Engaging Diverse Audiences

The use of compelling storytelling, visuals, and relatable analogies makes big history accessible to a broad demographic, including those without prior expertise in science or history.

Production Elements and Storytelling Techniques

The effectiveness of big history tv series relies heavily on their production quality and narrative methods. These elements work together to convey extensive information clearly and memorably.

Visual Storytelling

High-quality graphics, animations, and reenactments illustrate abstract concepts such as cosmic expansion, evolutionary processes, and technological innovation. These visuals serve as educational aids that enhance comprehension and retention.

Narrative Structure

Big history tv series typically employ a chronological framework enriched with thematic chapters, enabling viewers to follow complex ideas in a logical sequence. Narration often combines factual exposition with engaging anecdotes to maintain interest.

Expert Contributions

Incorporating interviews and commentary from historians, scientists, and educators adds authority and depth to the series. These expert voices provide context and underscore the credibility of the material presented.

Audience Reception and Cultural Impact

The reception of big history tv series has been generally positive, with praise for their ability to make vast and complicated knowledge accessible to the public. Their influence extends beyond entertainment into education and cultural discourse.

Popularity Among Educators and Institutions

Many schools and universities have integrated big history tv series into their curricula, valuing their multidisciplinary approach and engaging format. These series support innovative teaching methods and encourage student participation.

Contribution to Public Understanding of Science and History

By presenting science and history in an interconnected narrative, big history tv series help demystify academic subjects and promote scientific literacy among general audiences.

Challenges and Criticisms

Some critiques focus on the difficulty of fully representing such an expansive topic within limited series formats, as well as occasional oversimplification of complex theories. Nonetheless, the overall impact remains significant in raising awareness and interest in big history.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the 'Big History' TV series about?

The 'Big History' TV series explores the history of the universe from the Big Bang to the present, integrating various disciplines like science, history, and anthropology to provide a comprehensive understanding of our existence.

Who created the 'Big History' TV series?

The 'Big History' TV series was created by David Christian, a historian who pioneered the Big History approach, combining multiple fields to tell the story of the universe.

Where can I watch the 'Big History' TV series?

The 'Big History' TV series is available on platforms such as CuriosityStream, YouTube, and sometimes on educational networks depending on your region.

How many episodes are in the 'Big History' TV series?

The 'Big History' TV series typically consists of around 10 to 12 episodes, each covering a different era or theme in the comprehensive timeline of the universe.

Is the 'Big History' TV series suitable for students?

Yes, the 'Big History' TV series is designed to be educational and is suitable for high school and college students interested in a multidisciplinary approach to history and science.

What topics are covered in the 'Big History' TV series?

The series covers topics including the Big Bang, the formation of stars and planets, the emergence of life on Earth, human evolution, agriculture, and modern civilization.

Does the 'Big History' TV series include expert interviews?

Yes, the series features interviews with experts from various fields such as cosmology, biology, anthropology, and history to provide authoritative insights.

How is the 'Big History' TV series different from traditional history shows?

Unlike traditional history shows that focus mainly on human history, 'Big History' covers a much broader timeline, integrating scientific and historical perspectives to explain the interconnectedness of events from the beginning of time.

Are there any companion materials available for the 'Big History' TV series?

Yes, there are companion books, online courses, and educational resources available that complement the TV series and provide deeper exploration of the topics covered.

Additional Resources

1. *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*

This book offers a comprehensive overview of Big History, tracing the story of the universe from the Big Bang to the present. It integrates insights from cosmology, geology, biology, and human history to present a unified narrative. The authors aim to provide readers with a sense of scale and interconnectedness across time and disciplines.

2. *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History*

David Christian, a pioneer of the Big History movement, presents a detailed introduction to the subject in this book. It explores the major thresholds of complexity, such as the formation of stars, the emergence of life, and the rise of human civilizations. The narrative emphasizes the interdisciplinary approach that defines Big History.

3. *The Human Story: Our History, from the Stone Age to Today*

This engaging book focuses on the human aspect within the broader Big History framework. It traces humanity's evolution, cultural developments, and technological advancements. The author connects human history to larger cosmic and ecological processes to highlight our place in the universe.

4. *Origin Story: A Big History of Everything*

In this accessible book, David Christian offers a sweeping narrative that covers 13.8 billion years of history. He explains how complexity arises in the universe and how humans fit into this grand story. The book is designed for a wide audience, combining scientific rigor with storytelling.

5. *Big History and the Future of Humanity*

This volume examines how Big History can inform our understanding of humanity's future challenges and opportunities. It looks at past patterns of innovation, collapse, and adaptation to draw lessons for sustainability and global cooperation. The authors explore how a big-picture perspective can guide policy and ethics.

6. *The Universe and You: A Big History Perspective*

This book connects the cosmic story to individual human experience, showing how the universe's evolution shapes our lives. It discusses the origins of matter, life, and consciousness in a way that is both scientific and philosophical. Readers are invited to reflect on their place within the vast timeline of existence.

7. *Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present*

A clear and concise introduction to Big History, this book covers the major milestones from the formation of the universe through to modern times. It integrates knowledge from multiple disciplines to provide a coherent narrative. The author emphasizes the significance of understanding history on a grand scale.

8. *Chronicles of Complexity: The Big History Approach*

This work explores the concept of complexity as a unifying theme in Big History. It examines how simple elements combine to form more complex systems over time, from atoms to ecosystems to societies. The book highlights the scientific principles underlying the Big History framework.

9. *Big History: A New Way of Seeing the Past*

Focusing on the innovative methodology of Big History, this book discusses how it challenges traditional historical narratives. It encourages readers to think beyond human-centered history and consider broader cosmic and ecological contexts. The author advocates for Big History as a tool for education and global understanding.

Big History Tv Series

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International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, Second Edition, Fourteen Volume Set embraces diversity by design and captures the ways in which humans share places and view differences based on gender, race, nationality, location and other factors—in other words, the things that make people and places different. Questions of, for example, politics, economics, race relations and migration are introduced and discussed through a geographical lens. This updated edition will assist readers in their research by providing factual information, historical perspectives, theoretical approaches, reviews of literature, and provocative topical discussions that will stimulate creative thinking. Presents the most up-to-date and comprehensive coverage on the topic of human geography Contains extensive scope and depth of coverage Emphasizes how geographers interact with, understand and contribute to problem-solving in the contemporary world Places an emphasis on how geography is relevant in a social and interdisciplinary context

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big history tv series: *Animation: A World History* Giannalberto Bendazzi, 2015-11-06 A

continuation of 1994's groundbreaking *Cartoons*, Giannalberto Bendazzi's *Animation: A World History* is the largest, deepest, most comprehensive text of its kind, based on the idea that animation is an art form that deserves its own place in scholarship. Bendazzi delves beyond just Disney, offering readers glimpses into the animation of Russia, Africa, Latin America, and other often-neglected areas and introducing over fifty previously undiscovered artists. Full of first-hand, never before investigated, and elsewhere unavailable information, *Animation: A World History* encompasses the history of animation production on every continent over the span of three centuries. Volume III catches you up to speed on the state of animation from 1991 to present. Although characterized by such trends as economic globalization, the expansion of television series, emerging markets in countries like China and India, and the consolidation of elitist auteur animation, the story of contemporary animation is still open to interpretation. With an abundance of first-hand research and topics ranging from Nickelodeon and Pixar to modern Estonian animation, this book is the most complete record of modern animation on the market and is essential reading for all serious students of animation history. Key Features: Over 200 high quality head shots and film stills to add visual reference to your research Detailed information on hundreds of never-before researched animators and films Coverage of animation from more than 90 countries and every major region of the world Chronological and geographical organization for quick access to the information you're looking for

big history tv series: The Routledge Companion to Big History Craig Benjamin, Esther Quaedackers, David Baker, 2019-08-01 The Routledge Companion to Big History guides readers through the variety of themes and concepts that structure contemporary scholarship in the field of big history. The volume is divided into five parts, each representing current and evolving areas of interest to the community, including big history's relationship to science, social science, the humanities, and the future, as well as teaching big history and 'little big histories'. Considering an ever-expanding range of theoretical, pedagogical and research topics, the book addresses such questions as what is the relationship between big history and scientific research, how are big historians working with philosophers and religious thinkers to help construct 'meaning', how are leading theoreticians making sense of big history and its relationship to other creation narratives and paradigms, what is 'little big history', and how does big history impact on thinking about the future? The book highlights the place of big history in historiographical traditions and the ways in which it can be used in education and public discourse across disciplines and at all levels. A timely collection with contributions from leading proponents in the field, it is the ideal guide for those wanting to engage with the theories and concepts behind big history.

big history tv series: Documentary, World History, and National Power in the PRC Gotelind Mueller, 2013-10-30 Documentaries have recently become a favourite format for Chinese state-directed media to present an officially sanctioned view of history. Indeed, this is not confined to Chinese national history. In stark contrast to the earlier self-centred preoccupation with Chinese history, there has been an upsurge in interest in foreign history, with a view to illuminating China's role not only in world history, but also on the global stage today, and in the future. This book examines three recent Chinese documentary television series which present the officially sanctioned view of the rise of the modern West, the reasons for the end of the Soviet Union, and the legitimisation of the present-day Chinese government via a specific reading of modern Chinese history to argue for a 'Chinese rise' in the future. With a focus on these documentaries, Gotelind Müller discusses how history is presented on screen, and explores the function of visual history for memory culture and wider society. Further, this book reveals how the presentation of Chinese and foreign history in a global framework impacts on the officially transmitted views on Self and Other, and thus provides a keen insight into how the Chinese themselves regard their 'global rise'. *Documentary, World History, and National Power in the PRC* will be welcomed by students and scholars working across a number of fields, including Chinese studies, East Asian studies, media studies, television studies, history and memory studies.

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Providing a broad introduction to the area, *A World History of Chinese Literature* maps the field of Chinese literature across its various worlds, looking both within – at the world of Chinese literature, its history, linguistic, cultural, local, and regional specificities – and without – at the way Chinese literature has circulated throughout the world. The thematic focus allows for a broad number of key categories, such as authors, genres, genders, regions, as well as innovative explorations of new topics and issues such as inter-arts performativity and transmediation. The sections cover the circulation and reception of China in world literature, as well as the worlds of: Chinese literature across the globe Borders, oceans, and rainforests Comparative literary genres Translingual writers and scholars Gender configurations Translation and transmediation With a focus on the twentieth and twenty-first century, this collection intervenes in current debates on global Chinese literature, Sinophone and Sinoscript studies, and the production and reception of literary works by ethnic Chinese in non-Sinitic languages, as well as Anglophone literature inspired by Chinese literary tradition. It will be of interest to anyone working on or studying Chinese literature, language and culture, as well as world literatures in relation to China.

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Representing a unique reference tool for readers interested in history, criminology, or terrorism, this book provides the most complete and up-to-date coverage of assassinations of key figures throughout history and around the world. Effecting the death of a political figure, a leader of a nation, or a public figure usually captures people's attention. But how often is assassination effective to achieve the larger objective beyond the death of the targeted individual? *Famous Assassinations in World History: An Encyclopedia* offers more than 200 entries on assassinations of all kinds that will allow readers to grasp the often-complex motivating factors behind each event and better understand historical and contemporary social unrest. Each entry identifies the assassination target and summarizes that person's significance; discusses the person's assassination, including the factors that led up to it and its political and cultural contexts; and explains the powerful effects of the assassination in world history. The encyclopedia also includes various sidebars that spotlight relevant individuals, groups, and movements and present intriguing factoids such as the final disposition of notorious assassins' weapons and various films and novels that were inspired by famous assassinations. In addition, 23 primary source documents provide accounts of assassinations throughout world history.

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commissioning, production, marketing and distribution histories. With comparative references to other European nations and North America, the authors focus on British history programming over the last two decades and analyse the relationship between the academy and media professionals. They outline and discuss often-competing discourses about how to 'do' history and the underlying assumptions about who watches history programmes. *History on Television* considers recent changes in the media landscape, which have affected to a great degree how history in general, and whose history in particular, appears onscreen. Through a number of case studies, using material from interviews by the authors with academic and media professionals, the role of the 'professional' historian and that of media professionals - commissioning editors and producer/directors - as mediators of historical material and interpretations is analysed, and the ways in which the 'logics of television' shape historical output are outlined and discussed. Building on their analysis, Ann Gray and Erin Bell ask if history on television fulfils its potential to be a form of public history through offering, as it does, a range of interpretations of the past to and originating from or including those not based in the academy. Through consideration of the representation, or absence, of the diversity of British identity - gender, ethnicity and race, social status and regional identities - the authors substantially extend the scope of existing scholarship into history on television. *History on Television* will be essential reading for all those interested in the complex processes involved in the representation of history on television.

big history tv series: *Childhood in World History* Peter N. Stearns, 2016-07-01 Taking a global look at what the category of childhood has meant from agricultural societies to the present day, *Childhood in World History* offers a vital overview of this topical field. Through comparative analysis, Peter Stearns facilitates a cross-cultural and transnational understanding of attitudes towards the role of children in society, and how models of childhood have developed throughout history. Engaging with issues around children's role in the family and the involvement of communal, national, educational, and global infrastructures, Stearns unpacks the experience of childhood in the West, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. This expanded and updated third edition includes: updated bibliographies and suggested readings expanded discussions of religion and children's rights a new chapter on families in developing economies in the early twentieth century broadened discussions of childhood in Japan and in communist countries. With expanded further reading lists, Stearns's accessible text not only provides an overview of its field but also offers a research guide for more specialized study. Concisely presented but broad in scope, Stearns's accessible text guides readers through the transformations of the concept of childhood.

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big history tv series: *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* Peter Clark, 2013-02-14 In 2008 for the first time the majority of the planet's inhabitants lived in cities and towns. Becoming globally urban has been one of mankind's greatest collective achievements over time, and raises many questions. How did global city systems evolve and interact in the past? How have historic

urban patterns impacted on those of the contemporary world? And what were the key drivers in the roller-coaster of urban change over the millennia - market forces such as trade and industry, rulers and governments, competition and collaboration between cities, or the urban environment and demographic forces? This pioneering comparative work by leading scholars drawn from a range of disciplines offers the first detailed comparative study of urban development from ancient times to the present day. The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History explores not only the main trends in the growth of cities and towns across the world - in Asia and the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and the Americas - and the different types of cities from great metropolitan centres to suburbs, colonial cities, and market towns, but also many of the essential themes in the making and remaking of the urban world: the role of power, economic development, migration, social inequality, environmental challenge and the urban response, religion and representation, cinema, and urban creativity. Split into three parts covering Ancient cities, the medieval and early-modern period, and the modern and contemporary era, it begins with an introduction by the editor identifying the importance and challenges of research on cities in world history, as well as the crucial outlines of urban development since the earliest cities in ancient Mesopotamia to the present.

big history tv series: *Breaking Away from the Textbook: Creative Ways to Teach World History* Ronald Hans Pahl, 2011-03-16 Teaching history should not simply be an endless recitation of irrelevant facts, entombed between the covers of a textbook. Instead, *Breaking Away from the Textbook* offers a fascinating journey through world history. Not a comprehensive, theory-heavy guide, this book instead focuses on exciting classroom activities, methods for students to grapple with human issues, and innovative ways to show students the relevance of the past to the world today. Simply put, this book makes world history fun. Soon your students will be busy debating, thinking, applying, and learning about information that will stay with them for a lifetime. The key to this wonderful work is that it incorporates various disciplines including art, music, and writing to create a vibrant classroom. Volume I covers prehistory to the Renaissance and Volume II covers the Enlightenment to the 20th century. Includes pictures and drawings, appendices, indexes, maps, and a bibliography. Volume III: *More Creative Ways to Teach World History* covers ancient times through the 20th century and beyond. Appropriate for all grade levels.

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big history tv series: *Expanding Worldviews: Astrobiology, Big History and Cosmic Perspectives* Ian Crawford, 2021-06-07 This book collates papers presented at two international

conferences (held at the Australian National University in 2018 and Birkbeck College London in 2019) exploring the relationships between big history and astrobiology and their wider implications for society. These two relatively new academic disciplines aim to integrate human history with the wider history of the universe and the search for life elsewhere. The book will show that, despite differences in emphasis, big history and astrobiology share much in common, especially their interdisciplinary approaches and the cosmic and evolutionary perspectives that they both engender. Specifically, the book addresses the unified, all-embracing, nature of knowledge, the impact of big history on humanity and the world at large, the possible impact of SETI on astrobiology and big history, the cultural signature of Earth's inhabitants beyond our own planet, and the political implications of a planetary worldview. The principal readership is envisaged to comprise scholars working in the fields of astrobiology, big history and space exploration interested in forging interdisciplinary links between these diverse topics, together with educators, and a wider public, interested in the societal implications of the cosmic and evolutionary perspectives engendered by research in these fields.

big history tv series: Evolution: A Big History Perspective Leonid E. Grinin, Andrey V. Korotayev, Barry H. Rodrigue, 2011-09-29 This issue of the almanac aims at filling the gap in the mega-evolutionary research. The Editors believe that the present Almanac, which brings together scientists working in different areas of the vast evolutionary field, will hopefully make a contribution to this process. The contributions to this volume are subdivided into three sections: 'Universal Evolution', 'Biological and Social Forms of Evolution: Connections and Comparisons', and 'Aspects of Social Evolution'. Subjects and issues of the contributions to all three sections have a great deal in common and significantly supplement each other.

big history tv series: Teaching World History: A Resource Book Heidi Roupp, 2015-03-04 A resource book for teachers of world history at all levels. The text contains individual sections on art, gender, religion, philosophy, literature, trade and technology. Lesson plans, reading and multi-media recommendations and suggestions for classroom activities are also provided.

big history tv series: Big History, Small World Cynthia Stokes Brown, 2016-12-30 The newest way to think about the universe becomes engaging and personal in Big History, Small World: From the Big Bang to You by Cynthia Stokes Brown. Her clear introduction to big history, divided into eight thresholds of time, is the perfect starting point for any reader intrigued by this rich blend of history and science. Big History, Small World is also the first book about big history specifically designed to be used in high school courses and with the free curriculum available from the Big History Project cofounded by Bill Gates and David Christian. Big History, Small World is organized into twelve chapters. In the first chapter, Brown discusses the scientific method. In the last chapter she discusses the different ways people interpret big history and find meaning in it. The other ten chapters are based on eight major turning points, or thresholds, in the cosmic story. One threshold, the emergence of life, gets two chapters, while a discussion of the future fills chapter eleven. This book is not formatted as a traditional textbook, although it can easily be used as one. Each chapter has questions on the frontier of knowledge, as well as suggestions of how the content applies directly to the reader, to answer the perennial question: "Why do I have to learn this?" There are illustrations, charts, diagrams, a glossary and timeline, and short biographies of scientists and historians who have been influential in developing big history. Cynthia Stokes Brown has taught world history in high-school and trained high-school teachers at Dominican University of California, where she piloted big history courses and helped initiate the big history program now required for all freshmen. She is the author of the general-interest book on big history, Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present (New York: New Press, 2nd ed. 2012) and also wrote a university-level textbook with David Christian and Craig Benjamin, Big History: Between Nothing and Everything (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014). She is a founding member of the International Big History Association and associate editor of its publication, Origins.

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