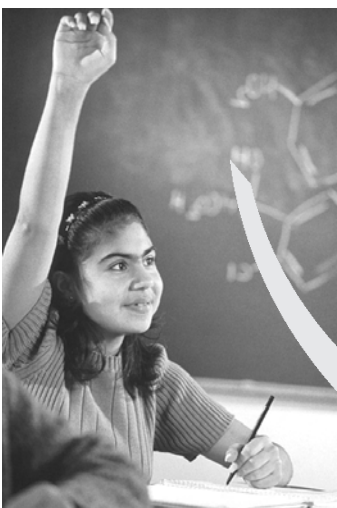
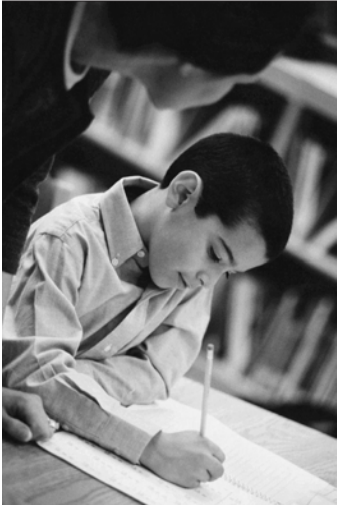


A SCOE Publication, October 2008



School and classroom structures for comprehensive ELD instruction

As more and more English learners join our school communities, administrators and classroom teachers are seeking strategies to ensure that these students *acquire English and learn grade-level academic content*. There are a variety of settings, structures, and strategies that can be used to address this double challenge and several Sonoma County schools are seeing English learner achievement advance as a result of careful attention to this issue.

Too often, however, the two threads of English learner instruction lose their distinct focus. While it's true that learning English and mastering content are interrelated, it is critically important that schools implement **an appropriate, effective program to support student acquisition of English**. Teaching second-language learners to understand, speak, read, and write in English has become a key aspect of instruction for today's classroom teachers.

This reality places increased importance on the implementation of English Language Development (ELD) programs and the schoolwide and classroom-based structures that support these efforts. A strong ELD program is absolutely essential to each school's effort to close the achievement gap because it equips students with

A strong English Language Development program is absolutely essential to each school's effort to close the achievement gap

This Aiming High Resource brief is part of an initiative to boost the achievement of English learners in our schools. The publication was developed by the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE).

Path of assessment and instruction

When parents register their child in school and fill out the language survey indicating that a primary language other than English is spoken at home, they trigger a path of language assessment and instruction.

As required by law, the student's English proficiency is assessed using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Each student is then placed in one of the five CELDT proficiency levels—beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced—or they are determined to be proficient in English.

The English-Language Arts framework states that all students in the five CELDT groupings should receive *daily* English Language Development (ELD) instruction until they become proficient in English. Students generally receive 30-45 minutes per day of ELD in the elementary grades and at least one period per day in middle and high school.

ELD instruction must be delivered in like-proficiency groupings; that is, beginners grouped with beginners and intermediates with intermediates. Although English learners are best served when groupings span just one CELDT level, combining two consecutive levels together is permissible—for example, beginners may be grouped with early intermediates.

Grouping more than two consecutive CELDT levels for ELD instruction is not recommended under any circumstance. Research indicates that language instruction is most effective when it is explicit and focused to students' proficiency level. In addition, students who are more proficient in English tend to dominate practice and response times in broader groupings, leaving the less-proficient students with less time to practice their new language.

All ELD programs should have an active assessment component. Language proficiency should be assessed on an ongoing basis and students should be moved to new, more advanced groupings as soon as appropriate. ♦

the English language skills they need to fully participate in content learning.

The purpose of ELD instruction is to actively engage students in learning English vocabulary and language structures. Although ELD lessons can be related to academic content, it is critical that the core purpose of this instruction—English acquisition—be maintained.

This publication explores three models for structuring the delivery of English Language Development in mainstream classrooms. Each one uses staff resources efficiently and ensures that all English learners receive the language instruction they need.

Blended services model

When students are grouped across classrooms and/or grade levels for ELD instruction, it's known as the "blended services" model. This structure places students from multiple classrooms in instructional groupings based on their language proficiency. Often, specialists, para-educators, and other staff are used to keep these instructional groupings small.

For example, students from three classrooms might be formed into four groups as follows: Group 1 for students at the beginning and early intermediate CELDT levels, Group 2 for intermediate, Group 3 for early advanced and advanced, and Group 4 for students who are proficient in English. The three classroom teachers and the school's English learner specialist would each be assigned to a group. The focus for groups 1-3 would be English Language Development. Group 4 might focus on other language and literacy skills.

ELD instruction can be related to a content area—for example, focusing on language structures and vocabulary used in science or math—but the core purpose of the instruction for groups 1-3 is English acquisition.

Note that the grouping of English learners includes *no more than two CELDT proficiency levels* per group. Although EL students are best served when groupings include just one CELDT level, state framework guidelines allow two levels per group. Serving students by proficiency level is essential to ensuring that they acquire English as quickly as possible, which will, in turn, give them broader access to academic content.

Students who are proficient in English or who are English-only speakers may be served as a single group or divided into smaller groups based on their learning needs. These students should not be served in the EL

groups, nor should they displace EL groupings or “force” groupings that span more than two proficiency levels.

The blended services model requires close collaboration among the teachers and principal to plan student groupings and deliver instruction. Working together, the school staff must:

- Agree to a consistent time of day for ELD instruction;
- Discuss and plan placements that cluster students by CELDT proficiency level;
- Plan instructional delivery, strategies, and resources; and
- Assess students regularly, monitor progress, and change placements as appropriate/

Because the blended services model requires educators to carefully coordinate instructional time, it works best at schools that have collaborative structures in place and where staff are committed to working together to deliver instruction.

The blended services model at Brook Hill School

Brook Hill School in Santa Rosa has consistently increased English language acquisition and raised academic achievement among its EL students using a blended services model. This school of 461 elementary students has an English learner population of 57 percent. With support and guidance from the principal, an ELD/literacy coach coordinates the English Language Development program for this school.

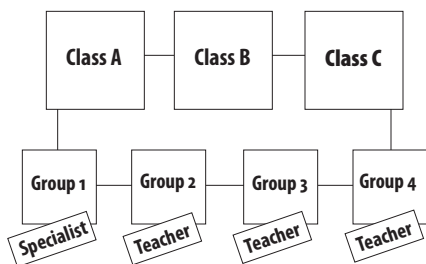
Brook Hill makes schoolwide decisions about student groupings for ELD instruction. The staff has created a system for monitoring student progress and uses an “assessment wall” to keep track of results. Each student has a “data card” on the wall, which summarizes the results of state and local assessments. As grade-level teams meet with the principal and ELD/literacy coach, student results are discussed and the data cards are sorted into clusters. From here, learning groups are formed.

Each Brook Hill teacher is assigned to a group during the time designated for ELD instruction.

ELD instructional models for the mainstream classroom

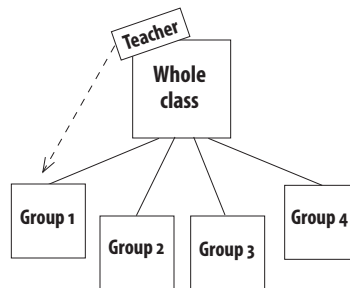
Blended services

Students are grouped by CELDT proficiency levels across or within grade levels. They may move to neighboring classrooms for explicit ELD instruction. Each group is led by a teacher or specialist.



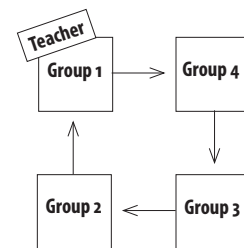
Direct instruction

Teacher provides ELD instruction to the entire class first, then assigns differentiated tasks to students grouped by language proficiency. Teacher pulls out groups as needed for focused ELD work.



Centers

Students are grouped by proficiency and rotate for differentiated activities and ELD instruction by the teacher. This model may also use a specialist or para-educator at one of the centers. Other groups are engaged in independent work.



Cooperative groups

Cooperative group work can be used in conjunction with any of the models illustrated above to enhance ELD instruction. Students are grouped by CELDT proficiency for cooperative activities that promote listening and speaking. Groups are assigned tiered activities geared to their proficiency level.

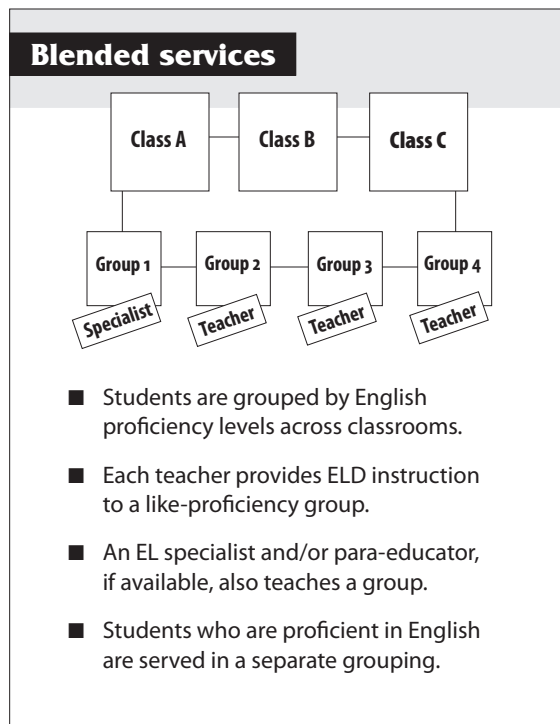


The ELD/literacy coach and a well-trained para-educator also provide instruction, which keeps section sizes small. Groups include only one or two CELDT proficiency levels.

The staff has received common professional development in instructional strategies and models its ELD program on the research-based framework and strategies for vocabulary development outlined in Isabel Beck's book, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*. The result of this planning and preparation is more focused, appropriate instruction and increased student success. The school has an API of 734, with its English learner subgroup attaining an API score of 704.



Principal Guadalupe Perez-Cook and ELD/literacy coach Joan Sullivan rearrange data cards on the assessment wall at Brook Hill School. The changes they're making are for students who have made recent advances.



Direct instruction model

In the “direct instruction” model, a lesson targeting a language objective in an English Language Development standard is delivered to the whole class. Follow-up is provided by the teacher in small groups while other students work independently on tasks keyed to the instruction. In this way, ELD is provided directly to all students, then differentiated for small populations of students in like-proficiency groupings.

While the teacher works with one group of students, other groups may be assigned differentiated tasks. As with the blended services model, student groups should include no more than two CELDT proficiency levels. Students who are proficient in English should not be grouped with English learners.

One strategy for differentiating instruction is to change what students are asked to produce following the direct instruction—i.e., different response expectations, different sentence frames, or different written work. Prior to utilizing this model, teachers should instruct students in the routines for working independently, in pairs, or as a team. In this way, the students stay on task while the teacher concentrates on working with a specific CELDT proficiency group.

A direct instruction example in a first-grade class

A first-grade teacher notices that several students at the beginning and early intermediate CELDT levels are not using “is” and “are” correctly in simple sentences, so she plans an ELD lesson to focus on this issue. Following whole-class ELD instruction, the teacher will work with beginning and early intermediate students while the rest of the class completes a related assignment independently.

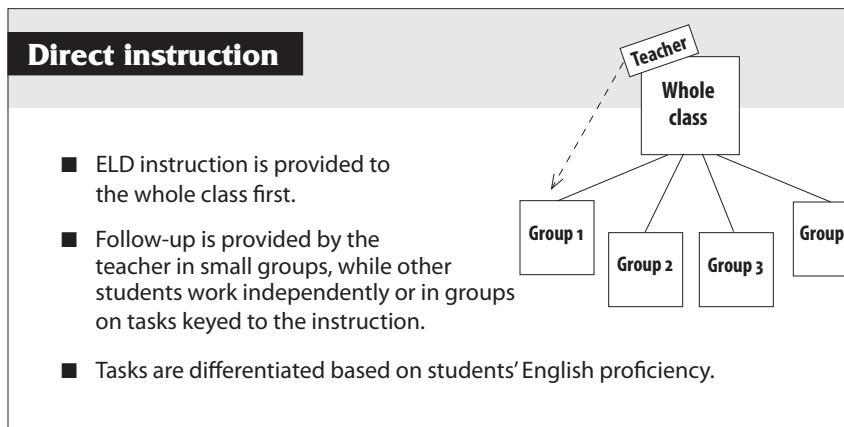
The teacher reads, then re-reads, the weekly story from the Houghton-Mifflin anthology to her whole class. She stops frequently to point out “is” and “are” examples using sentence frames and prompts:

- Who is the main character?
Lucy is the main character.
- Who are Lucy's friends?
Oscar and Maggie are her friends.

She asks for clarification, “How many tells us to use **is**?” and “How many tells us to use **are**?” Additional examples are elicited from the story using frames: *There is one _____*. *There are _____ (number) _____*.

After the examples from the story are reviewed and visually illustrated on a pocket chart, the teacher checks for understanding and asks students to practice the sentence frames with a partner. The teacher knows the level of English proficiency for each of her students and may ask questions that require higher-level thinking, depending on the students’ abilities.

Next, the teacher gives directions for a related writing comprehension task, differentiated based on language proficiency groupings, which the students can work on at their desks. As they set to work, she pulls the beginning and early intermediate students to the circle table for continued practice.



Using picture and word cards of people and things, both singular and plural, she has the students sort the cards onto a chart with the titles *Only One* and *More Than One*. The students work in pairs to decide which side of the chart to place the cards. As they place a card on the chart, they use the sentence frames, *There is one _____* or *There are (number) _____*. The cards are shuffled and the activity is repeated, allowing the students to practice multiple times using different vocabulary.

The sentence frames are modified as the students become fluent with the original frames. At the close of the session, the teacher checks for understanding by passing out cards and having the students practice again to earn their return to their seat.

Centers model

In this model, all students are grouped for ELD instruction based on their proficiency level, again with no more than two levels per group. Each group rotates to a different “center” for instructional activities according to a set time schedule. The teacher is at one of the centers and provides ELD instruction when groups of English learners rotate there. When the students are not at the teacher center, they engage in structured independent, partner, or small group instructional activities.

The centers model requires careful planning by the teacher, who must prepare ELD instruction, language practice activities, and content work for each of the centers. Using this model actually works best if there is another adult to lead one of the other centers. With groups on a 30-minute rotation, each adult serves two groups during a one-hour period and each student receives 30 minutes ELD instruction in a like-proficiency grouping.

Teachers working without another adult in the classroom will find this ELD model challenging to implement—and they may not be able to make the time commitment required for it. With only one adult to provide instruction, at least 90 minutes is needed for all English learners to rotate to the teacher-directed center. This allows 30 minutes of ELD instruction for three groups—beginning and early intermediate students in the first group, intermediate students in the large middle group, and early advanced and advanced students in group 3. English-proficient students would work without direct instruction from the teacher for the entire time.

Note that it is not advisable for teachers working alone to use the center model without allotting sufficient time for it. Common time-saving strategies like grouping more than two proficiency levels together or skipping instruction for the most advanced group are not acceptable alternatives according to state ELD guidelines.

The centers model at John Reed School

At John Reed School in Rohnert Park, the ELD lesson “High-Tech Five: The \$5 bill gets a brand-new look” uses a nonfiction article from the news publication *Time for Kids*. All of the students study the same article, but their learning is differentiated using the centers model. Variations in instruction and guided practice

support student success at each level of proficiency, while scaffolded learning advances language use.

In this example, the fourth-grade teacher organizes her lesson to coincide with the one-hour time slot when the school's highly experienced para-educator is assigned to her classroom. Three to four times each week, this teacher and para-educator work with homogeneously grouped students to address their English language skills. Each adult meets with one of the four groups of students for 30 minutes, while the two other groups work independently or in pairs on a structured reading, listening, writing, or math activity. The students rotate every 30 minutes, alternating between independent work and instruction guided by the teacher or para-educator.

The High-Tech Five lesson is especially motivating to students because they're able to handle real money, including a sheet of \$5 bills as it looks when it comes off the printing press. They examine the details of the \$5 bill, such as the embedded thread. *Embedded* is one of the vocabulary words in the lesson.

The teacher and para-educator follow a similar pattern with their ELD groups, modifying instruction as appropriate to the students' proficiency levels. They:

- Introduce the topic by hooking students with an attention-grabber,
- Present vocabulary and build background knowledge,
- Engage students in using the words in known contexts,
- Read the news article aloud, checking for understanding frequently, and
- Provide a follow-up activity, again using

the vocabulary in structured oral practice that contributes to comprehension.

Working with the para-educator, the beginning English learners spend extra time discussing vocabulary and adding new words to build understanding. The para-educator uses cognates and synonyms, then has the students clap out syllables and act out words. For the word *embedded*, the students make impressions of various objects in clay as they discuss the definition. Then, they observe the thread that is in the \$5 bill. This thread is *embedded* in the paper.

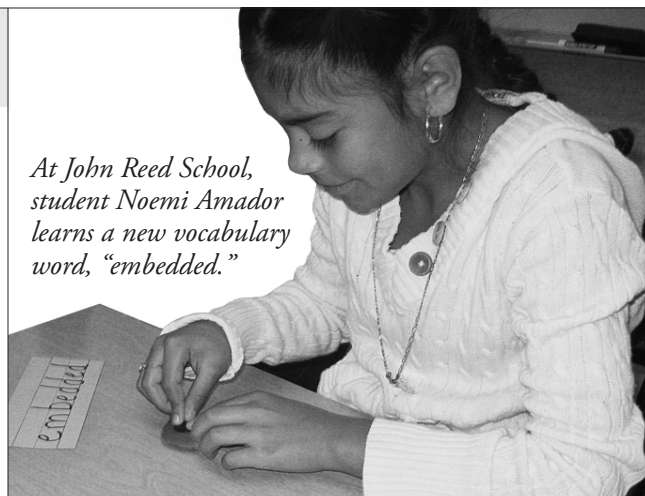
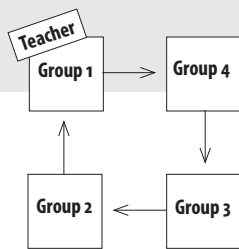
Using sentence frames, they practice using the word. The instructor asks, "What is embedded in the clay?" The students use the model sentence, "The _____ is embedded in the clay," to answer. Each student pushes an item into the clay, then completes the sentence using the frame. After looking at the \$5 bill, they complete a sentence frame by saying that a thread is embedded in the paper. The group then reads more of the article together, stopping frequently to discuss and clarify.

Meanwhile, a more advanced group completes sentence frames that require the verb form to match the context in the sentence. For example, using the vocabulary word *revamp*, the students practice the following sentences.

- I _____ (*revamped*) the classroom seating arrangement before winter break.
- He is _____ (*revamping*) his reading ability by reading every night.
- It was smart of the government to _____ (*revamp*) the \$5 bill.

Centers

- Students are grouped by language proficiency, then rotate to receive ELD instruction and differentiated follow-up activities.
- A para-educator or specialist can increase the amount of direct instruction provided to students when using this model and ensure that no more than two proficiency levels are served in a group.



At John Reed School, student Noemi Amador learns a new vocabulary word, "embedded."

Another student group completes a cause-and-effect graphic organizer, working collaboratively with a partner after discussing the article's main points.

Cooperative groups

Although not an instructional delivery model per se, cooperative groups can be used in conjunction with the direct and guided instructional models highlighted above to enhance English Language Development instruction. When used for ELD, cooperative groupings cluster students by CELDT proficiency level, again with no more than two levels per group, then engage the students in systematically planned listening and speaking activities.

In her book *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning*, Paula Gibbons stresses that “classroom talk determines whether or not children learn, and their ultimate feelings of self-worth as students.” She maintains that cooperative group work is an effective strategy for increasing student discourse in content areas and providing practice to accelerate language acquisition.

Because it increases students' language input and output, cooperative learning can have important advantages for second-language learners when paired with direct whole-class or small-group ELD instruction. Building from teacher-provided ELD lessons, students can engage in related cooperative learning activities that give them the opportunity to hear more language, hear a greater variety of language, and have more language directed toward them. Their verbal interaction with other speakers is heightened when group work requires them to take turns speaking and clarify statements that are not specific enough.

Because they are in working in small peer groups, English learners doing cooperative work tend to have less anxiety when asked to speak—and so they speak more frequently. They learn to use language in appropriate

ELD instruction: Overarching concepts

Match the model to the lesson objectives: Teachers can vary ELD instructional models throughout the school day, choosing an appropriate structure based on lesson objectives and content. In most instances, teachers will use a combination of models. The diversity of students' proficiency levels, grade-level content, or availability of a para-educator or specialist will also influence the choice of the model used.

Teach students the routines of the model: Students can be taught the routines of each model by practicing appropriate behavior with content that is familiar. For example, students might learn how to take turns speaking in a group by first talking about their families. Once they've learned the procedures of taking turns, asking questions, and prompting their partner, the discussion can be focused on the ELD learning objectives. Through repeated use of the model, the students will come to know what behaviors are expected of them.

Differentiate learning by proficiency level: In all instances, teachers should design lessons to differentiate learning for the different levels of English proficiency. English learner specialists, if available, can assist by conducting pull-out activities or providing extra support in the classroom. Specialists most often serve beginning to early intermediate students.

Ensure that all EL students receive daily ELD: Classroom teachers are responsible for providing ELD instruction to *all* of their EL students, including those who may be supported by a specialist. If there is no EL specialist, the teacher must explicitly teach ELD, monitor student progress, and continually adjust instruction so that all English learners receive instruction at their proficiency level for 30-45 minutes daily. ♦

contexts and for particular purposes as a result.

Teachers must take care when planning ELD-focused group work to ensure that it is effectively promoting language acquisition. According to Gibbons, teachers should ensure that cooperative group tasks:

- Have clear and explicit instructions,
- Require (not just encourage) talk for tasks,
- Have a clear outcome,
- Are cognitively appropriate,
- Are integrated with a broader curriculum topic,
- Involve *all* students in the group, and

- Allow enough time for students to complete assignments.

Cooperative group work is not sufficient in itself to satisfy ELD requirements, but can be very effective when used with the blended services model, direct instruction, or centers.

A cooperative group example in eighth grade

In this example, early intermediate and intermediate ELD students in an eighth-grade class build their English language skills during a science lesson. The teacher uses cooperative groups to help students learn the vocabulary, use the language, and discuss the content in Holt's California Physical Science lesson on "states of matter."

Cooperative groups



- Cooperative group work can be used in conjunction with the blended services model, direct instruction, or centers to extend ELD learning.
- Students are grouped by language proficiency, with no more than two CELDT levels per group, and learning activities are tiered to students' language skills.
- Activities are carefully constructed to promote speaking and listening.

The text includes a short introduction about matter, followed by one or two paragraphs on each of the three states of matter: gas, solid, and liquid. After some initial direct instruction to reinforce vocabulary and demonstrate the states of matter using visuals, the teacher divides students into small groups. Each group is assigned one state of matter to study. Once the students have become *experts* on their assigned topic, they'll share their knowledge with classmates.

In their small work groups, the students read the information about their topic (or have it read to them, depending on their proficiency). They use a note-taking guide to keep track of the words and ideas they're learning. This guide, which was created by the teacher, is a simplified version of the main points of the lesson, with blanks for vocabulary words. The students work together to clarify key points and test each other's knowledge.

After sufficient learning and interaction time, the students return to the larger group to "teach" their classmates about the state of matter they've just studied. For example, one of the liquid experts reads the text about liquids aloud, then all the students read the text together. Next, working in twos and threes, each liquid expert explains the key characteristics of liquids to classmates. The gas and solid experts share their knowledge in a similar way.

Once all of the experts have had their turn, the students complete another cooperative activity designed to reinforce their learning. They use a graphic organizer, a Tree Map, and sentence strips to capture the main differences of the three states of matter.

Summary

In classrooms with students at mixed levels of English ability, it's challenging to balance the instructional needs of second-language learners with those of students who are proficient in English. However, teachers implementing strong ELD programs, no matter which model is used, find that their EL students communicate more effectively in both written and oral forms and have improved comprehension and listening abilities. These language skills are essential to content learning and lead to greater student success. ♦

Learn more: Find these related Aiming High Resource publications online at www.scoe.org/aiming_high.

- *Providing Language Instruction* (January 2006) describes Susana Dutro's ideas for teaching English during ELD, frontloading language, and making grade-level content accessible.
- *Structuring Effective ELD Instruction* (May 2007) gives examples of how ELD is taught explicitly.

This publication was developed by the Sonoma County Office of Education in support of Aiming High. For information, contact Patty Dineen, pdineen@scoe.org.



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