

**GCSE (9–1)**

# PSYCHOLOGY

**J203**

For first teaching in 2017

## **Guide to 13 mark questions**

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# Introduction

This resource will help prepare students to answer the extended (13 mark) response question in GCSE psychology (J203/01 and 02) exams.

The guide is divided into three parts:

**Part 1:** Helping students to decode the question and comprehend what it is they are being asked to do.

**Part 2:** Help students to build answers which specifically target the question and include the relevant level of detail.

**Part 3:** Help students to plan their responses with suggested writing frames.

This guide uses June 2019 questions as examples.

## Part 1: Helping students to decode the question and comprehend what it is they are being asked to do

Both Paper 1 and Paper 2 have 4 sections; A,B,C & D. Section D is research methods and so the 13 mark question will always appear at the end of Section C in Paper 1 and 2. The question is synoptic which means it will assess candidates understanding of the connections that exist between different topic areas. It involves the explicit drawing together of knowledge, skills and understanding within different parts of the GCSE (9-1) course. Therefore, the question will relate to other areas/topics in psychology in addition to the one that Section C focuses on. The 13 mark question requires candidates to draw on a range of psychological knowledge in order to answer a set question.

### What skills will the 13 mark question assess?

The 13 mark question is divided into 6 AO1 marks and 7 AO3 marks. This is really important because students need to make sure they understand what the question is asking so that their responses are tailored to meet the assessment objectives.

### Assessment objectives

**AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes and procedures.

**AO3** Analyse and evaluate psychological information, ideas, processes and procedures to make judgements and draw conclusions.

Each assessment objective is marked by the examiner independently using Levels to determine which mark is given. Detail, accuracy, relevance and structure are all considered:

### AO1

Level 3 (5-6)	There is a <b>good</b> description of theory/study <b>and</b> at least one other theory from a different area of psychology.  This is done with accuracy and clarity. The information presented is relevant and substantiated in a good structure.
Level 2 (3-4)	There is a <b>reasonable</b> description of theory/study <b>and</b> at least one other theory from a different area of psychology.  There may be some inaccuracies though most of the information presented is relevant. The response has a reasonable structure.
Level 1 (1-2)	There is a <b>basic</b> description of theory/study and at least one other theory from a different area of psychology.

For AO1 to be placed in Level 2 or above, the response **must** refer to both the study or theory named in the question and **at least one other** theory or study.

## AO3

Level 3 (6-7)	There is a <b>thorough</b> evaluation which offers breadth and/or depth <b>covering at least two different points</b> . Points are coherent and relevant and the response is developed in order to reach a substantiated judgement in response to the question.
Level 2 (4-5)	There is a <b>good</b> evaluation which offers breadth and/or depth <b>covering at least two different points</b> . Points may be brief but should still be relevant and used to reach a supported judgement in response to the question.
Level 1 (1-3)	There may be some <b>basic</b> attempt at evaluation but it will be weak. Judgements will be either unclear or absent.

For AO3 to be placed in Level 2 or above, the response **must** refer to both the study or theory named in the question and **at least one other** theory or study.

As this question requires an extended response, spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology are also assessed. This is indicated by the \* next to the question number on the exam paper.

### Decoding the question

The 13 mark question will always be made up of three parts:

- (i) 'Use your knowledge and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following statement.'
- (ii) A statement on which a judgement is required.
- (iii) 'In your answer you should refer to...'(The question will end by giving you guidance on what areas/topics should be referred to in the answer).

The following is an example of a 13 mark question taken from (GCSE Psychology J203/01 Q20 June 2019):

*Because you are being asked 'how far you agree' with a statement, you must make a judgement in your answer; provide a balanced answer showing you have considered both sides of the debate.*

20\* Use your knowledge of and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following statement:

'It is really difficult to decide if a person's behaviour develops through nature, or if it develops through life experiences and interaction with the environment (nurture).'

In your answer you should refer to theories of criminality and **at least one other** area of psychology you have studied. [13]

*The question will always give guidance on what should be referred to in the answer. This will always include more than one area of psychology. It is important that you demonstrate knowledge and understanding from each topic/area the question directs you to. It is placed in bold to draw your attention to it.*

\*Spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology is being assessed here.

The statement will draw on common themes running through all of the topics/areas across the specification. For example: debates, approaches or methodological issues.

**Top tip:** Because this question is synoptic, if you are asked to refer to at least one other area of psychology you have studied, you can refer to any topic/area from across the specification, regardless of whether it appears in Paper 1 or Paper 2.

One useful way of decoding a question is to break it down so that it makes more sense to you. Start by identifying the debate, approach or methodological issue the question is focused on. For example:

'It is really difficult to decide if a person's behaviour develops through nature, or if it develops through life experiences and interaction with the environment (nurture).'



*This statement refers to both sides of the nature / nurture debate so this must be the focus of your answer.*

Next, use the guidance to determine which topics/areas should be used in the answer. For example:

In your response you should refer to theories of criminality and at least one other area of psychology you have studied.



*Theories of criminality is identified and 'at least one other area' means you can use any other area/topic you have studied across the course.*

Finally, plan how you will respond to the question before you begin writing your response. Make notes on all the key points your response will include. This should include the areas of psychology the response will refer to, specific research studies, key terminology (e.g. Psychology concepts) and the final judgement which will be the conclusion. A planning mat is provided at the end of this guide to help with this.

## Part 2: Helping students to build responses which specifically target the question and include the relevant level of detail

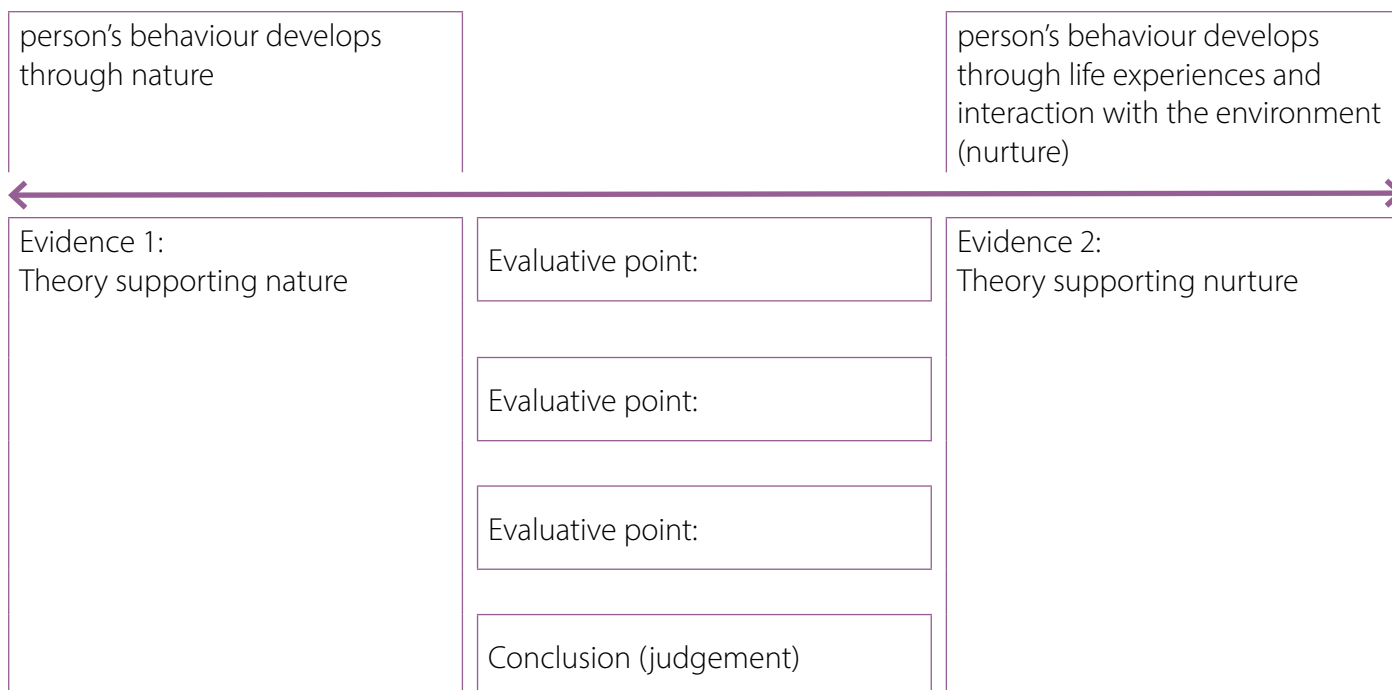
The question is asking candidates to 'explain how far agree with' the statement. This means students need to make a judgement and use evaluation throughout their response.

Using a continuum is a helpful way of conceptualising the judgement, plotting the evidence and evaluation along it.

For example:

### Question

'It is really difficult to decide if a person's behaviour develops through nature, or if it develops through life experiences and interaction with the environment (nurture).'



**Top tips:** When the 13 mark question asks about a debate, it is a good idea to define the debate in your opening paragraph. This is AO1 as it shows your knowledge and understanding of the debate.

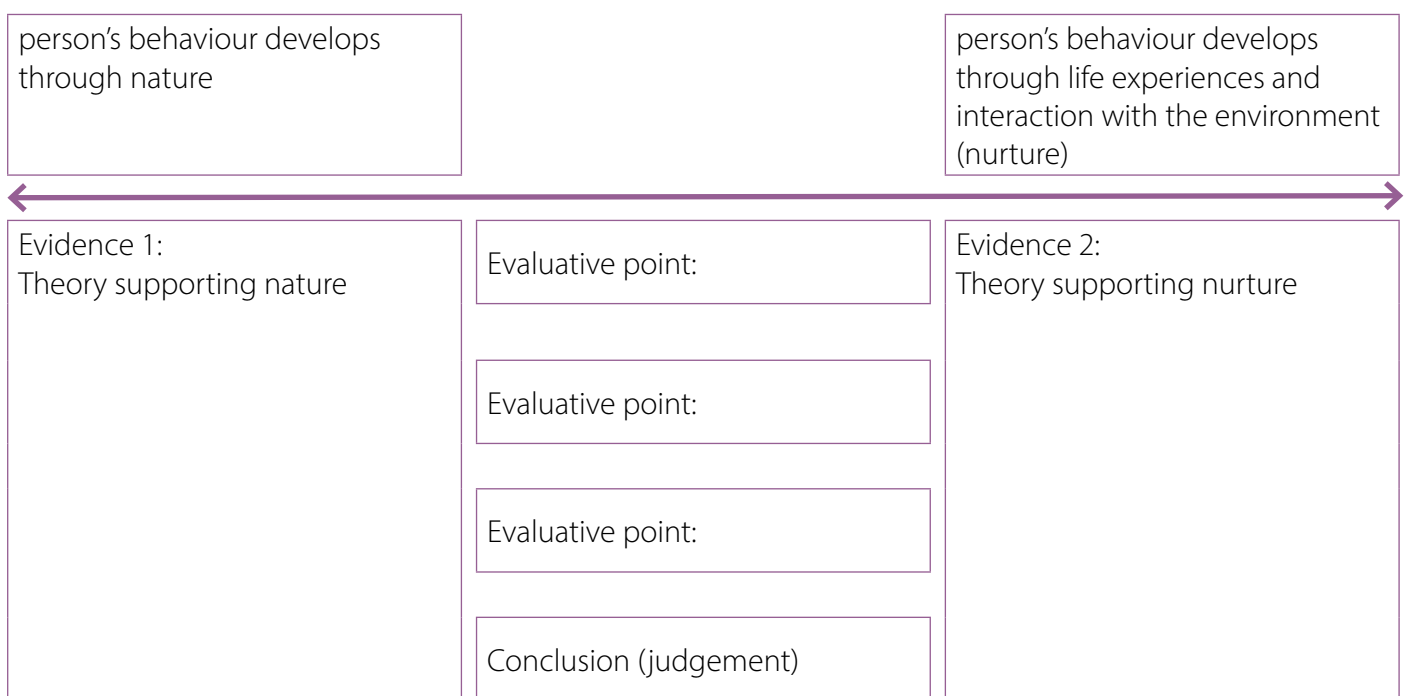
When describing a theory or a research study, do not describe everything you know. Instead focus on the parts that are relevant to the question. For example, if the question is a debate, you may want to focus on the results of research that support the side of the debate you are discussing. If the question is on methodology, you may want to focus on **how** the method has been used in the research study.

The following is an example of a 13 mark question taken from (GCSE Psychology J203/02 Q19 June 2019):

**19\* Use your knowledge and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following viewpoint:**

**'Questionnaires are useful for researching people.'**

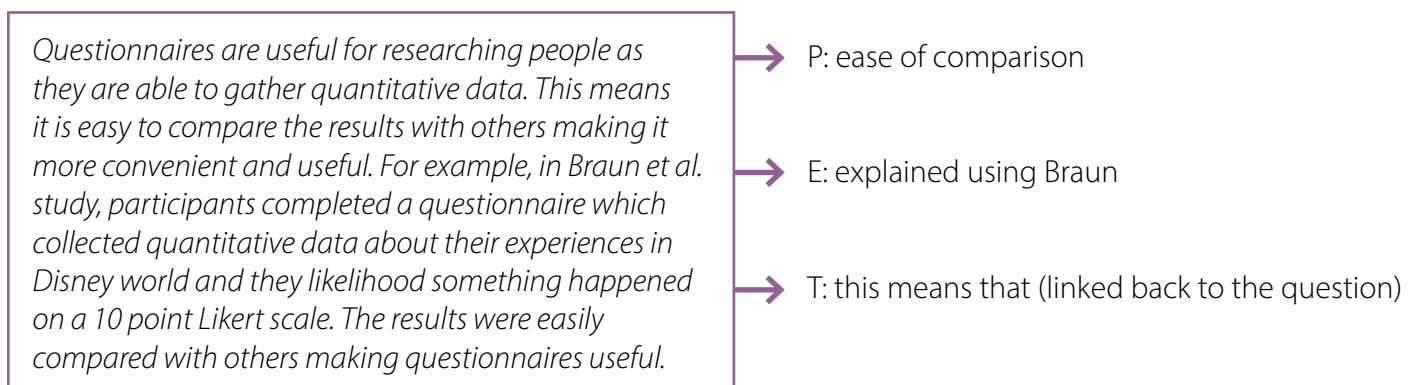
**In your response, refer to the use of questionnaires in the Braun et al. (2002) study into reconstructive memory and at least one other study which has used questionnaires.**



When evaluating theories or research studies, it is not enough to just identify an evaluative point. Instead, you must explore the point and give evidence that supports it.. The following is a helpful way to do achieve this:

**Top tip:** P – make the point  
 E – evidence or explain the point  
 T- This means that / therefore... (show its relevance in relation to the question)

This can be seen in the example response below taken from Exemplar Candidate work J203/02 June 2019 series (Exemplar response 2).



## Part 3: Helping students to plan their responses with suggested writing frames

It is possible, and in some cases preferable, for students not to feel constrained by writing frames or having to follow a certain structure. It is possible to achieve full marks on extended response questions without following a particular writing frame. However, many students find it very difficult to structure a response and using a writing frame, especially at the beginning of the course, can help make sure their responses flow, include place specific detail where necessary and respond to the demand of the question.

Once students are used to writing responses using plans, then they can practice writing responses without plans. The GCSE is roughly 1 mark per minute as a guide, so they can be expected to spend about 15 - 20 minutes writing their response to a 13 mark question in timed conditions

Suggested writing frame A	Features of a strong response
<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study	A strong response will not just describe everything about a research study or theory, instead it will focus on elements that are relevant to the context of the question.
<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study from a different area of psychology	A strong response will always refer to a theory/research study from a different area. This is required for a response to be placed in Level 2 or above (see marking guidance).
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	A strong response will refer to at least two different evaluation points and refer to both theories or research studies used in the question.
<b>Conclusion:</b> Make a reasoned judgement based on the arguments you have presented in your response. Refer back to the question.	A strong response will always end with a conclusion. As students are asked to 'explain how far you agree' with a viewpoint, a reasoned judgement, based on the material presented will be present.

### Example response using suggested writing frame A:

Using your knowledge and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following viewpoint:

#### 'Neuropsychology is of limited use when explaining human behaviour.'

In your answer, you should refer to the biological explanation of schizophrenia and at least one other topic where you have studied neuropsychology to explain a behaviour. [13]

Neuropsychology explains human behaviour by looking at biological factors like the central nervous system (CNS), neurotransmitters and brain structure. The theory suggests that people who have schizophrenia have too much on the neurotransmitter dopamine in their brains. Too much dopamine can cause erratic behaviour and the experience on hallucinations and delusions. Brain scans indicate that the pre-frontal cortex on people with schizophrenia can be defective. This can help to explain why making judgements or having control is difficult with people nor people with schizophrenia

Another biological theory is Eysenck's theory on criminality. He linked criminal personality traits to under activity on the CNS which can explain why extroverts engage in risky behaviours. Eysenck also says that psychoticism is related to too much dopamine which leads to less inhibition on impulses in the brain during synaptic transmission. The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is related to neuroticism where over arousal leads to violent behaviour.

One strength on neuropsychology explaining human behaviour is in the biological treatments. Antipsychotics can be used to help reduce the positive and negative symptoms. Using brain scans, psychologists can help the development on treatments by looking at why some treatments do not work as well nor some people. Another strength is the use on neuropsychological tests. These can help us to understand behavioural and cognitive problems a person may be experiencing, further helping with treatment.

However, neuropsychology ignores the role on nurture on development on human behaviour, including schizophrenia. The Social drift theory states explains the relationship between social class and schizophrenia with the working class being five times more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia than higher social groups. Eysenck ignores the role on learning in crime. People may learn criminal behaviour through observation and imitation or through reinforcement. This suggests that nature is not the only cause on schizophrenia or criminality.

Neuropsychology is too deterministic. Saying that people cannot help turning to crime or having schizophrenia would mean that treating them is very difficult and that they have no free will. It is like saying that they cannot change their behaviour and have no control over it.

In conclusion, schizophrenia and crime are very broad. There are many symptoms on schizophrenia as there are many crimes, saying that they are both caused by biology is not very realistic. It is more likely that biology and the environment interact together and so just looking at neuropsychology would be very reductionist.

→ This is AO1 as the candidate is describing the neuropsychology of schizophrenia.

→ This is AO1 as the candidate is describing the neuropsychology of criminality.

→ This is AO3 – a strength is given and in context with good evaluative terminology.

→ This is AO3 – a weakness (different evaluative point) is given, in context with good evaluative terminology & linked to both theories.

→ This is AO3 – a weakness is given and in context with good evaluative terminology.

→ A judgement is made in response to the question.



Suggested writing frame B	Features of a strong response
<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study	A strong response will not just describe everything about a research study or theory, instead it will focus on elements that are relevant to the context of the question.
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	A strong response will describe a relevant evaluative point and evidence it using the theory / research study to show its relevance. Generic evaluation is superficial.
<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study from a different area of psychology	A strong response will always refer to a theory/research study from a different area. This is required for a response to be placed in Level 2 or above (see marking guidance).
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	A strong response will refer to <b>at least two</b> different evaluation points and refer to <b>both</b> theories or research studies used in the question.
<b>Conclusion:</b> Make a reasoned judgement based on the arguments you have presented in your answer. Refer back to the question.	A strong response will always end with a conclusion. As students are being asked to 'explain how far you agree' with a viewpoint, a reasoned judgement, based on the material presented will be present.

Suggested writing frame templates are available at the end of this guide.

The following is an example of a 13 mark question taken from the Examiners' report (GCSE Psychology J203/02 Q19\* June 2019):

**Use your knowledge and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following viewpoint:**

**'Questionnaires are useful for researching people.'**

**In your answer, refer to the use of questionnaires in the Braun et al. (2002) study into reconstructive memory and at least one other study which has used questionnaires.**

## Example response using suggested writing frame B:

The Braun et al study into reconstructive memory used questionnaires in order to establish the effect of advertising in memory. A questionnaire called the 'Life Events Inventory' was given on week one. Most of the questions were there to distract the participants, but one was the target question, which asked whether or not they had ever been to a Disney park and shook hands with a cartoon character. The participants were asked to rate on a scale of 0 to 100 how sure they were that this had happened to them with 0 being definitely didn't happen and 100 being definitely did happen. They also completed several distraction tests which aimed to reduce demand characteristics if they figured out what the aim of the study was. They then came back the second week and were shown an advert. Half of participants saw a Disney advert, which included footage of someone shaking hands with a Disney character, and they were asked to imagine themselves in that situation. The researcher then came in looking panicked and claimed there had been a problem coding their results from the Life Events Inventory so they had to complete the questionnaire again. The research found that 90% of those in the Disney condition showed an increase in their confidence that it had happened to them, compared to 47% in the control group.

A strength of using questionnaires in this study is participants are unlikely to display social desirability due to the nature of the question. People are unlikely to want to change their score for this particular question, so that gives it fairly high validity and their use of questionnaires quite useful for determining the effect of advertising on memory.

Heaven's study into delinquency also used questionnaires to establish the causes of criminal behaviour. It was a longitudinal study that looked at adolescents from several Catholic schools in Australia. They were given questionnaires a few years apart to find out about any criminal behaviour that they had participated in. The independent variable was how highly they scores on the questionnaire determining their self-esteem and levels of psychoticism and the dependent variable was the criminal behaviour they were involved in. Heaven found that psychoticism was the best prediction for criminal behaviour.

The main weaknesses of the use of questionnaires in this study was social desirability. The adolescents may not have wanted to admit to crimes that they had committed if they were ashamed, or some may even exaggerate what they had done to make themselves look 'cooler'. The study is therefore not completely valid, so the findings may not be true. The researcher tried to counteract this by giving each participant a number so they weren't named, but this is unlikely to make much of a difference as many adolescents would still feel self-conscious about writing down what they had done.

In conclusion, I think that questionnaires can provide incredibly useful, in-depth information, although because of social desirability they will almost never be completely valid.

→ This is AO1 as the candidate is describing how questionnaires were used in Braun et al (2002) study. The description is accurate and the information presented is relevant and substantiated in a good structure.

→ This is AO3 – a strength of questionnaires is given, explained in context of Braun and linked back to the question. There is good use of evaluative language.


→ This is AO1 as the candidate is describing how questionnaires were used in Heaven's (1996) study. The description is mostly accurate and the information presented is relevant and substantiated in a good structure.

→ This is AO3 – a weakness of questionnaires is given, explained in context of Heaven and linked back to the question. The evaluation is in depth and there is good use of evaluative language.

→ A judgement is made in response to the question.

## Appendix A: question planning mat

Use your knowledge and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following viewpoint:

Add statement:			
In your answer, refer to			
Add statement:			
Debate/approaches/methodological issue?			
Add one argument here			Add the opposing argument here
AO1 Theory/research study supporting this side of the argument	AO3: Evaluation point:	AO3: Evaluation point:	AO1 Theory/research study supporting this side of the argument (check it is from a different area of psychology)
	Explain/Evidence:	Explain/Evidence:	
	Therefore/this means..	Therefore/this means..	
Conclusion/Judgement			

## Appendix B – writing frames

### Writing frame A

<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study	
<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study from a different area of psychology	
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	
<b>Conclusion:</b> Make a reasoned judgement based on the arguments you have presented in your answer. Refer back to the question.	

## Writing frame B

<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study	
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	
<b>AO1:</b> Description of Theory/research study from a different area of psychology	
<b>AO3:</b> Evaluation Point Explain in context Therefore/this means... (link back to the question)	
<b>Conclusion:</b> Make a reasoned judgement based on the arguments you have presented in your answer. Refer back to the question.	

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