

More Great Games

Presentation Skills & Games

Info-line

The *How-To* Reference Tool for Training & Performance Professionals



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Association for
Talent Development

More Great Games

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Presentation Skills & Games

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Why Games?

I stand here singing my song. And, you leave here humming it...I hope.

--Anonymous

Today's learner does not want to hear you lecture, and they are too busy to read your instruction guide, so how can you tell them what they need to know? The answer is learning games—games that have a practical, instructional purpose. Participants like to have fun while they learn, and a well-designed learning game brings fun into the learning environment. In addition, games create interactive learning by transforming participants into active players and translating inactive information into enjoyable learning episodes. Learning occurs at three levels:

1. Players interact with the content, demonstrating their knowledge and ability to apply the information.
2. Players observe their own behavior and that of others during game play. Post-game debriefings give insights into those behaviors in thoughtful vignettes and examples observed during the game experience.
3. Discussion of newly acquired awareness guides the learner to the discovery of personal and work site applications.

Features of an Effective Learning Game

Balance. The game format should present an appropriate mix of chance and skill. Too much chance makes the game boring and mindless; too much emphasis on knowledge reduces the game to a test.

Easily adaptable. An effective game format should be “open” to your content and can be written to the level of any audience. Some games even allow you to adjust the level of competition you wish to bring to your audience.

User-friendly. The game format is easily understood, so participants are quickly converted into active players.

Fun to play. The game promotes player involvement and continued interest.

Flexible. The game can be modified to fit into almost any training facility and any time schedule.

Selecting and preparing a new learning game to use in your training can be a risky procedure. To help you experience the preparation and play of a learning game, this issue of *Info-line* offers you five fully adaptable learning games, selected to fill a specific, yet differing function in the training plan. Each game will be presented in terms of its learning objectives, features, and mode of play.

With the exception of “Lecture Bingo” by Sivasailam Thiagarajan, these games were created by this issue's author and are adapted from his books, *Games That Teach* and *Games That Teach Teams*. To expand your understanding and application of learning games further, consult the list of references and resources at the end of this issue. Finally, to help you prepare your own learning game, use the job aid *Adapt-and-Play Guidelines*—also developed by the author. It is a valuable worksheet that you can use over and over again, incorporating your own content.

Shape Up!

Situation: You want to bring focus to your group with an exercise that will introduce your topic in a climate of energy and playfulness. You would like to divide your group into teams that will generate ideas about your content. You hope this event will create an ongoing interest in the topic that will carry you through the entire program.

Purpose: This icebreaker activity will establish a problem-solving climate and bring participants into problem-solving groups.

Time: 15 to 30 minutes.

Number of participants: 15 to 32.

Supplies Needed:

- One or more newsprint flipcharts and felt-tipped markers.
- A set of task assignments prepared in advance by the facilitator.
- Paper and pencils for the participants.

Sample Task Assignments

If you plan to use the game “Shape Up!” in your training, here are some examples of task assignments to write on the shapes. (These samples are appropriate for a time management training session.)

- Name seven reasons to keep a written journal of meetings.
- List seven ways to get more out of your desktop computer.
- List five ways to deal with an unwanted drop-in visitors.
- List nine important things you can accomplish in a seven-minute period of time.
- Name seven ways to make your next meeting more productive.
- Name five ways to get better use of the first hour of the workday.
- Name five ways to get better use of the last hour of the workday.
- List seven timesaving tips for using the telephone.
- List seven reasons why you should create a computer back-up system.

- Three sheets each of different color construction paper.
- Two or more fine-tipped permanent markers.
- Scissors or paper cutter.
- Four or more No. 10 envelopes.
- Masking tape.

Preparing for the Activity:

- Determine the number of task assignments you want resolved and choose a shape for each task.
- Write the tasks you wish each subgroup to accomplish on the appropriate shape.
- Determine the number of participants you want in each subgroup. Then cut the shape into the appropriate number of irregular pieces. For example, if you want four members in each subgroup, cut each shape into four pieces. (See the figure *Shape Up!* for an example.)

- In accordance with your group size, determine the number of tasks and the number of participants in each subgroup. For a group of 16, plan four tasks and four participants in each subgroup. This requires four different shapes (circle, square, star, and heart), each cut into four pieces. For larger groups, consider using more than one color for each shape.

Overview of Player Activity:

1. Distribute one piece of a shape to each player.
2. Have participants find other players whose pieces complete the shape.
3. Give each subgroup six minutes to complete the task written on the shape.
4. Call time at the end of six minutes.
5. Have each subgroup report on its task assignment.
6. Award one point for each item developed. The subgroup with the most points is declared the winner (optional).
7. Debrief and discuss the activity, as required.

Variations:

- Focus the debrief questions on identifying which participants took leadership, and post the results.
- Switch the task assignment after each subgroup has reported. Assign another subgroup to expand on the solutions devised by the original problem-solving group.
- Omit one piece from each shape to determine how participants handle ambiguity.
- Assign one point for each item presented. Determine if awarding points adds too much competition to the activity.
- Allow the group to vote for the most creative or most practical solutions, and award prizes.

Lecture Bingo

Situation: You have prepared a lecture containing vital information about your topic and want to ensure participant interest. Although you have taken great pains to support your material with appropriate overhead graphics, you are concerned that the lecture, in itself, will not be as interactive as it should be. You need demonstrated feedback to occur *during* key points of the lecture.

Purpose: Use this game to introduce the workshop topic, establish immediate work teams, and to motivate participants to interact with the lecture.

Time: 15 to 50 minutes.

Number of participants: 15 or more.

Supplies Needed:

- One newsprint flipchart and felt-tipped markers.
- One bingo card per team of players (see the next page for an example).
- Paper and pencils for the participants.
- Prizes (optional).

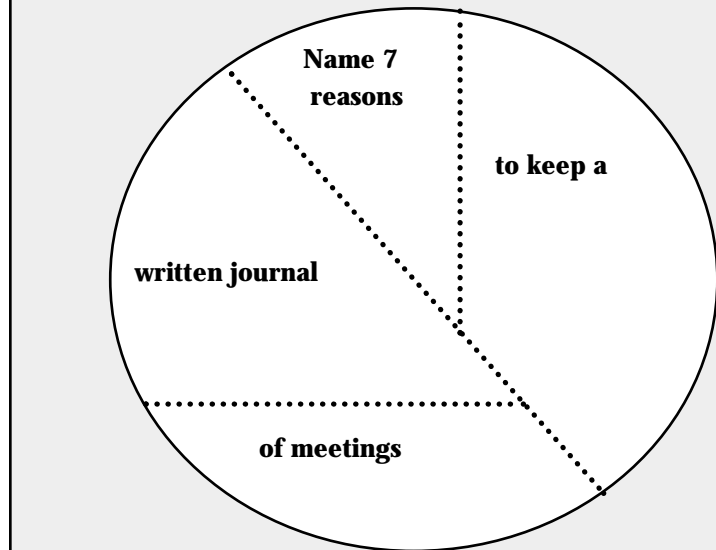
Preparing for the Activity:

- Select 25 or more items from your lecture. Prepare these in "bite-size" statements or ideas.
- Prepare one bingo game sheet per two participants.

Overview of Player Activity:

1. Divide the group into teams of two to three players each.
2. Distribute one bingo card and pencil to each team.
3. Tell participants that they are to identify items from your lecture and mark these items on their bingo cards.

Shape Up!



4. Present your lecture. The first team to identify and mark five items in a row from your lecture wins.

Variations:

- Replace key items with short-answer questions. Pause in your lecture and ask participants to see if they can answer a question on the bingo sheet. Give the correct response. Teams get to mark the box only if they give the correct response.
- Refrain from mentioning several key items to see if participants question you about those items in order to bring them into discussion.
- Require your participants to complete variations of items in a row, such as a total blackout card, an "X", a line of items forming a "T", or other configurations.
- Distribute bingo cards to groups, ranging from one to five, to demonstrate levels of effectiveness of different-size groups.

Source: *Zingo-2*. © 2000 Workshops by Thiagi, Bloomington, IN.

Lecture Bingo: Time Management

Rewards and punishment	Closed-door policy	Focus, focus, focus	Online meetings	TV, or not TV, that is the question
Telephone interruptions	My personal filing system	Virtual teams	The 80-20 rule	No. 1 time waster
Computer back-up system	5 is the "magic" number	My friend, the telephone	Chat room	Tele-conferencing
Just the fax, Ma'am	Coffee break	Internet connections	Email with attachment converter	Quiet time
Video/teleconferencing	Journal keeping	Shared responsibility	Websites	Just say "no"

Brain Frame

Situation: You want to create a lively, energetic, creative atmosphere to unblock thinking or to generate new ideas about the topic. You also want to use this exercise after a luncheon to jump-start the module, by requiring participants to demonstrate their understanding by associating items that are part of the theme of the exercise. Finally, you want to demonstrate an easy-to-use brainstorming structure.

Purpose: Use this game to motivate participants to create as many options as possible for learning topics. It demonstrates an easy brainstorming structure and provides a method to get people to think outside the box.

Time: 30 to 45 minutes.

Number of participants: Nine or more.

Supplies Needed:

- One or more newsprint flipcharts and felt-tipped markers.
- One flipchart-size game sheet for each team, prepared in advance by the facilitator.

- One set of felt-tipped markers for each team.

- Masking tape, to post the game sheets.

Preparing for the Activity:

- Prepare one newsprint flipchart game sheet per team, using the example found in the sidebar *Improving Plant Safety* as a sample format.
- Select a theme topic: Improving Plant Safety.
- Draw a 3-by-3 matrix.
- On the vertical axis, list three categories: Clothing, Materials, Activities.
- On the horizontal axis, select three letters: A, M, P.

Overview of Player Activity:

1. Divide the group into teams of three to five players each.
2. Have each team meet at one of the posted game sheets.

3. Give teams seven minutes to create as many items as they can, using the letters and categories on the matrix of the game sheet.
 4. Call time at the end of seven minutes.
 5. Award one point for each correctly identified item on the game sheet.
 6. Award a three-point bonus for any item not found on an opponent's game sheet.
 7. Debrief and discuss the activity, as required.
- Accommodate different categories or numbers of topics by using different matrix designs, such as 2-by-2, 2-by-3, 3-by-4, 4-by-4, and so forth.
 - Rotate the game sheets among the teams for each round of play. Continue until all teams have played on all game sheets.
 - Award 10 bonus points to each team that places at least one item in each square on the game sheet.
 - Use numbers or dates on the horizontal axis instead of letters. Teams can use the Brain Frame grid to identify stages, dates, or milestones of a project or process.

Variations:

- Create random rounds by placing letters in one hat and categories in another, and then have teams draw to create a random brainstorming round.
- Use game sheets as a take-home exercise to reinforce reading assignments. Have everyone fill them out after reading the material.
- Use words on both axes to make the forced association challenge more difficult.
- Play as a cyber team using your chat room function. Create the matrix using a spreadsheet program, and assign one player as recorder to write down the words and ideas.

Improving Plant Safety

	A	M	P
Clothing			
Materials			
Activities			

Classify

Situation: You want a game that will get your participants out of their chairs and highly active, especially after breaks. You also want a game that quickly reviews the specifics of categorized material—that is, material that can be sorted into two or more categories, such as political parties, safety procedures, milestones, or stages of a production, inventory, or management process.

Purpose: This game demonstrates differences among similar items or processes and creates a dynamic exercise that requires players to sort items correctly.

Time: 15 to 30 minutes.

Number of participants: 10 or more.

Supplies Needed:

- One or more newsprint flipcharts and felt-tipped markers.
- One newsprint flipchart game sheet for each team, with the names of the categories to be used in the activity, prepared in advance by the facilitator.
- One or more sets of item cards for each team, written on 3-by-5-inch cards, prepared in advance by the facilitator.
- Masking tape—tear strips of tape for each team. The teams will affix the tape to the backs of the index cards.
- Pins or thumbtacks (an appropriate amount to each team).
- A stopwatch or other timing device.

Preparing for the Activity:

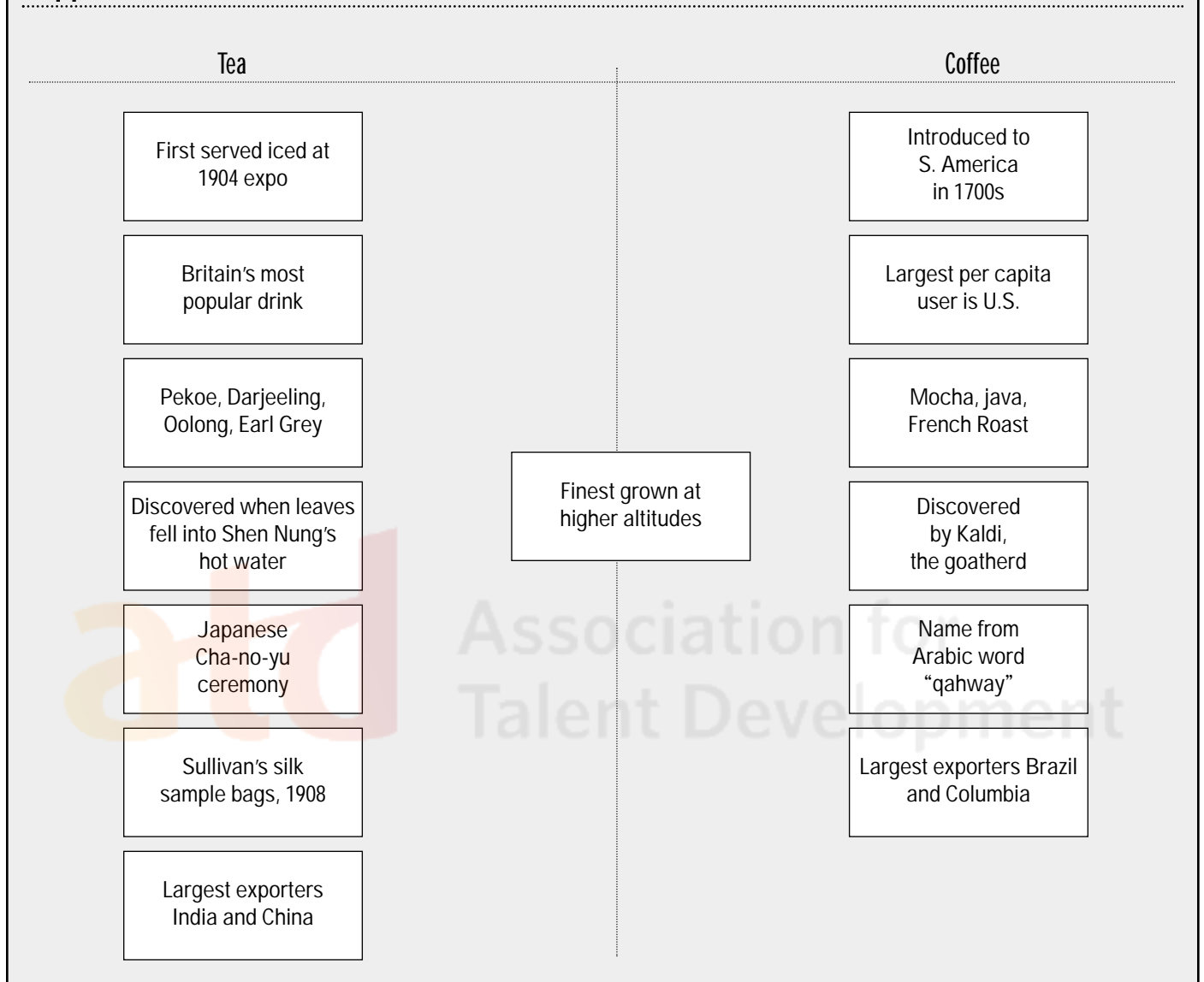
- Select your topic, determine the number of categories (usually two or three), and then determine the number of items to be categorized.
- Determine the duration of the game by dividing the number of items to be categorized by 13. Allow one minute for every 12 to 15 item cards.

- Prepare one set of item cards for each team. This can be done by selected software programs or by generating a label for each item and pasting it onto the index card.
- Prepare one newsprint game sheet for each team. If creating two choices, draw a vertical line down the middle of the sheet; then write the two choices at the top of the sheet. If creating three choices, draw two vertical lines down the sheet.
- If possible, place each game sheet near a conference table to serve as a team's "base of operations" during game play.
- Distribute supplies for affixing the items onto the game sheet: masking tape and thumbtacks.

Overview of Player Activity:

1. Divide the group into two or more teams of five to 10 players each.
2. Place one prepared game sheet on the wall.
3. Place one complete set of item cards, face down, and strips of masking tape by each team's game sheet.
4. Have each team meet at one game sheet.
5. Tell players that this is a "relay" exercise, in which each team will be given one minute to attach all their item cards to the game sheet.
6. Allow each team to prepare their masking tape strips and line up for the round of play.
7. When told to start, the first player will turn over the first item card and place it into one of the categories. Warn players that there might be an item card that fits more than one category. In that case, they will want to place their card on the line dividing the two categories (see the sidebar *Copper's Dilemma*).
8. Once a card is turned over, it must be played. Once a card has been placed, it cannot be moved. Only after the first card is placed may the second player turn over the second card.
9. Play will continue in this fashion until the team has placed all their cards on the game sheet or time has expired.

Cupper's Dilemma



10. Call time at the end of one minute.

11. Award one point for each correctly categorized item card. If you have used item cards that can be placed in more than one category, award a three-point bonus for any card correctly placed on the line between the two appropriate categories. The team with the most points is declared the winner.

12. Debrief and discuss the activity, as required.

Variations:

- Change the scoring so that one point is deducted for incorrect answers. This creates a more competitive dynamic during play.
- Although only one player may touch the item card, allow the rest of the team to coach their players as they are making their decision.
- Allow more or less time, depending on the difficulty of the material or the number of item cards.

Deadlines

Situation: You want a dynamic game that requires your participants to demonstrate their understanding of the topic under one of the following conditions:

1. After a lecture or readings about a specific module. This will give you data about how much participants understood and what material needs to be covered in more detail.
2. To preview the format of actual examination material in a less threatening environment. This can be very helpful in certification programs that require post-criterion testing.
3. At the beginning of your program. This can help you establish a baseline of how much your participants understand about the topic.
4. When you want this game to be easily played and generate a challenging, yet fun-filled environment, so that you can use the game over and over with the same or different audiences.

Purpose: Use this game to create a contract-and-challenge environment. Participants can predict how accurately their team can answer sets of questions pertaining to a certain topic and collect points based on the accuracy of both the predictions and the answers.

Time: 30 to 90 minutes.

Number of participants: 10 or more.

Supplies Needed:

- One or more newsprint flipcharts and felt-tipped markers.
- One set of question sheets for each team, prepared in advance by the facilitator.
- Paper and pencils for each participant.

Preparing for the Activity:

- Prepare a test bank of questions on your topic. Then, select sets of seven questions and put these questions on a question sheet. For instance, if you select 21 questions, place the first set of seven on question sheet No. 1, the second set of seven on question sheet No. 2, and the third set of seven on question sheet No. 3. (Past experience has shown that this game works best with three sets of question sheets. Teams enjoy the challenge of adjusting their estimates on subsequent rounds.)
- Prepare a “key” for each question sheet with the appropriate answers and additional information to reinforce the answers, as needed.
- Prepare one set of question sheets for each playing team. All teams may receive the same set of questions. This will allow you to focus on the same information for all teams at the same time.

Overview of Player Activity:

1. Divide the group into teams of three to five players each.
2. Distribute paper and pencils to each team.
3. Round 1:
 - Tell teams that they will be given five minutes to answer seven questions on the topic.
 - Have each team estimate how many correct responses they will provide for the seven questions.
 - Post each team’s prediction on the newsprint flipchart.
 - Distribute one set of question sheets to each team.
 - After five minutes, call time.

- Collect one completed question sheet from each team.
 - Go over the correct responses with the participants.
 - Have participants compute their scores according to the scoring matrix (at right).
 - Record each team's points on the newsprint flipchart.
4. Play each second and succeeding rounds in the same fashion.
 5. End of Game:
 - Total all team points. The team with the most points is declared the winner.
 - Debrief and discuss the activity, as required.

Variations:

- Adjust the time allowed for answers, depending on the complexity of the questions or size of the group.
- Vary the number of rounds to match the available time or the amount of material you wish to cover.
- Prepare question sets of four, five, or six using the same scoring system.
- After the participants have answered the questions and handed in their responses, give the teams the option of revising their original estimates of the number of correct answers. This allows the participants to reflect on how well they were able to answer the questions. But only the original estimate counts in determining the winner.

Scoring Matrix for Deadlines

Estimated Number of Correct Responses	Total Points
1	1
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25
6	36
7	49

If a team does not accomplish its contract, it receives 2 points for each correct response. If a team exceeds its contract, it receives an additional 2 points for every correct response above the estimate.

- Team "A" estimates it will provide five correct responses. It actually provides six correct responses. Team "A" receives 25 points for meeting its estimate plus two points for the extra correct response, for a total of 27 points.
- Team "B" estimates it will provide five correct responses. It actually provides only four correct responses. Team "B" receives two points for each correct response, for a total of $4 \times 2 = 8$ points.

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Job Aid

Adapt-and-Play Guidelines

Use this step-by-step guide to adapt, play, and debrief a game that incorporates your own training objectives.

Step 1: Select Game

Adaptability	Topic and audience Number of players Training facilities	Playability	Fun to play User-friendly rules Fits allotted time
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Step 2: Develop Game Content

Outcomes	Learning outcomes Demonstrated behaviors	Input	Information to be covered Question format
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Step 3: Resource Supplies

Training	Prepared lecture Handouts or readings Overheads/visuals	Audiovisual	Flipchart, overhead projector Powerpoint or other software Video or audio recorder
Supplies	Paper and pencils Felt-tipped markers Masking tape, pins Index cards Dictionary/other resources	Game Props	Timer, noisemaker Game cards, game sheets Name cards or badges Ticket and prizes Accessories (dice, pawns, and so forth)

Step 4: Room Logistics

Players	Set up tables and chairs. Set out game materials.	Instructor	Set out handouts and references. Check out audiovisuals.
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Step 5: Game Preliminaries

Set-Up	Form and seat teams (as required); distribute game materials. Introduce game: objective(s), rules of play, and time of play.
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Step 6: Game Play

Start Play	Present game situation(s). Players take appropriate action. Alternate play.
End Play	Call time at end of round or game. Tally score. Announce winners (optional).

Step 7: Closure/Debriefing Questions

What?	What did you experience? How do you feel? What happened?
So What?	What learning happened? What one major idea or concept did you learn?
Now What?	How does this relate to real life? What can you take back to the work site?

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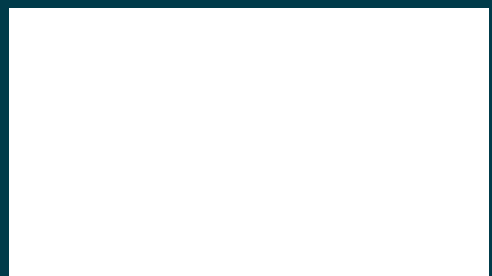


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