

detroit lions logo history

Detroit Lions Logo History: A Journey Through Time and Identity

detroit lions logo history is a fascinating tale that reflects not just the evolution of a football team's identity, but also the cultural and visual trends of different eras. The Detroit Lions, one of the NFL's storied franchises, have undergone several logo transformations since their inception. Each iteration tells a story – from the team's early days to the modern branding that fans recognize today. Let's dive into the rich history of the Lions' logo, exploring how it has changed, what inspired those changes, and why the logo remains an essential symbol for Detroit's football enthusiasts.

The Origins of the Detroit Lions Logo

The Detroit Lions were founded in 1930 as the Portsmouth Spartans before moving to Detroit in 1934 and adopting the Lions moniker. The initial logos were quite simple, reflecting the design sensibilities of the early 20th century. The original logo did not feature the iconic lion we know today, but rather incorporated elements that connected to the team's new identity and the city of Detroit.

The First Lion Symbol

While the team was known as the Lions beginning in 1934, it wasn't until the 1950s that the franchise adopted a lion image as the centerpiece of its branding. The first true lion logo was a rather static and regal lion, standing proudly – a symbol meant to convey strength, courage, and a fierce competitive spirit. This lion was more illustrative and emblematic than stylized, fitting with mid-century sports aesthetics.

Evolution of the Detroit Lions Logo Through the Decades

The Detroit Lions logo has seen several iterations, each reflecting changes in design trends and the team's own evolving identity. From the classic blue lion silhouette to more detailed and dynamic logos, the history of these changes is intriguing for fans and design enthusiasts alike.

1960s to 1980s: The Classic Blue Lion Silhouette

Starting in the 1960s, the Lions adopted a more streamlined and recognizable logo: a blue lion leaping forward. This design perfectly captured the energy and aggression associated with football. The lion was stylized, sleek, and modern for its time, featuring sharp angles and a sense of motion that suggested speed and power.

This blue lion silhouette became synonymous with the team's branding and was used consistently for over two decades. It also helped solidify the Lions' visual identity in a league that was becoming increasingly competitive not just on the field but also in merchandising and fan engagement.

1990s Refresh: Adding Details and Depth

In the 1990s, the Detroit Lions logo underwent a refinement to add more depth and detail. The lion became more muscular and three-dimensional, with highlights and shadows giving it a more realistic and aggressive look. The lines were sharper, and the mane was more detailed, emphasizing the ferocity of the team's mascot.

This redesign aligned with a broader trend in sports logos during the 1990s, where teams sought to update their branding to appear more dynamic and visually engaging, especially as television and merchandising grew in importance.

The Modern Detroit Lions Logo: A Blend of Tradition and Contemporary Style

The logo that fans recognize today was introduced in 2009, marking a significant yet respectful update to the team's identity. The modern Detroit Lions logo preserves the classic leaping lion but incorporates modern design elements that make it more vibrant and eye-catching.

What Changed in the 2009 Redesign?

The 2009 logo update involved several key changes:

- **Color Palette:** The team adopted a brighter, more vivid shade of Honolulu blue, along with silver and black accents for contrast.
- **3D Effects:** The lion now featured more pronounced shading and gradient effects, giving it a three-dimensional look that pops on merchandise and digital platforms.
- **Outline and Detailing:** A bold black outline was added, sharpening the lion's silhouette and increasing visibility from a distance.

These updates were designed to maintain the team's heritage while embracing the capabilities of modern graphic design. The logo became more adaptable, suitable for everything from jerseys and helmets to digital media and marketing materials.

Significance of the Detroit Lions Logo in Team Branding and Fan Culture

The Detroit Lions logo history is not just about aesthetics; it's deeply intertwined with the team's identity and the city's pride. The lion symbolizes strength, resilience, and courage—qualities that resonate with Detroit's hardworking spirit.

Why the Lion?

Choosing a lion as a mascot and logo was a strategic decision. Lions are universally recognized as kings of the jungle, representing dominance and bravery. For a football team, these attributes are ideal, projecting an image of power and competitive spirit. For Detroit, a city known for its automotive industry and blue-collar ethos, the lion symbol also reflects endurance and determination.

Logo's Role in Fan Engagement

A strong logo helps build community and fan loyalty. The Detroit Lions' logo, especially the leaping blue lion, has become a rallying symbol for fans. You'll see it on merchandise, fan gear, stadium banners, and social media. It unites generations of supporters and serves as a visual shorthand for everything the team stands for.

Tips for Appreciating and Using the Detroit Lions Logo

Whether you're a fan, a designer, or someone interested in sports branding, understanding the Detroit Lions logo history can deepen your appreciation for its design and significance. Here are some helpful tips:

1. **Respect the Brand Guidelines:** If you use the logo for any purpose, make sure to adhere to the team's official brand guidelines to maintain consistency and avoid misrepresentation.
2. **Understand the Color Scheme:** The iconic Honolulu blue and silver are integral to the logo's identity, so using the correct shades ensures authenticity.
3. **Recognize the Evolution:** Knowing the logo's history helps you appreciate why certain design choices were made and can inspire your own creative projects.
4. **Use the Logo to Connect:** Whether at games, on social media, or in conversations, referencing the logo can be a great way to connect with other fans and celebrate team pride.

Looking Ahead: The Future of the Detroit Lions Logo

Logos are never truly static—they evolve as teams grow and cultural trends shift. While the current Detroit Lions logo strikes a balance between tradition and modernity, it's possible we'll see further tweaks or even a full rebrand in the future, especially as digital media and fan engagement strategies continue to evolve.

Designers and fans alike will be watching closely to see how the Lions maintain their visual identity while adapting to the demands of the 21st century. For now, the leaping blue lion remains a powerful and beloved symbol that captures the essence of Detroit football.

Exploring the Detroit Lions logo history reveals much more than a series of design changes—it's a window into the team's legacy, the city's character, and the evolving world of sports branding. Whether you're a lifelong fan or new to the NFL, the story behind the logo adds an exciting layer to your appreciation of the Detroit Lions.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was the original Detroit Lions logo introduced?

The original Detroit Lions logo was introduced in 1934 when the team was first established as the Portsmouth Spartans before relocating to Detroit in 1934 and adopting the Lions name.

How has the Detroit Lions logo evolved over the years?

The Detroit Lions logo has evolved from a simple, more detailed lion illustration in the early years to a sleeker, more modern and stylized blue lion silhouette that emphasizes speed and agility.

What are the primary colors used in the Detroit Lions logo throughout its history?

The primary colors used in the Detroit Lions logo have consistently been Honolulu blue and silver, representing the team's identity and tradition.

When did the Detroit Lions adopt the current lion silhouette logo?

The Detroit Lions adopted the current lion silhouette logo in 2009 as part of a rebranding effort to modernize the team's image and uniforms.

What symbolism is behind the Detroit Lions logo?

The Detroit Lions logo symbolizes strength, courage, and pride, reflecting the team's fighting spirit and connection to the city of Detroit.

Have there been any major controversies or criticisms regarding the Detroit Lions logo changes?

There have been minor criticisms from fans over the years, especially when the team updated the logo

in 2009, as some preferred the classic design, but overall the changes were well-received.

Does the Detroit Lions logo incorporate any hidden or subtle design elements?

While the Detroit Lions logo primarily features a bold lion silhouette, subtle details like the lion's mane and its forward-leaning posture convey motion and aggression, emphasizing the team's competitive nature.

Additional Resources

Detroit Lions Logo History: Evolution of an Iconic NFL Emblem

detroit lions logo history encapsulates the visual journey of one of the National Football League's (NFL) most storied franchises. Over nearly a century, the Detroit Lions' logo has undergone multiple transformations, reflecting changes in design trends, team identity, and branding strategies. This article thoroughly examines the evolution of the Detroit Lions logo, highlighting key design shifts, symbolic elements, and the impact these changes have had on the team's image and fan perception.

The Origins of the Detroit Lions Logo

The Detroit Lions franchise was established in 1930 as the Portsmouth Spartans before relocating to Detroit in 1934. The early logos and branding were modest compared to today's standards, primarily featuring text-based designs or simple imagery. The original Lions logo was introduced in the 1950s, showcasing a blue lion in a leaping position, a symbol of strength, agility, and tenacity — qualities the franchise aimed to embody on the field.

This initial emblem was not just a mascot representation but also a strategic branding effort to connect the team with the city of Detroit, known as the "Motor City" with a rich industrial heritage. The lion,

often associated with courage and nobility, served as an apt metaphor for the team's competitive spirit.

Major Logo Redesigns and Their Significance

The 1960s to 1980s: Gradual Refinements

During the 1960s, the Detroit Lions logo saw subtle refinements rather than drastic overhauls. The design maintained the leaping lion but incorporated sharper lines and more dynamic postures, aligning with the evolving graphic design trends of the era. This period emphasized clarity and simplicity, which helped in merchandising and creating a consistent visual identity.

In the 1980s, the logo took on a slightly more stylized form. The lion was elongated, and its mane and tail were rendered with more detail, giving it a sleek and aggressive look. This era marked the beginning of the logo being featured prominently on helmets, uniforms, and fan merchandise, cementing its role as a central branding element.

The 2009 Redesign: Modernization and Brand Cohesion

One of the most significant updates in the Detroit Lions logo history occurred in 2009. This redesign was part of a broader brand refresh aimed at modernizing the team's image and appealing to a new generation of fans. The lion's silhouette became more angular and muscular, reflecting a stronger and more aggressive persona.

Key features of the 2009 logo update included:

- Sharper edges on the lion's body and mane, enhancing the sense of motion and power.

- **Darker blue hues** replacing the lighter shades, creating a bolder and more contemporary look.
- **Removal of additional text** to focus solely on the lion icon, improving logo versatility across digital platforms.

This redesign successfully balanced tradition and innovation, preserving the core elements of the logo while adapting to the demands of modern sports branding.

Symbolism and Design Elements in the Detroit Lions Logo

The Detroit Lions logo is rich in symbolism, which contributes to its lasting appeal. The lion itself is a universal emblem of strength, leadership, and courage. In the context of the NFL, it signifies the ferocity and competitive nature of the team. The leaping pose conveys motion and agility, attributes essential for success in football.

The selection of the color blue is also significant. Blue represents loyalty, confidence, and trustworthiness—qualities that the team and its fan base strive to embody. Over the decades, the specific shade of blue has shifted from lighter to darker tones, reflecting changing aesthetic preferences and marketing strategies.

Typography, while not always part of the official logo, has also played a role in the overall branding of the Detroit Lions. The team's font choices for uniforms and promotional materials typically complement the emblem's bold and dynamic style.

Comparisons with Other NFL Logos

When compared to other NFL team logos, the Detroit Lions logo stands out for its combination of

simplicity and symbolic depth. While some teams incorporate complex heraldic symbols or intricate designs, the Lions have maintained a relatively minimalist approach centered around the lion figure.

This minimalism has advantages:

- **Ease of recognition:** The distinct leaping lion silhouette is instantly recognizable, even at smaller sizes.
- **Brand consistency:** The logo's straightforward design allows for seamless integration across various media, from merchandise to digital platforms.
- **Timeless appeal:** By avoiding overly trendy elements, the logo remains relevant across different eras.

However, the logo's simplicity has also faced criticism for lacking uniqueness compared to more elaborate NFL emblems. Some fans and analysts have suggested that the franchise could explore more creative variations to enhance distinctiveness.

The Logo's Role in Fan Engagement and Merchandise

The Detroit Lions logo serves as a critical touchpoint for fan engagement. It appears prominently on team jerseys, helmets, hats, and collectibles. Over the years, the logo's evolution has coincided with shifts in merchandise strategies aimed at increasing fan loyalty and revenue.

The 2009 update, in particular, revitalized merchandise sales by offering a fresh yet familiar icon for fans to rally behind. The modernized lion allowed for a broader range of product designs, from classic apparel to contemporary streetwear collaborations.

Additionally, the logo has been incorporated into digital marketing campaigns, social media content, and stadium branding. Its adaptability to various formats and sizes ensures that it remains a cohesive element of the team's identity across all touchpoints.

Future Prospects and Potential Changes

As the NFL and sports branding continue to evolve, the Detroit Lions logo may undergo further refinements. Trends such as dynamic logos that change with game situations, augmented reality integrations, and enhanced digital presence could influence future iterations.

Moreover, ongoing dialogue with the fan community and corporate sponsors often drives branding decisions. Maintaining a balance between honoring tradition and embracing innovation will likely remain a guiding principle for any logo updates.

In summary, the Detroit Lions logo history reveals a thoughtful progression of design choices that mirror the team's growth and ambitions. Its enduring symbolism, strategic refinements, and role in fan culture underscore the logo's significance beyond mere aesthetics. As the franchise moves forward, the emblem will continue to be a powerful visual representation of Detroit's football legacy.

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detroit lions logo history: The Detroit Lions Thomas K. Adamson, 2023-08-01 Did you know that the Detroit Lions have played a home game every Thanksgiving for decades? This hi-lo title introduces reluctant readers to this tradition and more. Each spread is filled with action-packed images with engaging, leveled text that explores the team's history, players, and traditions. Special features map the team's stadium, highlight notable players, and show off top achievements!

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imprint of Abdo Publishing, a division of ABDO.

detroit lions logo history: *Timeline of America* Floyd Orr, 2006 Godzilla Stuffed into a Briefcase Columbus takes a vacation to The Bahamas, and discovers the area to be a fun place. He tells all his other adventurous friends about it, and they decide they all need vacations, too. Soon everybody in The Old Country is loading up enough beer to make the trip and sailing to The Bahamas. Hysterical events have surprised us, inventions have made us more comfortable, and recreational pursuits have all but dominated our lives. The story of America is told in a pair of Jekyll & Hyde Timelines. You will meet the good doctor inside. His mean, ugly brother will arrive in 2008. This is a lot more than a pop culture trivia book, although no simpler phrase describes it. Ten timelines tell the story of America's development from the arrival of Columbus to the homeruns of Barry Bonds and the movie release of The Da Vinci Code. The story is separated into ten topics: events, comforts, cars, toys, movies, television, music, nerds, sports, and gossip. Like any competent trivia book, there is a test at the end, but this tale is about the quest, not the grail. This is a capsule history of the things that have defined us, and Godzilla doesn't like being so tightly restrained.

detroit lions logo history: **Detroit Lions** Matt Tustison, 2013-08-01 Get your football fanatic readers into the action. Inside the NFL uses chronological narratives to tell the beginnings of the Detroit Lions, relate the greatest and lowest moments of the team, introduce the best players and coaches, and share other fun facts that help round out Lions' history. Mini-biographies, sidebars, fun facts, fantastic quotes, and full-color, action-packed photographs will bring the NFL to your library.

detroit lions logo history: *The Chicago Bears* Thomas K. Adamson, 2023-08-01 The Chicago Bears have dedicated fans who will "bear down" through thick and thin! In this title, young readers will learn about the fans, history, players, and traditions of this popular football team through leveled text and action-packed images. Special features help reinforce the main text by mapping the team's stadium, highlighting major accomplishments, and more. The book concludes with a two-page spread of Bears records, historic events, and more!

detroit lions logo history: **The Occasionally Accurate Annals of Football** Dan Patrick, Joel H. Cohen, 2023-09-05 Celebrated sports commentator Dan Patrick and comedy writer Joel H. Cohen team up with some of America's greatest* comedy writers to tell you everything and nothing about America's sport!** "greatest" is actually just a bad type-o for "mediocre" **No, not darts, we mean pro football. (book on professional darts coming never) Did you know . . . Tom Brady is a very good quarterback. (True, but only according to statistics and accomplishments.) The formation of the NFL took place in an auto dealership. The founders started an institution and also were convinced to buy rust-proofing for it. (Half true.) The Carolina Panthers originated as a book club but turned to football when they couldn't agree on which John Grisham novel to read. (Maybe true. Research isn't our thing.) The Occasionally Accurate Annals of Football is a love letter to America's favorite game, full of highlights, history, great plays and players, scandals, Super Bowls, and a series of lies, idiotic theories, baseless conspiracies, a diet that may kill you and, of course, a poorly-written haiku. The book takes the credibility Dan Patrick has built up over a stellar broadcast career (ESPN, NBC Sports, something called "Peacock") and risks it all with these falsehoods, half-truths, and even some quarter-truths. This parade of inanity is co-written by Joel H. Cohen (3 Emmys, several cavities due to poor flossing) and includes contributions from certifiably hilarious people, such as: Andy Richter (Late Night with Conan O'Brien) Brian Kelley (The Simpsons, Saturday Night Live) Chuck Tatham (Modern Family, Arrested Development, How I Met Your Mother) Mike Price (The Simpsons, F is for Family) Donick Cary (Silicon Valley, New Girl) Christine Nangle (Inside Amy Schumer, Saturday Night Live) Broti Gupta (The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Simpsons) Rob Cohen (Saturday Night Live, Big Bang Theory) Illustrated in two colors (black and white are colors, right?) The Occasionally Accurate Annals of Football informs (a little), entertains (a lot), and is the perfect gift to taunt the Jets fans in your life.

detroit lions logo history: *Detroit Lions*, The Mark Stewart, 2012-07-01 Thanksgiving is known for three things: turkey, family, and football. Did you know the Detroit Lions have hosted a Thanksgiving Day football game since 1934? That's over 70 years! "The Detroit Lions" by Mark

Stewart offers young fans a look into one of the best defensive teams in the NFL while including fun facts, team spotlights such as Calvin Johnson and Bobby Layne, and pictures of Lions memorabilia. Have a young fan who likes to argue sports? Don't miss the "Great Debates" section where readers get insight into some of the greatest debates surrounding the Broncos and professional football! Team spirit is that deep passion shared by the players and fans when they wear the same colors, watch the same scoreboard, and cheer the same triumphs. This popular series has been completely revised and updated for the Fall 2012 release. Book updates include new team information, records, photos, and timelines as well as new features like GREAT DEBATES and GLORY DAYS. Once you finish the book, you can go to the OVERTIME WEBSITE where each football team has its very own webpage to accompany the reading material. This site will be updated throughout the season and postseason with kid-friendly news about their favorite football teams - the perfect source for up-to-date statistics and player information for young sports fans.

detroit lions logo history: The Moral Background Gabriel Abend, 2016-05-31 In recent years, many disciplines have become interested in the scientific study of morality. However, a conceptual framework for this work is still lacking. In *The Moral Background*, Gabriel Abend develops just such a framework and uses it to investigate the history of business ethics in the United States from the 1850s to the 1930s. According to Abend, morality consists of three levels: moral and immoral behavior, or the behavioral level; moral understandings and norms, or the normative level; and the moral background, which includes what moral concepts exist in a society, what moral methods can be used, what reasons can be given, and what objects can be morally evaluated at all. This background underlies the behavioral and normative levels; it supports, facilitates, and enables them. Through this perspective, Abend historically examines the work of numerous business ethicists and organizations—such as Protestant ministers, business associations, and business schools—and identifies two types of moral background. *Standards of Practice* is characterized by its scientific worldview, moral relativism, and emphasis on individuals' actions and decisions. The *Christian Merchant* type is characterized by its Christian worldview, moral objectivism, and conception of a person's life as a unity. *The Moral Background* offers both an original account of the history of business ethics and a novel framework for understanding and investigating morality in general.

detroit lions logo history: If These Walls Could Talk: Detroit Lions Lomas Brown, Mike Isenberg, 2016-10 A closer look at the great moments and the lowlights from one of the NFL's most historic teams Written by Lomas Brown, the former Detroit Lions offensive tackle who paved the way for Barry Sanders, and Mike Isenberg, this work is an insider's account of the last 20 years of the team's history. A behind-the-scenes look at the era, Brown shares stories about coaches from Wayne Fontes to Jim Caldwell and stars including Barry Sanders, Calvin Johnson, Matthew Stafford, Ndamukong Suh, and more. This book covers all of the successes and failures, elation and embarrassment of recent Lions history, making it essential reading for any fan.

detroit lions logo history: The Great Book of Detroit Sports Lists Mike Stone, Art Regner, 2008-12-16 Sports talk in America has evolved from small-time barroom banter into a major media smorgasbord that runs 24/7 on TV and radio. With hundreds of billions of dollars generated annually by pro and college teams in major markets nationwide, sports fans across the country are more dedicated than ever to their teams. And when it comes to sports talk -- especially all-sports radio -- it's all about entertainment, information, prognostication, analysis, rankings, and endless discussion. Prominent sports-media figures in each of the three target cities -- Cleveland, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. -- engage in this phenomenon with a compilation of sports lists sure to delight as well as stir up debate within these already-buzzing sports communities. List topics include: What were the most lopsided trades in local sports history? Who were the most overrated athletes to play in our town? What local athlete had the best appearance in TV or film? What was the most heartbreaking loss in local sports history? What was the greatest single play in local sports history? Who are our team's most hated rivals? Plus dozens of guest lists contributed by famous local sports and entertainment celebrities. Not only does Detroit host major pro sports teams -- the Lions (NFL),

the Red Wings (NHL), the Tigers (MLB), and the Pistons (NBA) -- the area also includes prominent college sports programs such as the University of Michigan. Detroit's fans are some of the most educated and fanatical in the country, thanks to the work of long-time commentators Mike Stone and Art Regner.

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detroit lions logo history: History of the NFL First 100 Year's You Sure Started Somethin' R.D. Griffith, 2021-12-16 Are you searching for a book about American Football that has it all? R. D. Griffith will take you on a comprehensive drive through the history and highlights of American Football, its salient details, from its inception at the turn of the century to its centralized embodiment now in the modern era, the NFL. He will share with you the challenges the game faced through the Great Depression and two World Wars, including the spicy anecdotes of the people comprising the great game of American Football throughout the years.

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detroit lions logo history: NFL Draft ,

detroit lions logo history: The Most Memorable Games in Patriots History Jim Baker, Bernard M. Corbett, 2012-08-07 Tom Brady marching the team upfield in the final minute of the 2001 Super Bowl. Troy Brown playing offense, defense, and special teams. The Tuck Rule. A rogue groundskeeper plowing a path for kicker John Smith at the end of a scoreless, snowy game. Gino

Cappelletti setting the AFL record for points in a game against the Houston Oilers. These are the moments Patriots fans love to remember, now retold by the players who lived them. Once a top team in the AFL in the 1960s, the Patriots have returned to glory as one of the NFL's best franchises during the past decade, and enthusiasm for them has never been higher. Sportswriters Jim Baker and Bernard M. Corbett relive the evolution of the team, getting war stories from players like Cappelletti, John Hannah, and Steve Grogan. Moving through the team's biggest games, they put a fresh spin on the stories all Pats fans love, with detail and color from the players who were there, on the field, making history. The Most Memorable Games in Patriots History is a perfect gift for the serious fan-not just a collectible, but the kind of book you can hunker down and enjoy.

detroit lions logo history: When Lions Were Kings Richard Bak, 2020-06-10 An in-depth look at one of the most storied dynasties in Detroit sports history. During the 1950s, the Detroit Lions were one of the most glamorous and successful teams in the National Football League, winning championships in 1952, 1953, and 1957, and regularly playing before packed houses at Briggs Stadium. In *When Lions Were Kings: The Detroit Lions and the Fabulous Fifties*, journalist and sports historian Richard Bak blends a deeply researched and richly written narrative with many rare color images from the decade, re-creating a time when the Motor City and its gridiron heroes were riding high in the saddle. Representing a city at its postwar peak of population and influence, coach Raymond Buddy Parker and such players as Les Bingaman, Bob Hunchy Hoernschemeyer, Yale Lary, Joe Schmidt, Jack Christiansen, Jim Doran, Lou Creekmur, and Leon Hart helped sell the game to a country discovering the joys of watching televised football on Sunday afternoons and Thanksgiving Day. Quarterback Bobby Layne and halfback Doak Walker were celebrity athletes during this golden age of pro football—a decade when the game first started to replace its slower-paced cousin, baseball, as the national pastime. While the quietly modest Walker was a darling of Madison Avenue advertisers, the swaggering Layne became the first NFL player ever to grace the cover of *Time* magazine. Along with detailed profiles of the players, coaches, and games that defined the Lions' only dynastic era, Bak explores such varied topics as the team's languid approach to desegregation, the wild popularity of bubble gum trading cards, and the staggering physical cost players of the period have suffered in retirement. *When Lions Were Kings* is a lively portrait of the golden age of professional football in Detroit that will delight younger fans and inform die-hard followers of one of the NFL's oldest franchises.

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