

AMHERST PUBLIC SCHOOLS
6th GRADE ELEMENTS OF QUALITY WRITING

	FOCUS	STRUCTURE	ELABORATION	STYLE	CONVENTIONS
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Curriculum Units:	<p>Establishes the angle from which to convey an idea in writing by selecting, choosing, and narrowing the lens through which the writer and reader will look.</p> <p><i>* For what purpose am I writing?</i></p> <p><i>* What am I going to convey to my audience and how will I do that?</i></p>	<p>Decides on the best overall form for the particular writing being generated, and maintains awareness of those features before, during, and after the writing.</p> <p><i>* In what mode should I write this composition?</i></p> <p><i>* What would be the best way to organize my ideas?</i></p>	<p>Gives life to the writing by adding specifics that flesh out ideas through sensory language, details about the internal or external world. Revealing relationships between things can reveal inner thoughts and ideas.</p> <p><i>* How can I elaborate on the ideas in my writing?</i></p> <p><i>* What kind of details will add to my writing and make it more interesting, clear, and complete?</i></p>	<p>Creates an expression of thoughts, ideas, or feelings, by blending and incorporating personal and world knowledge, authors craft, linguistic awareness, and voice.</p> <p><i>* Who is my audience and how can I communicate with them in this written piece?</i></p> <p><i>* Will the reader understand my thoughts and feelings?</i></p>	<p>Uses mechanics and knowledge of learned conventions in order to create a product that is legible, and understandable to both the author and audience.</p> <p><i>* Does my writing show good control of language and written conventions?</i></p> <p><i>* Is my writing legible and neat so the reader can easily read it?</i></p>
<p>UNIT 1:</p> <p>Launching Writing Workshop</p> <p>Personal Essay</p> <p>Memoir</p> <p>Maintains a writer's attitude towards work.</p>	<p>Reads and analyzes personal essays/memoir to discover how authors weave together: -general information -details, facts, quotes -interesting anecdotes - images</p> <p>Maintains use of Writer's Notebook for recording and generating personal life stories, issues or concerns: -generates writing topics that point to a personal theme -records beliefs, hopes, fears, and important or personal</p>	<p>Analyzes organizational formats of published texts.</p> <p>Experiments with crafting strong leads and compelling endings that meet personal needs, demonstrate creativity, and reveal the significance of the story.</p> <p>Selects a text structure that suits the writing: -logical/sequential -compare/contrast -then/now -circle back to beginning</p>	<p>Develops setting, character, and plot.</p> <p>Fills in memory gaps with information that stays true to the story.</p> <p>Provides partial information so the reader can make inferences.</p> <p>Expands writing by using: -descriptive language -step by step account -dialogue -comparisons</p>	<p>Uses first person narrative. Conveys tone/mood: reflective, sad, joyful, funny. Shares a perspective opposite from the one primarily being taken: -the negative in the positive -the joys within the sadness -the unfairness behind something enjoyed Reflects on event, concern, relationships, growth:</p>	<p>Uses consistent tense throughout.</p> <p>Uses an Editing Checklist and appropriate editing marks to guide proofreading and make corrections.</p> <p>Revises to maintain focus and clarity during and after composing.</p> <p>Uses paragraphs to separate ideas or scenes.</p>

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<p>Follows routines for Writing Workshop.</p> <p>Produces baseline writing for assessment.</p> <p>Continues use of Writer’s Notebook.</p> <p>Maintains writing materials in an organized manner.</p>	<p>interests/concerns about life -adds meaningful ideas sparked from texts.</p> <p>Determines focus: -finds slant or angle for the writing -decides on theme or main idea for writing -asks <i>What is important about this?</i> -narrows the focus to convey a significant idea through one life experience or episode.</p>	<p>Reflects on focus or thesis statement and bulleted points making sure that they: -are parallel in ideas -have precise wording -do not reiterate the same point with different words</p> <p>Revises outline if necessary.</p> <p>Experiments with and decides on an effective introduction that points to the purpose of the piece: -question -dialogue -thought -description -action</p> <p>Organizes contents by components: -lead -thesis statement -paragraph with topic sentence -supporting information including story that supports the topic sentence, and a discussion of it as evidence -second paragraph with topic sentence and supporting evidence -conclusion that repeats the thesis and adds a new spin</p>	<p>-revealing inner thoughts of characters or narrator Uses tight, believable dialogue that is pertinent to story.</p> <p>Digs deeper for personal insights: -lets reader know internal thoughts and feelings -clearly expresses the important aspect of the experience</p> <p>Crafts writing for greater effect and coherence by incorporating: -snapshots, vignettes or small moments connected by personal reflection or meaning -underlying theme with small moments, snapshots, or vignettes to exemplify it.</p> <p>Reveals the perspective opposite from the one primarily being taken.</p>	<p>-Internal Reflection; reveals internal thoughts -External Description; uses sensory detail in a step by step manner to show rather than tell importance of event</p> <p>Selects precise nouns, specific adjectives, and accurate verbs that help convey an idea or create a detailed image.</p> <p>Intentionally varies sentence structures for effect.</p> <p>Deletes redundant or weak words.</p> <p>Reveals inner thoughts allowing reader to empathize with the character or message.</p> <p>Sustains coherence throughout the writing</p>	<p>Maintains verb-tense agreement.</p> <p>Eliminates run-ons and fragments.</p> <p>Understands how to construct a sentence in order to edit for grammar: -uses complete subject and predicate -combines sentences by expanding with modifiers -uses conjunctions to make compound sentences</p> <p>Punctuates sentences and dialogue correctly: -commas for dialogue items in a series, and to separate words in parenthetical phrases -open and closed quotations for dialogue</p> <p>Corrects misspelled words.</p> <p>Refers to resources for spelling and locating synonyms when needed.</p> <p>Demonstrates legibility and neatness.</p>

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		<p>Incorporates transition words to denote passing of time or connection between events: <i>-before, after, during</i> <i>-meanwhile, until</i> <i>-finally</i></p> <p>Decides on focus for the conclusion: <i>This is important because...</i></p>			
<p>UNIT 2:</p> <p>Fictional Narrative</p> <p>Short Story</p> <p>Myth</p>	<p>Analyzes short narrative text: -identifies elements and methods for crafting text, -reads to examine purpose and experiment with techniques</p> <p>Explores and examines elements in writing a short story: -credible and engaging characters -size and scope of conflicts -establishing and resolving conflicts -plot sequence -movement through time -use of language</p> <p>Generates ideas for fiction based on familiar stories, previously read stories, or ideas from personal life.</p>	<p>Titles piece creatively: -alludes to the meaning of the narration -alludes to dual meaning -piques reader's interest</p> <p>Determines lead that will best set up the story focus.</p> <p>Creates a lead that places the character in the setting engaged in an action that is close to the heart of the story.</p> <p>Develops a plot line or story mountain with a series of episodes that reveal the character's problem, struggle, intensified opposition, achievement of goal, and reflection of gained awareness.</p>	<p>Elaborates on the important parts of the story.</p> <p>Identifies character through: -name, age, physical characteristics, -likes and dislikes, -strengths and weaknesses, -qualities, -friends and foes, -relationships, -fears and worries, -favorite objects or memories</p> <p>Uses: -internal thought -external descriptions</p> <p>Deliberately uses dialogue to allow the reader to learn about the characters' traits, intentions, feelings or attitudes.</p>	<p>Decides on the point of view from which to write (1st/3rd person) and maintains that view throughout the piece.</p> <p>Writes in past or present tense.</p> <p>Draws the reader in through use of literary device such as: -exaggeration -personification -foreshadowing</p> <p>Incorporates a variety of sentence types and styles.</p> <p>Extends vocabulary for clarity and tension.</p> <p>Chooses adjectives to show feelings, quantity, and quality.</p>	<p>Checks and confirms spelling using outside sources such as dictionary or thesaurus.</p> <p>Uses new paragraphs for each new speaker, and punctuates correctly.</p> <p>Uses new paragraph for scene change.</p> <p>Avoids confusing pronouns by using correct referents.</p> <p>Reflects on writing in order to make future improvements.</p> <p>Edits out qualifiers or asides.</p> <p>Demonstrates legibility and neatness.</p>

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	<p>Identifies a character, place, object, or event for focus of writing.</p> <p>Narrows the time frame and determines a specific focus according to intention, audience interest, or importance of topic or theme.</p> <p>Creates believable characters that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have a specific motivation -have strengths and weaknesses -experience obstacles -interact with other characters -engage in events that lead to a problem or conflict which is resolved <p>Defines conflict from the perspective of the main character:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -imagines potential conflicts by posing <i>What if...?</i> questions -identifies conflict that is out of the control of the main character but which is resolvable <p>Devises an appropriate setting and timeframe.</p> <p>Conjures explanations for myths.</p>	<p>Keeps text cohesive through use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -phrases denoting sequence -conjunctions <p>Experiments with and decides on satisfying endings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lesson/moral -irony, humor -explanation or reason <p>Uses and follows a story pattern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Quest: character achieves something and becomes hero -Choice: character faces important decision at end -Reversal: character has change of feeling at end -Understanding: clues lead to understanding or truth at end 	<p>Reveals the perspectives of main and minor characters using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strong verbs, -descriptive adjectives, and adverbs -similes -descriptions of what the character sees <p>Creates scenes that reveal character traits and motives.</p> <p>Establishes the relationship between characters and setting.</p> <p>Implies information that allows the reader to fill in details or infer.</p> <p>Includes recurring detail at beginning, middle, and end to build interest, suspense or cohesion.</p> <p>Experiments with creating suspense by selectively withholding information to the reader.</p> <p>Incorporates super-power or magical elements depending on sub-genre.</p>	<p>Creates mood through use of setting and language.</p> <p>Determines when to slow time or speed it up.</p> <p>Reviews and utilizes varied sentence structures to provide changes in mood and/or pace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -simple -compound -complex <p>Includes element of suspense or humor.</p> <p>Determines where to use summary as told by narrator, and where to use a story scene that contains action and dialogue.</p> <p>Creates a fast moving plot keeping the reader involved and interested.</p>	
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<p>UNIT 3:</p> <p>Expository</p> <p>Essay</p> <p>Feature Article</p>	<p>Reads critically from a wide variety of informational texts to identify and define the elements of the expository essay and/or feature article: purpose, topic, structure.</p> <p>Analyzes expository craft techniques for: -title, topic, topic sentences/introduction -organization and linking of information and ideas -engaging audience</p> <p>Generates, explores and selects topic that may be familiar, interesting or new.</p> <p>Uses note taking strategies to create a focus.</p> <p>Finds purpose for writing: -expresses unique understanding of topic -shares awareness of a ‘Big Idea’</p> <p>Takes a stance on a specific idea, creates a thesis and substantiates it with text-based evidence.</p> <p>Determines important and interesting information to be included.</p>	<p>Outlines essay using thesis for introduction, main ideas, supporting detail, and conclusion.</p> <p>Experiments with writing introduction/lead: -presents thesis to be discussed so the reader knows what to expect -starts with a scene that introduces the reader to the subject and sets the stage for the focus -provides the reader with a broad idea of the topic</p> <p>Delineates distinctly different main ideas for separate paragraphs.</p> <p>Creates topic sentences and identifies relevant details to be developed.</p> <p>Uses transitions at the beginning and/or end of paragraphs to lead the reader from one point to the next.</p> <p>Incorporates a range of thinking words: <i>if, so, then, because, since, therefore.</i></p>	<p>Interprets information from reading and conveys it in written form.</p> <p>Provides specific evidence to support assertion.</p> <p>Selects important and relevant information from a variety of sources and explains connections and relationships to main ideas.</p> <p>Provides additional facts and information to emphasize important points.</p> <p>Establishes the relationship between part and whole.</p> <p>Extends body of text with: -quotes, -facts, statistics -anecdotes -evidence to support ideas</p> <p>Sets forth facts and or ideas point by point to explain or clarify.</p> <p>Uses organizing structures to develop and explain: -description -compare/contrast -cause/effect -chronological sequence</p>	<p>Uses objective language to conceal personal bias.</p> <p>Selects precise or technical vocabulary to demonstrate knowledge of topic.</p> <p>Reveals time period through vocabulary, cultural and historical elements.</p> <p>Emphasizes an important point by including sentences that use the repetition of words, phrases or sentence beginnings.</p> <p>Includes conjunctions: -too, also, every -however, although, on the other hand</p> <p>Fleshes out both sides of the argument: -raises the opposing argument and dismantles or refutes it</p> <p>Leaves the reader with a specific idea, thought, or feeling.</p> <p>Maintains cohesion of ideas.</p>	<p>Rereads and revises while writing.</p> <p>Uses rubric to aid editing process.</p> <p>Edits to make sure that topic sentences and supporting details correspond.</p> <p>Indicates references by title and author.</p> <p>Modifies and restructures to clarify and achieve precise meaning and cohesive text.</p> <p>Begins to use semi-colon to adhere related sentences.</p>
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	<p>Expresses position as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - factual statement; something as true or false, - value statement; something that has worth or value, - consequence statement; points out the results of decisions and actions -autobiographical statement: from writer's personal experiences, - policy statement; claiming that something should not happen. 	<p>Experiments with and writes various endings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -concise summary that reiterates topic -fact, quote, question -compelling ending that lingers with the reader 	<p>Uses structure of paragraphs to aid in adding detail or elaborating:</p> <p><i>Opinion Paragraph:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strongest point at the start or near the end of the paragraph -includes facts, observations, and data from various sources -expresses opinion, to persuade reader to adopt reasoning; <p><i>Informative Paragraph:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - share information about topic using similes, metaphors, and descriptions <p>Expands conclusions in order to emphasize the main focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -surprising or unusual fact -brief memorable scene -summary -a question that lingers with the reader 		
<p>UNIT 4:</p> <p>Expository/ Information</p> <p>Research</p>	<p>Understands and follows the steps involved in research.</p> <p>Understands the overview and details of the assignment.</p> <p>Defines the question, or topic for focus of study.</p>	<p>Analyzes, organizes and manipulates information or data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -takes notes on note cards or puts information in outline form -organizes ideas into categories, uses charts to assist -answers questions pertaining to research focus 	<p>Clearly supports topic with main ideas and supporting detail with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -facts -specific details -examples -anecdotes -data or statistics -quotes 	<p>Adds personal voice by experimenting with creating a closer or more intimate focus on a topic.</p> <p>Considers using a variety of genre styles and makes decisions about the best genre to use for particular points being made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -poem -transcript 	<p>Revises by clearing up confusions or doubts in the mind of the reader.</p> <p>Uses separate paragraphs for each main idea.</p> <p>Re-orders words, phrases, clauses, paragraphs and sections to clarify and achieve precise meaning.</p>

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	<p>Identifies supporting details and seeks further information and clarity.</p> <p>Decides which information is important and significant, which is interesting and provides specific detail, and which is superfluous.</p>	<p>Experiments with and creates an interesting conclusion to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sum up the research -remind the reader of an important big idea 			
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<p>UNIT 5:</p> <p>Expository</p> <p>Persuasive Essay/ Editorial</p>	<p>Reads, analyzes and understands the parts of the persuasive essay.</p> <p>Considers issues and generates questions that have personal meaning.</p> <p>Considers topics and issues that involve others in the world and have powerful implications for fostering personal growth as a world citizen.</p> <p>Determines the position and argument that will be used.</p> <p>Decides how to effectively support opinion or stance with prior knowledge and evidence from print and/or non-print sources.</p>	<p>Outlines the argument.</p> <p>Organizes information according to the topic and audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the information and ideas that will be most effective for a particular audience -the parts that will be most or least convincing <p>Understands the structural framework and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -introduction -general background information -position statement -arguments -counterarguments -conclusion <p>Presents arguments logically.</p> <p>Provides argument and evidence for topic in body.</p>	<p>Provides a logical argument.</p> <p>Builds on argument by clearly stating or showing the relationship between the position taken and the argument.</p> <p>Supports argument with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -personal experience -expert advice -facts, figures, statistics -anecdote to prove a point <p>Poses questions and provides answers.</p> <p>States possibilities and possible consequences.</p> <p>Addresses the opposing viewpoint by either including contradictory evidence, or attempting to answer objections to the argument.</p>	<p>Gains a sense of involvement on the part of the reader.</p> <p>Appeals to the audience's sense of reason and not just emotion.</p> <p>Utilizes inclusive language assuming the reader is in agreement with author.</p> <p>Reveals strong feelings about the topic.</p> <p>Incorporates personal opinions or bias to influence the reader.</p> <p>Explains important terms to the reader.</p> <p>Avoids clichés.</p>	<p>Uses rubric to evaluate work for content and conventions.</p> <p>Determines when to use exclamation mark, dash, ellipsis.</p> <p>Uses comparative and superlative forms correctly.</p> <p>Edits to ensure argument is clear, convincing, and well supported.</p>
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	<p>Persuades others through oral argument or debate and reflects on personal opinion as well as that of others in order to expand understanding of the issue.</p> <p>Develops and clarifies an effective opinion statement about topic in writing.</p> <p>Identifies three reasons that support the opinion and explain viewpoint.</p> <p>Identifies an opposing argument and prepares to address or counter it.</p>	<p>Places best reason first or last for emphasis.</p> <p>Includes topic sentence and relevant supporting details in each paragraph.</p> <p>Utilizes transition words and phrases to bridge two or more ideas: <i>-In the same way...</i> <i>-Likewise...</i></p> <p>Utilizes signal words to denote: -time; since then, recently -convince; it is essential -provide evidence; for example, according to, in fact -counter argument; however, on the other hand</p> <p>Creates title that gives broad idea about topic.</p> <p>Ends with concise summary that: -reiterates argument -makes a call to action</p>	<p>Makes use of repeated word(s) or phrase(s) to emphasize a point.</p> <p>Generates comparisons for the purpose of persuading others.</p> <p>Uses transition words to show the relationship between the position and the argument: <i>-another reason</i> <i>-if...then...</i> <i>-When..., it causes...</i> <i>-It is a problem when..., because...</i> <i>-One result of...is...</i> <i>-An example of the problem...</i> <i>-Since...</i></p>	<p>Communicates passion by using persuasive techniques including: -strong introduction -questions -appealing to emotion -comparison -hypothetical situations -anecdotes, facts, statistics -strong language -attacking the opposing view</p> <p>Provides facts without distortion.</p> <p>Uses writing to persuade others, and calls reader to take specific action.</p> <p>Tackles and reflects on ideas and issues that reveal personal thoughts about and concerns for others in the world: -political -social -environmental</p>	
<p>UNIT 6: Poetry</p>	<p>Reads from a variety of poets, themes, and poetic forms.</p> <p>Identifies poetic techniques and analyzes content.</p>	<p>Experiments with different poetic forms: -uses models -innovates on poems</p> <p>Groups lines for sound and/or meaning.</p>	<p>Represents images by adding significant sensory detail.</p>	<p>Looks to end the poem with strongest or most memorable line.</p> <p>Chooses words that trigger a strong emotional response.</p>	<p>Revises to clarify confusing lines.</p> <p>Uses punctuation and white space to separate ideas, images, or emphasize a point.</p>

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	<p>Explores the genre by reading widely, listening to, rehearsing, performing and analyzing for meaning.</p> <p>Keenly observes an object or event from a new perspective in order to generate ideas.</p> <p>Shares an idea, emotion, or sense of wonder using language as an art form.</p> <p>Determines the big idea for the poem by asking: <i>What am I trying to say about this subject?</i></p> <p>Selects subject, gathers thoughts and ideas.</p> <p>Chooses form for overall effect.</p>	<p>Varies line length.</p> <p>Uses meter or stressed and unstressed syllables to create rhythm.</p> <p>Narrows concepts and perceptions so they reflect an idea.</p>	<p>Manipulates words to achieve a desired effect.</p> <p>Uses figurative language and imagery to convey ideas: -simile -metaphor -personification</p> <p>Experiments with using well-chosen fragments to create a stream of consciousness effect.</p> <p>Narrows concepts and perceptions so they reflect an idea.</p> <p>Adds strong verbs, descriptive adjectives, and specific nouns.</p> <p>Creates drawings that reflect images.</p> <p>Connects inner emotions to external images to achieve metaphor.</p>	<p>Experiments with using words to connote meaning rather than being explicit.</p> <p>Experiments with words or phrases that repeat.</p> <p>Repeats sounds for effect: -alliteration -assonance -rhyming</p> <p>Experiments with deliberately breaking conventions or manipulates them to enhance meaning.</p> <p>Expresses ideas in uniquely personal manner.</p> <p>Breaks from convention in order to add sentence fragments.</p> <p>Adds visual element of shape for concrete poems or includes personal illustrations if desired.</p>	<p>Edits for spelling and precise language.</p> <p>Revises for precise meaning and clarity.</p> <p>Maintains one point of view or voice throughout.</p> <p>Defines broad terms and general opinion words so reader can visualize and understand.</p> <p>Edits for subject-verb agreement and tense.</p> <p>Rereads for fluency.</p> <p>Ensures consistency of pattern if one.</p>
<p>UNIT 7:</p> <p>Expository/ Writing About Reading</p> <p>Literary Essay</p>	<p>Understands the overview and details of the assignment or prompt.</p>	<p>Understands the structure of an essay and creates an organizational tool to process the text and respond effectively.</p>	<p>Includes: -title and author -main character -important or initiating action.</p>	<p>Identifies the author’s message and responds to it in relation to the focus of the writing.</p>	<p>Indents for paragraphs</p> <p>Uses legible cursive handwriting.</p> <p>Rewrites rambling sentences.</p>

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<p>Open Response</p> <p>Biographical Sketch</p>	<p>Uses comprehension strategies to make connections, infer, summarize, analyze, judge, and evaluate text.</p> <p>Reflects on the reading -<i>What is the subject?</i> -<i>What is the author saying?</i> -<i>What are my feelings?</i></p> <p>Creates a flow chart or other graphic organizer to aid development of ideas and emphasize most important events.</p> <p>Gathers and distills necessary information from text(s).</p> <p>Decides what is important to include: <i>What do I include to provide enough information and hold the reader's attention, without giving away the outcome?</i></p> <p>Reads in order to gain insight about the characters' or subjects' motive, growth, and relationships.</p> <p>Connects to world knowledge, geography, time period.</p>	<p>Crafts a thesis that includes the main idea and sets the foundation for the remainder of the paper.</p> <p>Organizes biography to include: -name, date of birth, and family history of subject -details about time & place -key events -details about subject's qualities -main achievements</p> <p>Selects appropriate text structure: -plot summary -compare/contrast -cause/effect -description -sequence</p> <p>Crafts a conclusion that avoids giving away the ending of the text.</p> <p>Uses linking words for chronological order: <i>meanwhile, during, until.</i></p>	<p>Reveals empathy and understanding for characters by taking their perspective.</p> <p>Provides specific examples from the text that support thesis and main ideas.</p> <p>Adds quotations and cites them.</p> <p>Elaborates on important events with the help of specific text structures in order to show relationships, effects, and reasoning.</p>		<p>Uses consistent verb tense agreement.</p>
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