

EDUCATORS GUIDE

THE SNOVY DAY













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The Snowy Day and Other Stories

Activities in this study guide connect to Common Core State Standards in Math, Performing Arts, Reading, Science, and Social Studies.



Educators, we invite you to share with us what you did in your classroom around this guide or the production! You can email **scoleman@portlandovations.org** or reach us via <u>Facebook</u> or <u>Twitter</u>.

We want to hear and see what great learning is happening in your classrooms.





ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The Snowy Day and Other Stories follows Peter and his friends as they explore a fresh snow fall, learn to whistle for the first time, and find a special treasure. Through winter, spring, summer and fall the friends romp and play, start snowball fights and make snow angels, and journey in space and under the sea, in a musical play about the childhood joys and challenges of growing up. Using shadow puppetry, Keats' treasured characters come to life in a humorous and fun adaptation of *Whistle for Willie, Goggles!*, A Letter to Amy, and The Snowy Day.



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

This production of *The Snowy Day and Other Stories* was created by Childsplay out of Tempe, Arizona. Founded in 1977, Childsplay is a nationally and internationally respected professional theatre company whose chosen audience is children. Childsplay is committed to its mission: "To create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love, and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future." Childspay is part of a growing group of professional theaters geared specifically toward young people, a genre known as Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA).

Learn more at <u>www.childsplayaz.org</u>.







Things to know before the performance

1. WHO IS EZRA JACK KEATS?

Ezra Jack Keats was born in 1916 to Polish immigrants in Brooklyn, New York. Even when he was very young, Ezra loved to draw and paint. He drew all over the kitchen table and on wood he found in the street. When he was 8 years old, Ezra was paid 25 cents to paint a sign for a local store. His father thought he might be a sign painter when he grew up, but Ezra was more interested in painting pictures. Ezra's dad died in 1935, the year he graduated from high school, and Ezra went to work painting murals for the Works Progress Administration. When Ezra went into the Army, in 1943, his artistic training was put to use designing camouflage patterns for uniforms and equipment. After the war ended in 1945. Ezra came back to New York to look for work. Since Ezra had faced antisemitism all his life, he knew he was more likely to be hired if his name sounded "more American." In 1947 he changed his name legally, from Jacob Ezra Katz to Ezra Jack Keats. In 1947 he spent six months in France, painting and traveling. When he returned, Ezra began working as a commercial artist and teaching classes in illustration. Ezra's work appeared in advertisements, national magazines and newspapers, and popular books. A publisher saw Ezra's work and asked him to start illustrating books for children. In 1962, Keats wrote and illustrated The Snowy Day. The Snowy Day featured a young African-American boy named Peter. Ezra had noticed that the main characters in the books he illustrated were always white. That didn't seem fair to other children, who deserved to see characters in books that looked like them. He decided that Peter would be the hero of his story because "he should have been there all along." For The Snowy Day, Ezra created beautiful collages with patterned wallpaper, fabric, stamps, ink, oilcloth and more. Over his career, Keats wrote 22 picture books and illustrated more than 85 books for children.

See Additional Resource on page 11.



Ezra Jack Keats, born Jacob Ezra Katz on March 11, 1916 in East New York, Brooklyn



Brooklyn, New York, 1960's





Things to know before the performance

2. HOW DID KEATS' CHILDHOOD INFLUENCE HIS CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

Many of the illustrations, events, and characters in Keats' books were influenced by his childhood experiences growing up in a big city. Ezra Jack Keats grew up in Brooklyn, New York. Brooklyn is south east of Manhattan, and the western most part of Long Island. In 1962, about 2.6 million people lived in Brooklyn and the population remains about the same today. In the 1960s, the population of people from Brooklyn consisted of people from many different ethnic, religious, and racial groups – the largest groups included Jewish-Americans, Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, and African-Americans. Today Brooklyn is home to many more ethnic groups including a large number people whose ancestors immigrated from the Caribbean, Pakistan, and China. There are many unique experiences about growing up in Brooklyn - most people take public transportation and live in apartment buildings. Because of the diversity of people different types of food and cultural events are available to everyone. Like Peter, children spend time out on the sidewalks playing with their friends and interacting with people of different ages and backgrounds.



Brooklyn, New York, 1960's Photo: Constance Hansen



Brooklyn, New York, 1960's





Things to know before the performance

3. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE DIVERSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

It is important for young people to see themselves represented in stories in books, on screen and onstage. There is much research that supports this claim – highlighting the value of seeing positive and diverse representations as supporting positive identity development. The campaign to rectify the overwhelmingly white publishing industry, specifically in books for young people, has gained movement in the last decade. In 2014, <u>We Need Diverse Books</u> was formed. This non-profit and a grassroots organization advocates for essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people. In 2015, Marley Dias, a then 11-year old African-American girl, launched the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign to bring awareness to how few books there were about black girls. In 2018, the Cooperative Children's Book Center in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison reported that out of the 3,312 books received from U.S. publishers 21% were written by authors of color. Meanwhile, stories about people of color represented about 28% of the books received. People of color make up about 40% of the United States population. Therefore, the authors and stories of the books published do represent the amount of diversity across the country in an equitable manner.

See Additional Resources on page 11.

*Data on books by and about people of color and from First/Native Nations published for children and teens compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. <u>https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp#USonly</u>

Definition of Diversity from We Need Diverse Books

We recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities*, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities.

*We subscribe to a broad definition of disability, which includes but is not limited to physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, chronic conditions, and mental illnesses (this may also include addiction). Furthermore, we subscribe to a social model of disability, which presents disability as created by barriers in the social environment, due to lack of equal access, stereotyping, and other forms of marginalization.



diversebooks.org





Things to know before the performance

4. HOW DO PEOPLE CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS AROUND THE WORLD?

The celebration of birthdays can be traced back to ancient societies in Persia (now the Middle East), Egypt, Greece, and Rome (land surrounding the Mediterrean Sea). Greeks began the tradition of putting candles on cakes. Prior to the Medieval Ages, Christians were told to refrain from celebrating birthdays as the tradition had pagan origins. That practice has been lifted in almost all types of Christianity. Many people who practice Islam do not celebrate birthdays. In Judaism, the 13th birthday has strong religious significance – young men have a bar mitzvah and young women have a bat mitzvah. Meanwhile, in Hispanic culture many young women celebrate their quinceañera (15th birthday) with a large party. There are also many different ways that people in different cultures celebrate birthdays. Americans typically have birthday cake, sing "Happy Birthday" and open presents. In China, the birthday person often eats a bowl of sau mein or longevity noodles (one long noodle). In Hungary, Italy, Brazil, and Argentina, the birthday person gets their ear pulled for every year they've been alive – sending good wishes for a long life. In Jamaica, you might get floured – meaning someone throws a fist full of flour in your face and in Mexico or Venezula you might get your face pushed into a birthday cake. In Australia and New Zealand, the birthday person eats "fairy bread," bread with butter and rainbow sprinkles in celebration of another year.

5. HOW DOES SHADOW PUPPETRY WORK?

Shadow puppetry is a form of theatre and storytelling that can be traced back to 100 BCE in parts of Central Asia -China and India. The art form spread and is a traditional form of performance across most of Central and Southern Asia. The art form works by shining light behind a translucent screen of fabric or paper. Then puppets (or humans) are placed between the light source and the screen thus blocking the light from hitting the screen where the object is. As the objects move, the audience watches the shadow on the screen from the other side. Shadow puppetry is the earliest form of a motion picture. Shadow puppets traditionally were made of paper, and then sometimes of leather. They often have intricate details, with moving parts and tiny cut outs that allow light to shine through. Shadow Plays in Asia traditionally retold folktales and other stories and were accompanied by music and singing. Shadow puppetry is still performed around the world today and like all art forms - continues to evolve. Examples of shadow puppetry in contemporary entertainment include Broadway's The Lion King, Disney's Bear in the Big Blue House, and the 2010 Karate Kid movie.



2009, photos by China Puppet and Shadow Art Society





PRE-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Providing context in preparation for the performance

NARRATIVE PANTOMINE

Read *The Snowy Day* out loud to the class. Then invite all the students to stand up next to their desk or in a space in the room where they aren't touching anyone or anything else. Retell the story having the students pretend to be Peter and move in their spot as Peter does. You might have them start by zipping up their snowsuit. Then, invite them to participate in Peter's actions – they can walk (in place) like Peter, look around like Peter, have the snowball "plop" on their head, etc. This is a great activity to use prior to a reading comprehension assessment.

For more information on the Narrative Pantomime strategy visit: https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/narrative-pantomime



Reading Standards: Key Ideas and Details 1 & 2, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10 Visual and Performing Arts Standards (Theatre): B1 Movement, B3 Improvisation

PARTS OF A THEATER

The Snowy Day and Other Stories will perform in Merrill Auditorium, Portland's largest performing arts theater. It was built in 1912, renovated in 1997, and can seat 1908 people. Share the Theatre Diagram (on page 14) with students so they can be familiar with the different parts of the space. Challenge students to name as many parts of the theater when they arrive at Merrill Auditorium.



Social Studies Standards: Civics and Government Visual and Performing Arts Standards (Theatre): A1 Terminology

STORY CIRCLE

Sitting in a circle, have the class tell a story going around the circle with each student sharing one sentence at a time. Hand out cards with sequencers – first, next, then, after that, finally – to help the story move along. Start by retelling *The Snowy Day* then have them improvise a new story taking place in another season, or retell stories the class has read together. Encourage students to pay close attention to subject-verb agreement, time, setting, and the characters that are introduced to help the make sense and have a clear beginning, middle and end. As the teacher you can record the story on the board to capture it in writing.



Anchor Standards for Writing: Text Types and Purposes 3





POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to reflect on students' experiences attending *The Snowy Day and Other Stories*. Feel free to modify the complexity of the question for your grade level.

- 1. Who was an important character in the story? How do you know?
- 2. What was a problem that Peter had? How was the problem resolved? Did anyone help him?
- 3. Where did the story take place? How many places did Peter visit during the story?
- 4. Which character was your favorite and why? Are you similar or different to that character? If you were a character in the play, who would you be? Why?
- 5. Share a moment from the play that made you laugh. What other funny bits do you remember?
- 6. At the end of the performance, the actors took some questions from the audience. What other questions did you want to ask?

PLAY OR BOOK?

Have students compare and contrast the story in the book *The Snowy Day* with the story they saw onstage. What was similar? What was different? How did they use shadow puppets to help tell the story? Using specific examples, have students explain, or write about, which version of the story they enjoyed more and why.



Anchor Standards for Reading: Key Ideas and Details 1, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7 Visual and Performing Arts Standards (Theatre): D1 Aesthetics and Criticism

THE IMPACT OF WEATHER

Use *The Snowy Day and Other Stories* to connect (or reconnect) with science units around weather. Students can observe and record the weather over a course of a week or more, and then examine any patterns they see. They can compare their observations to the weather represented onstage. Students can observe what clothing Peter wears in each of the seasons and share how the weather impacts their clothing choices and actions. Older students can explain why the images in *The Snowy Day* do not have any plants in bloom or discuss the amount of sunlight in the winter as opposed to another season.

See Additional Resources on page 11.



Next Generation Science Standards: K-ESS2-1, K-ESS3-2 (Weather and Climate), 1-ESS1-2 (Earth's Place in the Universe), 2-LS4-1 (Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems)





POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes

THE MUSIC OF A RAINSTORM

For this activity, invite students to sit or stand in a circle with the facilitator in the center so that everyone can see them. The facilitator will then start rubbing their hands together and will walk up to a student who will then start rubbing their hands together. The facilitator continues to walk around the circle and as they pass, the students will begin the motion as well, until everyone in the circle is rubbing their hands together. Once this is achieved, try a different action (snapping fingers, clapping hands, patting thighs, stomping feet). Change the speed or volume, have different students do different actions, create a rain symphony! listed below, or even try out different patterns and speeds. Reflect on how the different sounds, speeds, and volumes create the sense of different types of rainstorms. You can also create different patterns using one or many sounds.



Visual and Performing Arts Standards (Music): B1 Style/Genre, C1 Application of Creative Process, E5 Interpersonal Skills

MONEY AND MAIL

In *A Letter to Amy*, Peter writes a letter to his friend Amy inviting her to his birthday party. Connect this moment in the story with the math involved in mailing a letter. Older student can explain what coins they will need to buy a stamp for a letter, figure out how much it will cost to mail more than one letter, or how to use multiple stamps of different amounts to get to \$0.55. Younger students can count the number of footsteps in the pictures throughout *The Snowy Day* or talk about objects in relationship to each other (above, behind, next to) in the illustrations.



Common Core Math Standards: KCC.B, K.G.A, 1.NBT.B, 1.OA.A-C, 2.MD.C, 2.OA.A-C

SHADOW PLAY

Shadow puppets help to tell the story throughout *The Snowy Day and Other Stories*. Have students draw/ trace and cut out some of the characters from the stories and create their own shadow plays. This can be down with a bright lamp shining at screen (a sheet, piece of white fabric or white paper). It's helpful is the bottom of the screen is at table height so that the creators cannot be seen. Once the characters are cut out attach them to sticks so that they can be moved from below. Students can use their sequenced story circle story as the script to retell the story – or they can create an original story.

See Additional Resources on page 12.



Anchor Standards for Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7 Anchor Standards for Writing: Text Types and Purposes 3 Visual and Performing Arts Standards (Theatre): B1 Movement, B2 Character, B3 Improvisation





RESOURCES

WHO IS EZRA JACK KEATS?

Ezra Jack Keats: A Life Creating Books for Children. www.ezra-jack-keats.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Ezra-Jack-Keats-Bio-for-Kids.pdf

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation: https://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE DIVERSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

We Need Diverse Books: https://diversebooks.org/

• Where to find diverse books: https://diversebooks.org/resources/where-to-find-diverse-books/

Fleming, Nora. "Why Diverse Classroom Libraries Matter." *Edutopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 14 June 2019, www.edutopia.org/article/why-diverse-classroom-libraries-matter.

Smith, Gabriel. "It's Time to Talk About Dr. Seuss." *Teaching Tolerance*, 4 Mar. 2019, www.tolerance.org/magazine/its-time-to-talk-about-dr-seuss.

Katie, Ishizuka, and Stephens Ramon. "The Cat Is Out of the Bag: Orientalism, Anti-Blackness, and White Supremacy in Dr. Seuss's Children's Books." *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2019. <u>https://sophia.stkate.edu/rdyl/vol1/iss2/4/</u>

The Conscious Kid: <u>https://www.theconsciouskid.org/</u>
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/theconsciouskid/

THE IMPACT OF WEATHER

Resources provided by WMTW News 8 Meteorologist Sarah Long

https://www.facebook.com/MeteorologistSarahLong/

Follow Owlie Skywarn through hurricanes, floods, thunderstorms, tornadoes, and winter storms to learn about these weather hazards and how to stay safe. <u>http://youngmeteorologist.org/</u>

Learn the difference between weather and climate: <u>https://scijinks.gov/weather-v-climate/</u>

Learn all about thunder and lightning. Remember "When thunder roars, go indoors!" https://scijinks.gov/thunderstorms-video/

"The Clouds Outside My Window." Learn all about clouds, how they form, and the different types of clouds: https://www.weather.gov/media/owlie/CloudsOutMyWindow.pdf

Now Create Your Very Own Clouds Outside My Window book with your very own pictures: https://www.weather.gov/media/owlie/CloudsOutMyWindow_template.ppt

All resources are designed by the National Weather Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.







Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD

SHADOW PLAY

How To - Kenneth Wingard's DIY Shadow Puppet Theater (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHw-4UOcj40

Shadow Puppetry Tutorial (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSVd_0AKTKc

How to make Shadow Puppets with Your Hands (YouTube): <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv-MdaBfk8U</u>

LITERACY AND THE ARTS

Edutopia on Literacy: https://www.edutopia.org/topic/literacy

"Art as Text: Bridging Literacy and the Arts." *Edutopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 28 Mar. 2019, www.edutopia.org/video/art-text-bridging-literacy-and-arts.

Klass, Perri. "Using Arts Education to Help Other Lessons Stick." *The New York Times*, 4 Mar. 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/03/04/well/family/using-arts-education-to-help-other-lessons-stick.html?fbclid=IwAR0nA-dyTsmNrMe410n8UG7HM2osLgMnRYkXyOGav0A9VPmMqGlpHAej_yRQ.

Caldecott Award Winners:

http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottwinners/caldecottmedal





LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Your local or school library – check out all of Ezra Jack Keats books and more. Beautiful Blackbird Children's Book Festival presented by Indigo Arts Alliance on August 15, 2020. https://indigoartsalliance.me/

MAINE CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS

- Ashley Bryan: https://ashleybryancenter.org/books.html
- Barbara Cooney: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/5634/barbara-cooney
- Ryan Higgins: https://books.disney.com/book-author/ryan-t-higgins/
- Dahlov Ipcar: https://www.islandportpress.com/dahlov-ipcar.html
- Reza Jalali: https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/8372467-moon-watchers
- Robert McCloskey: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/238237/robert-mccloskey
- Daniel Minter: <u>https://danielminter.net/books/</u>
- Anne Sibley O'Brien: http://www.annesibleyobrien.com/index.php/asob/books
- Melissa Sweet: <u>https://www.melissasweet.net/books</u>
- Chris Van Dusen: <u>http://www.chrisvandusen.com/books</u>

The Telling Room: https://www.tellingroom.org/

At The Telling Room, we empower youth through writing and share their voices with the world. Focused on young writers ages 6 to 18, we seek to build confidence, strengthen literacy skills, and provide real audiences for our students. We believe that the power of creative expression can change our communities and prepare our youth for future success.

Figures of Speech Theatre: http://figures.org/

Figures of Speech Theatre creates and tours visionary works of performance forged at the intersection of poetry, music, sculpture and dance.



BY KWAME ALEXANDER PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS









PORTLAND OVATIONS

Founded in 1931, produces dynamic performing arts events including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway. We believe that cultural enrichment should be high quality and accessible to all. Ovations collaborates with other nonprofit organizations, education systems, and the business sector to promote lifelong learning while celebrating the power and virtuosity of the performing arts. We bring the exhilaration of the performing arts into our communities with free events as part of Ovations Offstage, connecting artists and audiences. Join us at unexpected "art happenings," classroom workshops, masterclasses, community discussions, and pre-performance lectures to explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform and each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and will want an audience to applaud only when they have completed a portion of their performance. As your students enjoy the show, invite them to think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? How many can you name?
- What kind of responses might an audience give to different types of performances?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?

Also, remember that a theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers or paper rustling can be heard throughout the auditorium. Each person is a part of a community of audience members and we all work together to create your theater experience.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Portland Ovations acknowledges that the places where we gather, dance, and sing is ancestral Wabanaki land. We will to pay respect to the Abenaki, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot - and their elders past, present and future.



Created and written by Sarah Coleman Additional text from Childsplay, AZ and Holden & Arts Associates Designed by Katie Day © Portland Ovations 2020



PARTS OF A PLAY Theater Diagram







SHADOW PUPPET CUT OUTS

Cut out these shapes to make your own shadow puppets.





SHADOW PUPPET CUT OUTS

WILLIE

Cut out these shapes to make your own shadow puppets.



portlandovations.org





We want to know what you thought about the performance you watched! You may write and/or draw pictures.

PERFORMANCE: The Snowy Day & Other Stories - March 30, 2020

SCHOOL NAME: ______TEACHER NAME: _____

YOUR NAME: ______ GRADE: ______

What did you really like about the performance? Why did you like that part? (If you want to draw a picture, do so on the back of this piece of paper.)

What was something that you learned, discovered or felt during the performance?

What would you like to tell other students about the performance?

Please print your name below to give Portland Ovations permission to use your comments in future promotions. Thank you!

Print Your Name Here

MAIL RESPONSES TO: Ovations Offstage 50 Monument Sq, 2nd Fl. Portland, ME 04101 EMAIL SCANNED RESPONSES TO: offstage@portlandovations.org

TEACHER RESPONSE FORM



Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Feel free to include any comments from class discussion or activities related to the performance as well!

PERFORMANCE: The Snowy Day & Other Stories - March 30, 2020

TEACHER NAME:	
SCHOOL NAME:	CITY/TOWN:

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. From your perspective as a teacher, how would you rate the performance? Please select one. □ Excellent □ Very Good □ Good □ Fair □ Poor

2. What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn't, what can we do better?)

3. What was your <u>primary</u> reason for choosing to bring your student to *The Snowy Day & Other Stories*? Please select one.

- □ I wanted my students to experience a live performance
- □ The performance fits with my curriculum goals.
- \Box The date and time of the performance fit our schedule.
- \Box The ticket price is affordable.
- \Box Other (please specify):

4. How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

5. Did you use the Educator Guide before or after attending the performance?

□ Yes □ No

6. Why or why not?

7. What improvements could we make to the Educators Guide to serve you and your classroom better?

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TEACHER RESPONSE FORM

8. How would you rate the following components of attending the School-Time Performance?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Reserving & paying for tickets					
Communication about the day of the performance					
Arrival at the venue					
Departure from the venue					

9. What types of performances would you like to bring your students to in the future? (Feel free to share art forms, topics/themes, specific artists, etc.)?

10. A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for Portland Ovations to offer these School-Time Performance tickets at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experiences or its impact on your students?

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