

The REAP Strategy in Action: EFL Students' Perceptions and Reading Comprehension Enchantment

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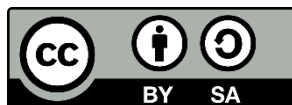
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Abstract

REAP strategy offers a systematic approach to address challenges face by the students in reading activity. The strategy is divided into managable stages: Reading, Encoding, Annotating, and Pondering. This study aimed to identifying students' perceptions of the Implementation of REAP strategy on their reading comprehension among 11th-grade EFL grade students in Palembang through a qualitative approach. The interview method chosen was semi-structured to give more insight into the research. The data was collected from students' perceptions of the implementation of the reap strategy which was analyzed using thematic analysis which found that the REAP strategy facilitates understanding of text, REAP encourages content review and retention, REAP promotes comprehension by rephrasing key ideas, REAP increases engagement and attention during reading, REAP facilitates personal connections and critical thinking, lengthy process of REAP and time-consuming implementation of REAP. The REAP strategy effectively improved students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. However, the challenges of its time-consuming and multi-step nature suggest the need for adjustments to its implementation. Educators should consider providing additional guidance during the more complex stages, such as annotation and pondering, and incorporating time management strategies to make the process more efficient and accessible for all learners.

Keywords: EFL; REAP; Reading Comprehension; Reading Achievement; Perception

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INTRODUCTION

To understand reading material effectively, students must develop good reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand and interpret written texts, and the primary goal of reading lessons is to help students achieve this understanding (Adelini et al., 2018; Juliari et al., 2024). Teachers play a vital role in facilitating this process, which requires the use of effective strategies to support students in comprehending

texts more easily. The success of students in learning English is influenced by the teaching methods employed, making it clear that a strong teaching strategy is essential for improving reading comprehension skills.

The REAP strategy, which stands for Read, Encode, Annotate, and Ponder, is a powerful tool to help students improve their reading comprehension. According to [Eanet and Manzo \(1976\)](#) the REAP strategy helps readers transform information into clear, coherent knowledge. Each stage of the strategy encourages students to engage deeply with the text, fostering a thorough understanding. The strategy prompts students to reflect critically and objectively on what they read. Moreover, students are encouraged to summarize the text using their own interpretation ([Rumapea et al., 2022](#)). This approach motivates students to analyze and comprehend texts more effectively. The flexibility of the REAP strategy allows it to be applied to various types of texts, including academic, literary, and technical materials, making it adaptable to different educational contexts ([Amelia et al., 2024](#)). Given its effectiveness, the REAP strategy is particularly valuable for use in elementary and high school settings.

Interviews with an 11th-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher at a state senior high school in Palembang revealed common classroom practices that include asking students to skim texts individually, identify difficult words, and translate them. However, many students struggle to actively participate, often finding it difficult to answer questions. Additionally, reading materials are limited to those recommended by the school, resulting in a monotonous classroom environment that primarily focuses on reading and translating with minimal engagement. Given these challenges, it is urgent to implement strategies like REAP to create a more dynamic and effective learning environment. The REAP strategy can help improve students' reading comprehension, foster active engagement, and support the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, in response to the identified issues, the REAP strategy will be implemented in the teaching of reading comprehension to 11th-grade students to enhance their learning experience and boost their interest in reading.

In line with the statement in teaching reading above, those problems can be solved by using the REAP strategy, the REAP provides a structured approach to reading that helps students break down the process of reading into manageable steps. REAP strategy includes "reading" to understand the author's central message, "encoding" to repeat the message in their own words, "annotating" by responding in different ways, and finally, "pondering" by reflecting on what they have read, students can more easily identify the text and be able to actively participate in the learning process when they understand what they have learned. Besides improving analytical reading skills, REAP also helps students think and write better. It can be used effectively in both reading classes and content area classrooms. [Renette \(2016\)](#) states that the REAP strategy helps students connect what they read in their own words, making communicating their understanding of the text easier. In addition, by using the REAP strategy students can improve their reading comprehension skills. This strategy helps students become more critical and active readers ([Dewi et al., 2018](#)).

Previous studies show REAP effectively enhances comprehension and makes students more active and creatives ([Ariyani, 2021](#); [Ramdhani & Pusparini, 2022](#); [Tuti et al., 2023](#)). [Sholeh and Osu \(2021\)](#) recommend REAP for teaching reading. However, the previous research above only focused on the implementation of the REAP strategy on students' reading

comprehension, there is limited exploration of students' perceptions regarding the strategy, particularly how they experience and respond to its various stages (reading, encoding, annotating, and pondering). Understanding students' perceptions can provide valuable insights into the challenges and benefits of the strategy from their perspective, highlighting areas for refinement and improvement.

Identifying students' perceptions is crucial because it bridges the gap between theoretical effectiveness and practical application. By analyzing how students engage with and interpret the REAP strategy, educators can tailor its implementation to better suit their needs, ensuring that the strategy not only improves reading comprehension but also fosters a more engaging and supportive learning environment. Furthermore, understanding students' feedback can guide future adaptations of the strategy, making it more efficient and accessible for diverse learners. Based on this, the researcher is interested in raising the title, "Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of REAP strategy on their reading comprehension achievement among. The REAP strategy offers valuable references for teachers to improve reading instruction.

METHOD

Design

To explore students' perceptions of the implementation of the REAP strategy on their reading comprehension achievement among 11th-grade students, the researchers employed a qualitative research method with a case study approach. A case study is a research approach that focuses on an in-depth examination of a specific group, event, or phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach was chosen to gain a detailed understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives regarding the REAP strategy.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a state senior high school in Palembang City, providing a suitable setting to explore students' perceptions of the REAP strategy on their reading comprehension achievement. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, as described by [Andrade \(2021\)](#), which involves choosing individuals based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives. Twelve 11th-grade students were selected based on their post-test results, representing the highest, middle, and lowest scores. These students were interviewed to gather detailed insights. According to [Creswell \(2014\)](#) conducting 5 to 25 interviews is considered ideal for qualitative research, and the twelve participants provided sufficient data for in-depth analysis.

Data Collection

In this research, interview questions items were used as data collection. Interview questions item was used to find out students' perceptions of the REAP strategy for reading. This interview aimed to discovered students' perspectives using the REAP strategy for their reading comprehension achievement. The semi-structured format combined prepared questions with the flexibility to ask follow-up questions based on students' responses. The interviews aimed to explore how students viewed the REAP strategy in improving their reading comprehension. There were 24 interview questions items that was asked to the participants. The participants in this study consist of 12 students, selected based on their post-test scores: four students with the highest scores, four students with average scores, and four students with

the lowest scores. Each interview was conducted face-to-face and lasted around 10 to 15 minutes.

Data Trustworthiness

Verifying data validity is the process of determining whether or not qualitative research is accurate and reliable. The researcher verified the accuracy of the finding through member checking. [Creswell and Guetterman \(2020\)](#) explain that member checking involves the researcher asking one or more study participants to verify the accuracy of the account. This verification process ensures that the data collected is reliable and reflects the participants' views. The interview guideline for this study was also validated by two experts through an expert judgment process to ensure the validity of the interview items.

Data Analysis

After conducting the interview and collecting data, the next step is to analyze the data. In this study, the results of the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. According to [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#) becoming familiar with the data is the first step that the researcher must take. Firstly, begin by thoroughly reviewing the collected interview data to gain a deep understanding of the information. This leads to creating a list of ideas for the formal coding process. The second step entails writing the initial code line, organized and assessed the entire dataset to identify repeating patterns or themes. Thirdly, presented topics, sub-themes, and related data connected to each theme after coding all the interview data. The fourth step involved reflection on whether the code forms a theme, fits into it, or if the theme itself is problematic. This review determines if any themes need merging or removal. Fifth, using the REAP strategy, labeled the themes and selects the most suitable one to encapsulate the data about the students' perspectives or experiences after teaching reading. Finally, compiles a comprehensive report with an analytical narrative that delves into the various themes, providing a deeper understanding of the interview data concerning the research question.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study reveal the perceptions of students regarding the effectiveness of the REAP strategy in enhancing their understanding of texts. Through interviews with students of varying performance levels, key themes emerged that highlight the strengths and challenges of the REAP strategy in facilitating comprehension, content review, and retention. The following sections outline these findings in detail, with supporting quotes from the students to illustrate their experiences with the strategy.

1. REAP Facilitates Understanding of Text

The REAP strategy facilitates understanding by encouraging students to express the main ideas and their thoughts in their own words. This process helps students better grasp the text's message by breaking it down into manageable stages.

One student with the highest English learning outcomes score, TA, shared how REAP helped her delve deeper into the text:

In my opinion, after using REAP, it is easier for me to find the main idea and the author's message, because REAP has been divided into several stages such as read, encode,

annotate, and ponder. In each section, we write it in a structured way, making it easier (TA, personal communication, 2024).

This statement reflects how REAP's structured approach helped the student understand the core message of the text. However, a student with an intermediate English learning outcomes score, AA, noted some difficulties with the REAP strategy: she said that, *so far it helps, but I don't understand fully because REAP has several stages* (AA, personal communication, 2024). This student acknowledged that while the REAP strategy helped with understanding, the multiple stages were a challenge.

A student with the lowest English learning outcomes score, H, also commented on the strategy's benefits and challenges: He stated that, *although the REAP strategy can help me find the main idea, I haven't really mastered it myself, so I have to strengthen my understanding of the text gradually* (H, personal communication, 2024). This statement highlights the student's recognition of REAP's benefits but also their need for more practice to master it.

2. REAP Encourages Content Review and Retention

REAP encourages content review by breaking the text into structured stages, which helps students focus on the core ideas, making the review process more systematic and effective. One student explained how the REAP strategy helped her review the text more effectively:

Yes, in my opinion, with the REAP strategy, I am better able to review the text because, with this strategy, it has been noted in advance which points are the R, E, A, and P parts. So, I am better able to know the core parts, and this makes it easier to review the content of the text again (DA, personal communication, 2024).

This statement reflects how the REAP strategy made content review easier by clearly marking the stages of the text. Another student with an intermediate English learning outcomes score, NP, shared a similar sentiment: She said, *with the REAP method, it is easier for me to review the text because, in REAP, the stages are structured, so it is easier to review the text*" (NP, personal communication, 2024). The structured stages of REAP were highlighted as a key factor in simplifying the review process and enhancing comprehension. However, a student mentioned: he stated that, *I think it was helpful, but I think the reading stage is the same as reading as usual, but I've got to highlight the important points of each paragraph*" (personal communication, September 19th, 2024). This student noted that while the REAP strategy was helpful, they still needed to actively highlight key points during the reading stage to improve retention.

3. REAP Promotes Comprehension by Rephrasing Key Ideas

The REAP strategy promotes comprehension through encoding by encouraging students to summarize key points using their own words. This process helps reinforce understanding by making the material more personal and digestible. One student shared how REAP helped her grasp the text more effectively: he said, *because I use my language with REAP, I can understand the text,*" (MP, personal communication, 2024). This statement highlights how

encoding with REAP helped MP solidify her understanding of the text by rephrasing it in her own words.

Similarly, MS, with an intermediate English learning outcomes score, noted how encoding required him to think critically about the material: He stated that, *this stage helps me summarize the main idea of each paragraph in my language, which makes me understand the text better*" (MS, personal communication, 2024). MS emphasized how rephrasing the content in his language improved retention and understanding.

However, MR, with the lowest English learning outcomes score, expressed difficulty with identifying the main ideas during the encoding stage: he stated that, *encoding is easy enough, but finding the right information is difficult. Sometimes I'm not sure what the main idea is* (MR, personal communication, 2024). This feedback suggests that while the encoding process itself is clear, some students may need additional support in identifying the main ideas and relevant details to fully benefit from the strategy.

4. REAP Increases Engagement and Attention during Reading

REAP has also been noted for its ability to increase student engagement and attention during reading. The annotation stage, in particular, helps students actively engage with the text by focusing on important points and rephrasing them in their own words.

DA, a student with the highest English learning outcomes score, explained how annotation helped her stay engaged:

I think annotation really helps us to be active and engaged because when we annotate, we are told to look for important things from the text ourselves, so we are more informed and deeper because we will be compiling it in our own words" (DA, personal communication, 2024).

The statement illustrates how rephrasing key points helped DA stay engaged and deepen her understanding of the text. Similarly, NP, with an intermediate English learning outcomes score, shared: *yes, I feel more focused because we're told to retell what's being said in our language*" (NP, personal communication, 2024). NP also found that rephrasing the text in her own words helped her maintain focus and engagement. However, a student expressed difficulty with the annotation stage: He mentioned that, *I don't fully understand how this annotation stage works since it involves retelling the text in my language, which is something I find difficult to do* (R, personal communication, 2024).

This feedback indicates that while DA and NP benefitted from the rephrasing aspect of annotation, R struggled with this process, which affected their ability to engage fully with the text.

5. REAP Facilitates Personal Connections and Critical Thinking

The REAP strategy also promotes personal connections to the text and encourages critical thinking. Through summarizing, annotating, and reflecting on the text, students are able to form deeper connections with the material. DA explained how summarizing the content helped her form personal connections: he commented that, *I am able to do this because REAP helps me to summarise the content of the text*" (DA, personal communication, 2024). This highlights how summarizing with REAP facilitated DA's understanding and connection to the material. Similarly, RP shared how the pondering step encouraged deeper reflection: he claimed that,

pondering helps me to summarise the text according to my understanding of the text” (RP, personal communication, 2024). RP emphasized how the pondering stage allowed him to reflect critically on the content, helping him connect it to his own understanding. However, MR, with the lowest English learning outcomes score, shared that he still struggled with the pondering step:

Yes, it was quite helpful. The teacher gave clear steps on how to do pondering, so it was easier. But I'm afraid I'm still asking for guidance every time I do it because I still don't have a grasp of it (MR, personal communication, 2024).

MR's feedback suggests that while the pondering step was somewhat helpful, he needed more support to fully engage with this stage and make personal connections with the text.

6. Lengthy Process of REAP

Despite the advantages, several students shared concerns about the lengthy process of the REAP strategy. A common issue was the time required for each stage. A student with the highest English learning outcomes score, TA, noted that each stage felt long, especially when she had to look up unfamiliar vocabulary or text meanings: *she said that, yes, I feel that this strategy is long because there are a lot of steps, not to mention the times when I have to look up the meaning of the text or the vocabulary that I don't understand (TA, personal communication, 2024).*

TA also mentioned that the annotation stage felt particularly lengthy due to the need to rewrite the story: *She said that: I think the annotation stage is difficult and long because I have to rewrite the story.* AA also felt that REAP was a lengthy process. She pointed out that the REAP strategy involves multiple stages and requires analysis to fully understand the text: *She commented that, yes, because REAP has many stages and requires analysis to obtain text information (AA, personal communication, 2024).* AA found the encoding stage particularly time-consuming, as it made summarizing the text more challenging: *She claimed, In my opinion, the encoding stage takes longer and makes the summary a little bit difficult (AA, personal communication).* RP shared similar concerns about the length of the process. He mentioned that each stage, including reading, highlighting, encoding, annotating, and pondering, required its own time: *He said, yes, I feel that the REAP strategy is a long strategy because each stage, such as reading, highlighting text, encoding, annotating, and thinking, takes its own time (RP, personal communication, 2024).* RP specifically found the pondering stage to be the most time-consuming, as it required deep reflection on confusing parts of the text: *He mentioned that, I found the pondering stage to be the most lengthy because I had to really think about the content of the text that was confusing me (RP, personal communication, 2024).*

7. Time-Consuming Implementation of REAP

In addition to the lengthy process, some students also felt that the implementation of the REAP strategy was time-consuming due to its complexity and multiple stages. DA, a student with the highest English learning outcomes score, mentioned that following all the steps was more time-consuming than other strategies: *She commented, in my opinion, the REAP strategy*

is more time-consuming than other strategies because there are stages that must be followed (DA, personal communication, 2024). DA also highlighted that progressing through each stage sequentially added to the complexity, making the process feel longer. The annotation stage was one part she found particularly time-consuming: She added, *I think the most time-consuming part is the annotation stage because we have to highlight important text content, and then in the encoding stage, we have to underline important points.* MS, noted that the REAP strategy was more time-consuming because of its multiple stages: He claimed that, *this REAP strategy is more time-consuming because it has stages that are quite time-consuming (MS, personal communication, 2024)* MS also found that annotating to be the most time-consuming part: He said, *each of these stages in REAP takes a long time to complete, especially, I think, annotating (AA, personal communication, 2024).* Similarly, H mentioned that REAP was more time-consuming compared to other strategies. He found it difficult to understand quickly, which made it challenging to complete each step within the allotted time, particularly during the pondering and annotation stages: He explained, *I think the REAP method is more time-consuming than the others because it has steps to follow, and I find it difficult to understand it quickly (H, personal communication, 2024).* H also pointed out that the pondering and annotation stages often made him feel rushed: *Sometimes I find it difficult to complete each step in the allotted time, especially when to ponder and annotate the text; these steps often make me rush (H, personal communication, 2024)*

In short, The REAP strategy was found to be an effective strategy for improving students' understanding of texts by encouraging them to express the main ideas and thoughts in their own words. Many students mentioned that the structured stages of the REAP strategy (reading, encoding, annotating and pondering) helped them to understand the author's message and to identify the main ideas more clearly. For example, students found that breaking the text down into manageable stages made it easier to review and engage with the content. This organized method not only aided comprehension but also encouraged critical thinking and personal connections to the material, allowing students to reflect on their understanding and summarized effectively. However, alongside these benefits, students also highlighted some challenges associated with the REAP strategy. A significant concern was its lengthy and time-consuming process, with many students reporting that the different stages required considerable time and effort to complete. For example, students noted that the annotation stage, where they had to highlight important text and rewrite key points, often felt particularly challenging. The step-by-step nature of the REAP process added to its complexity, making it difficult for some students to keep up, especially during the pondering stage, which required deep thinking about the text. Based on the research findings, most students reported that the REAP strategy significantly facilitated their understanding of texts, making it easier to grasp the main ideas and the author's message. However, some students found the REAP process to be complex (AA, A, H). This aligns with Siregar et al., (2023) who stated that the REAP strategy encourages students to think deeply and objectively about the material, while also requiring them to summarize the text in their own words. Despite its effectiveness, the complexity of the strategy may pose challenges for some students, particularly those who are less familiar with such structured approaches.

In terms of the structured stages of the REAP strategy, students found that the stages helped encourage content review and retention, though some felt that the reading stage was too similar to regular reading practices (DA, NP, RP). This observation is consistent with [Dewi et al., \(2018\)](#) who noted that the REAP strategy allows students to access information more effectively by marking important points during the reading process. While the REAP strategy's structure aids in comprehension, the overlap with traditional reading techniques suggests that further clarification or adjustment of the stages may enhance its effectiveness. The encoding stage of REAP, which involves rephrasing key ideas in students' own words, was particularly noted for improving comprehension. This step helped students summarize and better understand the text. However, some students struggled with identifying the main ideas (MP, MS, MR). This is in agreement with [Ramdhani and Pusparini \(2022\)](#) who highlighted that the encoding process allows students to better grasp the text by focusing on key ideas and difficult words. These challenges may stem from students' varying levels of proficiency in identifying central themes and synthesizing information.

The annotation stage, which is designed to increase engagement and attention during reading, was another critical element of the REAP strategy. However, some students found it challenging (DA, NP, R). [Rumapea et al., \(2022\)](#) adds that annotation helps keep students engaged and aids in learning, particularly by helping them understand unfamiliar words. While annotation can enhance engagement, its complexity might be a barrier for some students, suggesting the need for more support during this stage. The pondering stage, which facilitates personal connections and critical thinking, also proved to be beneficial, though some students required more guidance to complete this step (DA, PA, MR). [Nuroktravianti et al., \(2022\)](#) emphasized that this stage encourages students to construct deeper meaning from the text in their own words, thereby fostering higher-order thinking skills. While the pondering stage encourages critical reflection, students' need for additional guidance suggests that further scaffolding may be needed to ensure that all students can fully engage with this step.

Despite the benefits, students noted that the multiple stages of REAP, particularly annotation and pondering, made the process lengthy and time-consuming (TA, AA, RP). This aligns with [Rahmawati et al., \(2015\)](#) who identified the time-consuming nature of the REAP strategy as a drawback. The length of the process, especially the annotation and pondering phases, was cited as a challenge for students, making it harder to complete the strategy in a timely manner. This highlights the need to balance the thoroughness of the REAP strategy with time constraints in classroom settings.

In conclusion, the REAP strategy, through its structured stages—reading, encoding, annotating, and pondering—enabled students to summarize and interpret texts while engaging critically with the content. This process encouraged students to form personal connections with the material, which helped them better understand key ideas and moral values. While the strategy offered significant benefits, such as enhancing comprehension and organizing thoughts, it also presented challenges. Some students found the process to be time-consuming, particularly during the annotation and pondering stages. These findings are consistent with existing research, but this study contributes by highlighting the specific difficulties students face with the REAP strategy, particularly the need for guidance during certain stages and the time constraints that affect its implementation. Despite these challenges, the REAP strategy

remains a powerful tool for enhancing reading comprehension and critical thinking skills, suggesting that with appropriate adjustments, it can be more effective in diverse classroom contexts.

The findings suggest that educators should consider integrating the REAP strategy into reading instruction, with modifications to address its time-intensive nature. Teachers can allocate additional time for annotation and reflection or provide targeted scaffolding to support students during these phases. At the policy level, incorporating the REAP strategy into curriculum frameworks could standardize its use and ensure training for teachers on its effective implementation.

This study is limited by its qualitative design, which relied on a small sample of 11th-grade students at a single school. As such, the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts or age groups. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from students may introduce biases, as participants might overestimate or underestimate their experiences with the REAP strategy. Future research should explore the implementation of the REAP strategy across diverse educational settings and student populations to assess its broader applicability. Studies focusing on specific age groups or proficiency levels could provide insights into how the strategy meets the needs of different learners. Additionally, investigating the effectiveness of streamlined or modified versions of the REAP strategy, particularly in addressing its time-consuming aspects, could make it more practical for wider use. Longitudinal research could also evaluate the sustained impact of REAP on students' critical thinking, retention, and overall academic performance, offering deeper insights into its long-term benefits.

CONCLUSION

This study presents compelling evidence of a significant positive impact on students' learning outcomes, particularly in teaching writing. This is evident from the results of statistical tests, including the paired t-test, and the notable increase in average scores in the post-test compared to pre-test scores before the treatment. This study confirms the effectiveness of adopting creative instructional approaches, such as the linguistics landscape in language instruction. This learning technique enchanted students' engagement and also affected their writing skills. When combined with project-based learning, these benefits are reinforced, encouraging active student engagement, collaborative learning experiences, and the development of creative written works. The application of the linguistic landscape technique affected the strong comprehension of the students. Students obtained a better understanding by assigning tasks based on the study's methodology. They might express their knowledge and creativity in written form, such as posters, to improve their abilities.

Based on the results of the study regarding the perceptions the students of the implementation of REAP strategy, the researcher reached several important conclusions, as followed: 1). REAP facilitates understanding of text 2). REAP encourages content review and retention 3) REAP promotes comprehension by rephrasing key ideas 4). REAP increases engagement and attention during reading 5) REAP facilitates personal connections and critical thinking 6) lengthy process of REAP and 7) Time-consuming implementation of REAP. The study's limitations include its relatively small sample size and focus on 11th-grade students from a single school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, such as different age groups or educational environments. Additionally, the reliance on self-

reported data through interviews may introduce biases, as participants might have overstated or understated their experiences. Furthermore, the study primarily focused on the immediate effects of the REAP strategy, leaving the long-term impacts on critical thinking and retention unexplored. Lastly, while the study highlighted the time-consuming nature of certain stages, it did not examine potential modifications to streamline these processes. Future research could address these limitations by exploring the application of the REAP strategy in more diverse educational settings, investigating its long-term effects, and evaluating adaptations to make the strategy more efficient while maintaining its effectiveness.

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