Explore Meteor Crater and Petrified Forest

with Noah Justice

Study Guide
let’s talk

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Meteor

Crater

and

Petrified Forest

with Noah Justice

STUDY GUIDE & WORKBOOK
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Introduction

In the northeastern high desert of Arizona sits a most peculiar site — thousands of petrified logs sitting on the desert floor, hanging out of cliffs, and peeking out of the soil. Where did they come from? Why are they here? How did they petrify? How do they fit in with the biblical view of earth’s history?

Just farther west is a huge crater etched into the desert limestone and sandstone. With evidence for volcanism around the area, many early scientists thought it was an ancient volcano. But evidence later revealed that this crater was caused by a large meteorite hitting the earth at an estimated 40,000 miles per hour, just a few thousand years ago. Scientists have used this crater to identify other meteorite craters around the world. But did something like this cause the demise of the dinosaurs like so many secular scientists believe today?

Meteor Crater, the Petrified Forest . . . all this, and more, on Awesome Science!

Complete Word List

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**Key Concepts**

- airborne processes
- biblical account
- continental movements
- erosional processes
- fountains of the deep
- Genesis Flood
- geologic processes
- God's judgment
- layered deposits
- permineralization
- petrification
- quick deposition
- quick erosion
- Trapid succession
- repeatable science
- secular humanism
- stages of the Flood
- water processes

*Explore Meteor Crater/Petrified Forest* Study Guide • 5
THE GRAND STAIRCASE AND NOAH’S FLOOD

Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:

receded    geologic    remnant
fountains  volcanoes  mountain ranges
Genesis 6  Kaibab     Chinle Formation
Bryce      water      underwater
ash        continental Grand Staircase

The Painted Desert in northern Arizona is a ____________ of a vast dry lakebed, one of the many lakes that stretched across several western states after the Flood.

This area is part of the ____________________, a 10,000-foot-deep section of sedimentary strata, starting at the top of _____________ Canyon in Utah, and ending at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Much of this area was formed through water, by the laying down of layers by water, and then eroded by water.

Much of this area is in the Chinle Formation, which is in the lower middle of the Grand Staircase. It’s an amazing area, full of ______________ sites.
It is thought to have been formed over millions of years, but there’s another story that better explains the features we see. Using the Bible as our historical authority, we see in ____________ that God sent a flood to destroy the whole earth.

The ____________ of the great deep burst forth and it rained for 40 days and nights non-stop, and culminated in a year-long Flood. The bursting forth included water and volcanic activity as continents were broken apart. ____________ covered the whole earth for about a year.

As the continents moved under the water and slowly came to a stop, ________________ were quickly pushed up. Water from the Flood rushed off the continents, eroding valleys. But some water got trapped in large inland lakes between the mountain ranges and plateaus.

Even after the Flood waters ____________, volcanic activity continued, then eventually slowed down due in large part to ______________ movements minimizing and the earth equalizing after this great catastrophe.

The landscape of the entire southwest shows evidence that there were two large lakes that existed eastward of the _____________ Plateau.

Many creationists believe these waters breached and became the source of the catastrophic flow which drained quickly through the Kaibab Plateau to carve the Grand Canyon in a matter of just days. ________________ continued to erupt around this
area, even after the Flood.

The _______________________________ was laid down, as evidenced by the volcanic flows of basalt on top of these layers.

Much of the Chinle Formation contains volcanic ____________ laid down by water. This volcanic ash came from volcanoes erupting, for the most part, ______________ during the Flood. When it mixed with sand and mud, this huge layer was deposited, along with logs and dinosaurs.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the Painted Desert?

2. How do volcanoes and floods impact the landscape?

3. How is Noah’s Flood a better explanation for what we see in the Petrified Forest National Park?

**Bonus Activity:**

Find a map and see if you can draw a circle around the Grand Canyon, Meteor Crater, and the Petrified Forest. See if you can figure out how many miles apart they all are, and which might be closest to Mount St. Helens.
ABOUT THE PETRIFIED FOREST

Here at Petrified Forest National Park, there are petrified logs haphazardly scattered around. Scientists here say that they are millions and millions of years old. But in reality, they’re all a part of Noah’s Flood.

Petrified Forest National Park is just 124 miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona. This Navajo and Apache land has an average elevation of 5,400 feet. Thousands of petrified trees lie on the ground, mostly broken apart into rounds. A few full-size logs lie on the ground, others hang halfway out of cliffs, and some peak just above the surface. Also in the park are hills of amazing colors. It’s made from ash layers and formed under water. It screams “Catastrophe!”

Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

In 1962 this area became a national park because of its unique features with 50,000 acres being set aside for the public to come and examine earth’s history. ______

Park signs say that this area was formed 225 million years ago, but is this accurate? This date comes from a belief in evolution and millions of years. ______
According to the biblical record and genealogies, we can determine this area is only about 141,350 years old, formed at the time of the Flood. 

Everyone agrees these logs were transported in and by water, laid down here, then fossilized. But the mechanism for how they got here and how long the fossilization took is where the difference lies.

You either think in long ages, a concept held by those who believe in creation . . . or just a few thousand years, according to the Bible, which evolutionists use as a time-line.

First of all, the root balls on these logs are very small, or just absent, which scientists see as evidence that the original trees were ripped out of their original location in a cataclysmic event . . . think Genesis Flood.

During the Flood, massive amounts of water rushed across the land, uprooting much of the vegetation, including large trees.

The logs floated on top of the Floodwaters for a while, but eventually sank to the bottom and were buried quickly by the volcanic sediments.

The bark has been stripped off, so something happened to cause the bark to be knocked off.

During catastrophes, like Mount St. Helens, we saw something similar. After the 1980 eruption knocked down trees, logs floated below Mount St. Helens on Spirit Lake. They rubbed against each other, and
eventually the bark fell off before the logs began being deposited on the bottom of the lake. During the Flood catastrophe we expect nothing less. 

Where the bark fell was most likely different from where the logs rested, because the rock layers here, in the Petrified Forest National Park, do not contain any coal. Bark is commonly found in coal layers. 

We can see growth rings in the logs. They are large. The original trees would have grown up in a very healthy environment, which is what we would expect before the global Flood. The environment back then was definitely better than today, but still suffered the effects of the Curse because of the Fall of man. 

Due to volcanic action, the water was surely heavy with silica, and when the logs were buried, the silica-rich water would have petrified them. 

Why is this significant? Well, when the logs were buried, the carbon would have traded places with the silica in a chemical process called mummification, and the logs were quickly fossilized. 

Signs in the park will tell you it took a long time for these logs to fossilize. But with the right conditions, such as a global Flood, it could take less than a year. One lab has been able to duplicate this process in just days. Now that’s repeatable science! 

Also, in Yellowstone National Park, scientists experimented with putting logs in silica rich water and in less than a year substantial fossilization occurred.
Since this area continued to be underwater, even after the Flood receded, these logs stayed buried for a while. In a few years or less, the large inland lakes wore away at the limestone in the Kiabab Plateau, and a massive erosional event occurred, where the Grand Canyon was carved in just days. 

**Aftermath**

When the Grand Canyon formed, some of these layers at Petrified Forest National Park were exposed. The exiting water eroded through these layers, exposing the petrified tress and creating the “teepee” geologic features.

Much of the desert floor is clay, which mostly came from volcanic ash during the Flood, but some probably came from volcanic activity after the Flood. But in some places like Jasper Forest, the stumps are buried in sandstone with pebbles. We call this a conglomerate layer.

When a rock layer has pebbles, it’s usually a sign that fast moving water was involved to round the rocks. This gives us another indication that water action was responsible for creating what we see here today.

It’s interesting that we find entire logs here, and not just bits and pieces of them. Researchers realize that entire forests were swept away in one large event . . . the global Flood makes perfect sense!

Remember, don’t sample or take any pieces of petrified wood. The park rules say no, and we need to keep things like this for future generations.
Discussion Questions

1. Signs at the park give a much longer time-line than what we find in the Bible. What do the genealogies found in the Bible that speak of the world being around 6,000 years old mean when looking at a biblical account of earth’s history?

2. How does the evidence of trees being fossilized in less than a year support the view that the Petrified Forest was a result of the Great Flood?
OTHER PETRIFIED EXAMPLES

Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:

tidal wave    peat    catastrophic    landslide
Spirit Lake    silica    erosion

One way for us to verify our theories on __________________ forest destruction, floating logs mats, and petrification, is looking no farther than Mount St. Helens in southern Washington State.

In 1980 Mount St. Helens had a huge eruption, causing the north side of the mountain to slide into the valley below, resulting in the largest _____________ in recorded history.

The landslide pushed into Spirit Lake and caused an 800’ high ________________ on the opposite hill. The wave was so huge that it pulled the entire forest of large, mature trees back into the lake in less than a few minutes.

The logs covered the top of ________________ in one large floating tree mat, and many are still there today. The logs rubbed together and the bark sunk.
Over time, thousands of logs became water logged and sank to the bottom of the lake. Eventually, up to 20,000 logs sank to the bottom of the lake, and the layer of bark formed a layer of ____________________. Sonar tests and SCUBA expeditions have verified these facts.

If Mount St. Helens were to continue to erupt and fill Spirit Lake, all of the trees would be buried in peat, silt, and ash, which would naturally have ________________ in it. Eventually the trees would fossilize.

If exposed at some point through ________________, this area at Mount St. Helens would look much like what we see at Petrified Forest National Park, and even the numerous levels of apparent petrified forests at Specimen Ridge in Yellowstone National Park.

Even if secular scientists don’t like the conclusion, this is evidence for catastrophic processes, like the Genesis Flood, that helped carve many of the geologic features we see around the world today.
WHAT ABOUT THE TEEPEES?

Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:

uniformity  Noah’s Flood  sediments
deposited  water erosion  underwater
monsoon  layers

Driving along within the Petrified Forest National Park you’ll see steep, cone-shaped hills, which are called “the Teepees.” They are made up of volcanic ash, at the top of the Chinle Formation. Their shape is the result of ____________________________.

In August it is __________________ season in Arizona, where afternoon storms will drop as much as 1–7 inches of rain in 15–30 minutes. The ash and clay erode quickly when this much rain falls over a short period of time.

The brilliant ___________________ in the Chinle Formation indicate they were created by catastrophic means. How? Let’s look at the evidence.

Indicators are that these volcanic ash layers were originally _________________ under water. It was not a local event, but huge, in order for the same colored layers to stretch out for extreme distances.
______________________, just 4,350 years ago is an ideal candidate for a catastrophe on such a massive scale.

If it were a smaller event, then layers would be more sporadic. The different bands of color are due to different episodes of ________________ volcanic eruptions.

Every volcanic eruption puts out different materials, some coarse, some fine, so one layer is never the same as the next. When eruptions happen underwater, such variations are even more diverse because the water will also carry other ________________, which will mix in with the ash.

Slow and gradual processes would have laid down these deposits with no ________________. But if they were laid down by water rapidly, one after the other, the layers would be uniform over long distances and large areas.
Rapid layered deposits and erosion are not a fairy tale. When catastrophic ______________ are at work, amazing things can happen!

Back at Mount St. Helens, the 1980 eruption blasted the volcanic ash and debris to the north, piling ash layers on top of the initial landslide ________________.

When finished, the valley floor had risen ________________ feet.

Then in 1982, Mount St. Helens erupted again, but this time the ________________ contained a large amount of snow and ice.

When the eruption happened, the snow and ice ________________.
The water breached the large __________________ formed by the crater rim and carved huge canyons near the crater, then continued to carve into the blast zone deposits below.

All of this ______________________ action happened in just a few hours.

One of these canyons has been called the “Little Grand Canyon” because of the similar erosional features we find in the ______________________.

These erosional __________________ have allowed scientists to view the layers laid down by Mount St. Helens during past eruptions, as well as the 1982 eruption.

What they observed was different layers of ash, pumice and mud laid down rapidly, some by __________________ processes, some by water processes.

What surprised scientists the most was that the ______________ showed independent multiple layering during the same eruption.

Even in the hurricane force spread of deposition, independent multiple layers were made __________________ between fine grain and coarse materials.

Mount St. Helens helped researchers realize how a catastrophe, like the Flood, can develop __________________ multiple layers in the strata, as well as large erosional features. This should
make anyone question whether catastrophes have occurred in the past.

So when someone thinks that geological features took long ___________________ of time, this should be immediately questioned.

The _____________________ in the Teepees at Petrified Forest National Park could have been created quickly, over vast areas of the Southwest.

It’s just here that the layers were exposed, then weathered away into these fantastic _____________.

The Bible can be trusted in what it says about catastrophic processes not long ago in earth’s history, and researchers are realizing this the more they study catastrophes and geologic features.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why was an event like the eruption at Mount St. Helens so important for researchers who support a biblical time-line of history?

2. What is erosion and how can it impact the landscape during periods of floods or heavy rains?
Many dinosaur fossils have been found in Petrified Forest National Park, along with fossilized logs. This area obviously had a lot of catastrophe deposits during the Flood.

Signs in the park describe this area’s past as a temperate rain forest where the dinosaurs lived. But there is little evidence to support this theory. Secular scientists point to the fossil fauna to support their story, but all evidence points to the Flood.

For instance, all of the strata are sedimentary rocks, laid down repeatedly by water. It was not an ancient forest floor. The deposits indicate quick deposition, including the ash beds in the teepee formations in the park.

The dinosaurs were not living here millions and millions of years ago, but were buried here quickly in sediments during the global Flood.

Discussion Questions

1. Dinosaurs are associated with a “millions of years” time-line of earth’s history. How does
the biblical account of the Great Flood give an answer to why dinosaur fossils are found around the world?

2. What are some clues that the Great Flood killed dinosaurs in the fossil record?

**Bonus Activity**

Choose a favorite dinosaur and see if you can find photos of a fossil online of this dinosaur. What do we scientists theorize about your favorite dinosaur in terms of where it may have lived, what it might have eaten, and whether or not it was a predator?
PETRIFIED FOREST — CONCLUSION:

Petrified Forest National Park is a testament to the destruction of the earth and God’s judgment against sin in Genesis 6. There is evidence for quick burial of trees, global flood action, and large-scale volcanic activity both under water and after the Flood.

We’ve found other catastrophic action at Mount St. Helens on a smaller scale to demonstrate how these trees were uprooted and deposited, as well as how layers can be produced quickly when the right conditions exist.

We see that the Bible can be trusted as an accurate book of earth’s history. It is not a complete history of course, but a selected history to give us a big picture look at the past.
Northern Arizona is home to the Grand Canyon, Lake Powell, the Painted Desert, and many other geologic wonders. In addition to catastrophic processes due to the global Flood, there is one formation in the desert floor that has fascinated scientists for decades. It is a crater in the Kiabab Formation, the top layer seen at the Grand Canyon. The crater is 4,200 feet wide and 750 feet deep.

Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:

asteroid dust layer starved model Shoemaker acid rain meteorite heat Yucatan Peninsula

Due to all of the volcanism in the area, it was once thought to be a volcano. But after scientific research, a whole new ________________ emerged.

Here at Meteor Crater, Arizona, a 150-foot diameter ____________ slammed into the earth, creating this gigantic crater we see here.

Not long after the formation of the Grand Canyon, an ___________ weighing approximately 60,000 tons impacted the earth at around 40,000 miles per hour.
Because of what we know today about the earth’s atmosphere and the ____________ experienced during entry, the asteroid was most likely much larger out in space.

In the 1960s, Dr. Eugene ________________ studied this crater, which led him on a worldwide search to find other impact craters. To his surprise, he found hundreds around the entire earth.

Some say that a meteorite like this a hundred times bigger crashed into the ________________ causing the extinction of the dinosaurs. Think again.

They say the meteor created a giant ________________, wiping out all of the plants, and thus wiping out the dinosaur’s food source.

The dinosaurs around the earth would have ____________ to death by lack of food, then buried in dust. But there’s one major problem with this idea.

We don’t find dinosaurs buried in ________________. We find them in sedimentary rock layers, clay, sand, and dirt; this means flood action, not a gigantic dust storm.

Another proposed idea is a meteor crashed into the ocean, causing tidal waves and ____________, destroying life on the planet.

But what does the evidence really show?
Discussion Questions

1. What is a meteor?

2. What is it about where dinosaur fossils are found that seems to indicate a meteor impacting earth didn’t kill the dinosaurs?

Bonus Activity

Learn more about impacts. Put a towel on the table and then an unbreakable bowl half-filled with water on the towel. Drop a rock in the water. Re-create the impact, dropping the rock at different levels to see how that changes the impact on the water. Now, take the rock and use it to test impacts in a box of sand. What happens when the rock hits the water? Or hits the sand?
METEOR CRATER
EARLY HISTORY

In the early 1900s, Daniel Barringer, a mining engineer and businessman, came across this large crater. Geologists told him it was volcanic because of all the evidence for volcanism in the area. But he had a different opinion.

Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

He believed it was an impact crater from a meteorite, and began to perform research to show that it was. He didn’t do his research for science, but for profit. _____

If it was a meteorite, being a mining engineer, he knew that fragments, or even the meteor itself, would be worthless, making no money if sold. _____

Meteorites are known to have high iron and nickel content. _____

When iron ore is mined from the earth, it typically yields 65–70 percent iron. But when nickel ore is mined, you’re lucky to get 1 percent. _____

A meteorite will typically contain about 92 percent iron and 7 percent nickel. A large meteorite could be
sold for a very large amount of money, so he began to try and find this one. ______

He first thought he’d find it in the side of the crater. ______

He dug down 700 feet in the middle but came up empty. Instead of giving up, he changed his plan of attack. Then he theorized the meteor came in at an angle. So he drilled into the rim. ______

Barringer and his team went down 13 feet and found a few fragments, but not the big payoff of a meteorite. ______

That was enough to convince him that it was a crater caused by a volcano, not a meteorite impact. ______
MORE DETAILS ON THE CRATER

What makes Meteor Crater so cool is that there are few large craters so visible to the public. There are a hundred or more of these craters around the earth, but we can’t see them because they are eroded and obscured in a tropical rain forest or on the ocean floor. Meteor Crater is on the high desert of Arizona with nothing to hide it.

Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

Meteor Crater is almost a mile wide and 750 feet deep. That’s as long as two and a half football fields. _____

With the meteorite coming in at approximately 40,000 mph, it caused a huge explosion on impact. Because of this great speed, most of the meteorite vaporized, leaving the crater and just small fragments scattered around. ______

Signs at the crater say that this event happened around 500,000 years ago. But according to the genealogies in the Bible, the earth is only 60,000 years old, and God doesn’t get things wrong. ______
We know this event had to have happened before the water receded after the global Flood because it sits in a dry desert above the sedimentary rock. So this puts it more than 4,350 years ago.

This area is part of the Grand Staircase, a 10,000 foot section of earth made of sedimentary layers laid down during the global Flood.

Researchers have pointed out that after the Flood receded, two very large inland lakes, three times the size of Lake Michigan, were here in the early stages after the Flood, trapped between mountains and plateaus.

In just a few years, the lakes wore away at the concrete in the Kiabab Plateau. When the water finally wore through, it carved the Grand Canyon in just a few decades, emptying the lakes and leaving this area as a high desert.

Knowing that the Bible says the Flood ended around 4,350 years ago, and that these lakes existed after the Flood, then since the crater is sitting above the sedimentary layers, it might put this event at Meteor Crater between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago! But we can’t be dogmatic about it. It’s just an educated guess.
In the early 1960s Eugene Shoemaker began to visit this area to study the crater. Studying impact craters was his passion. He studied craters at atomic test sites in Nevada and spent time at Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff to study crater impacts on the moon.

**Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:**

Chesapeake   hypothesized   craters   evidence
sea floor    ashes       meteorites   moon
anomaly

He _______________ that meteor impact craters are much more numerous than anyone previously thought.

To him, Meteor Crater was not an _______________.

Based on his research, he proposed that there could be other _______________ around the world, and he began searching for them.

He discovered how catastrophic processes, like _______________ and nuclear bombs, create shatter cones, which is evidence for the shock of a meteor impact.
Then he used this ____________ to test other craters around the world.

He not only found impact craters on the continents, but also on the ____________.

Some of these craters have been found in ______________ Bay as well as on the Yucatan Peninsula.

He helped to train astronauts to study craters on the ____________. He was even a candidate to go to the moon, but could not because of his health.

He is the only person who has his ______________ buried on the moon.

His widow, Carolyn Shoemaker continues his work to search for meteorites in space and impact craters here on earth. Because of his research, we now understand so much more about how the earth has been impacted through catastrophic meteor impacts.
DINOSAUR EXTINCTION BECAUSE OF METEOR IMPACT?

Did a meteor impact cause the death of dinosaurs? Let’s look at the facts.

**Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:**

numbers  carcasses  global flood  quickly
land-dwelling  dust storm  quick burial  Bible
population  water  tidal waves  perished

There are many ideas on how the dinosaurs died. Yet most of them seem to skirt around the ___________________ concept, even though most of the evidence supports it.

We know the dinosaurs were buried in sedimentary layers, which means they were buried in ___________________. Any other theory that does not involve water just doesn’t stand up.

If the dinosaurs died on land, then their bodies would have decomposed or been eaten by scavengers. If they died in the sea, the same processes would have consumed their ______________.
But all evidence shows they were buried __________ in sediments such as in sand and mud.

When we use the ______________ as our history guide book, we see the mechanism of a global Flood.

This would have been the cause and the means for __________ of the dinosaurs.

But the Bible also tells us that God brought two of every ______________, air-breathing animal on Noah’s ark, which included the various dinosaur kinds, estimated to be 50.

Any animal outside the ark would have ______________ in the Flood.

As we already mentioned, some secular scientists have proposed an immense ______________ caused by a giant meteorite hitting the earth, blocking out the sun, and dwindling their food supply. The dinosaurs simply starved to death in this scenario.

These impacts should have affected the whole world’s animal ______________, but they didn’t.

Furthermore, dinosaurs were dying out after the Flood, which tragically reduced their ______________, of course.

Other ideas say a meteorite hit the ocean near the Yucatan Peninsula, causing giant __________ and acid rain to fall, killing off the dinosaurs.

Yet none of these ideas can adequately explain what we see, except for a global flood.
CONCLUSION

The Bible can be trusted as the true history book of the world. The Bible’s explanation makes perfect sense of what we are observing. We even expect meteorites to impact the world, being that it is sin-cursed and broken.

But as creationists, we don’t look at the evidence first. We start first with the Bible, trusting that it is God’s true Word, and then interpret the evidence through what we read in the Bible. We form our worldview through the Bible and use it to view all evidence.

We let God be the ultimate authority on the subject and go from there using the milestones He has revealed in the Bible. Secular scientists look at the same evidence we do, and interpret it differently because of their worldview.

They do not trust God and His Word as the ultimate authority, and so by default, man becomes his own authority. This is where the debate rages, between these two religions: humanism and biblical Christianity.

This is why there will always be a difference in what is thought about earth’s history. It’s not just based on the evidence, but our worldview. It shapes the way we look at the evidence as though we were wearing a certain type of glasses. So do we trust in man’s opinion, or God’s Word? We trust in God’s Word.

God was there at the beginning; He made the world, He destroyed it by a Flood, showing He has the power to judge.
He promises to destroy it again, this time by fire, but He promises salvation through His son Jesus Christ.

Meteor Crater — What It REALLY Means

Meteor Crater reminds us that the earth is not immune to catastrophic destruction from the heavens. A group of scientists are concerned about this and continue to watch the heavens for meteorites heading to earth.

When we look at the rocks in this area, evidence for a global flood is all around and God’s judgment was indeed a reality, showing that the Bible can be trusted as a true book of earth’s history. And there will be another coming judgment, and this time of fire.

God means business with his judgments and is calling for people to repent (Acts 17:30).

As we look at Meteor Crater, it gives a glimpse of what God can do. When we see Flood sediments all over the world, we see what God can do when people do not repent. Even so, God sent a means of salvation as He did with the ark from the Flood. All people have to do is enter through the door and be saved.

God is going to judge the earth for its rebellion once again. Yet because of His great love, He has provided salvation for all those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ — a door to salvation, for those who enter through Him shall be saved.

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