

2014 Notable Children's Books

Younger Readers

Alphablock. Franceschelli, Christopher. Illus. by Peskimo. Appleseed/Abrams

Each spread of this playful abecediary presents a die-cut letter revealing a few clues about the hidden object -- some expected, some unusual. A visually appealing and engaging guessing game for tots and parents alike.

Ball. Sullivan, Mary. Illus. by the author. Houghton

A ball-obsessed pup desperately waits for his owner to return to continue their play. (A 2014 Geisel Honor Book)

The Bathing Costume, or, the Worst Vacation of My Life. Moundlic, Charlotte. Illus. by the Olivier Tallec. Trans. by Claudia Zoe Bedrick. Enchanted Lion

Almost eight-year-old Myron faces a momentous summer vacation in the French countryside with his three cousins and a bathing suit that doesn't fit. (A 2014 Batchelder Honor Book)

Benjamin Bear in "Bright Ideas!" Coudray, Philippe. Illus. by the author. TOON

Benjamin Bear does some creative thinking when he tries to walk on water, build a house in the woods and shed his fleas, in this ingenious comic book full of visual gags and puns.

A Big Guy Took My Ball! Willems, Mo. Illus. by the author. Disney/Hyperion

Gerald the elephant comes to Piggie's aid when a big guy takes away the ball she found. A classic schoolyard encounter with a wry twist. (A 2014 Geisel Honor Book)

Building Our House. Bean, Jonathan. Illus. by the author. Farrar

An inspiring account of a resourceful family determined to raise roof and rafters. Detailed watercolors show the entire family working together to accomplish their goal.

Bully. Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter

Bull becomes larger and more threatening with each animal encounter until a fed-up goat calls Bull on being a bully. Simple text and clever art make for a powerful tale.

Count the Monkeys. Barnett, Mac. Illus. by Kevin Cornell. Disney/Hyperion

This interactive counting book invites readers to count 10 monkeys - provided the reader can find said monkeys. A clever and engaging concept book.

The Dark. Snicket, Lemony. Illus. by Jon Klassen. Little, Brown

Laszlo, frightened by the dark, must face his fears when his night light goes out. A little scary, a lot of fun.

The Day the Crayons Quit. Daywalt, Drew. Illus. by Oliver Jeffers. Philomel

Duncan just wants to color but his crayons have minds of their own. The imaginative humor and quirky illustrations will encourage creative youngsters to think outside the box.

Deep in the Sahara. Cunnane, Kelly. Illus. by Hoda Hadadi. Random/Schwartz & Wade

Lalla wants to wear a malafa but first must understand its true meaning. Jewel-toned illustrations introduce a West African culture in this unusual, universal story of emerging maturity.

Eat Like a Bear. Sayre, April Pulley. Illus. by Steve Jenkins. Holt

Strong illustrations portray a hungry grizzly bear as it wakes up in the spring and begins its determined search for food

Exclamation Mark. Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. Illus. by Tom Lichtenheld. Scholastic

In this simple, charming picture book, an exclamation mark learns a little bit about punctuation and a lot about being himself as a pesky question mark helps him discover his talent for emphasis.

Flight of the Honey Bee. Huber, Raymond. Illus. by Brian Lovelock. Candlewick

A day in the life of a honey bee scout is full of drama, excitement and danger as it zig zags from flower to flower, spreading pollen all around.

Flora and the Flamingo. Idle, Molly Schaar. Illus. by the author. Chronicle

The budding relationship between an awkward girl and a graceful flamingo is revealed through carefully orchestrated flaps in a minimalist setting and a limited color palette. (A 2014 Caldecott Honor Book)

Fraidy Zoo. Heder, Thyra. Illus. by the author. Abrams

Little T and her family romp through the alphabet creating zoo animals from paper, scissors and glue. This bursts with energy and encourages creativity.

Little Santa. Agee, Jon. Illus. by the author. Dial

What was Santa like as a child? This clever and inventive origin tale depicts how he grew from a tot in his little red onesie into the jolly fellow we know and love.

Locomotive. Floca, Brian. Illus. by the author. Atheneum

Dramatic illustrations document a family's unforgettable weeklong train trip from Omaha to Sacramento in 1869, including meticulously-researched portraits of train, travelers, and crew. (The 2014 Caldecott Medal Book and a Sibert Honor Book)

Lulu and the Dog from the Sea. McKay, Hilary. Illus. by Priscilla Lamont. Whitman

While Lulu, her family, and Sam the dog are enjoying a vacation in a seaside cottage, Lulu befriends a stray dog living in the dunes. Simple text, charming illustrations, and fully-realized characters, including the dogs.

Maria Had a Little Llama/María tenía una llamita pequeña. Dominguez, Angela. Illus. by the author. Holt

Maria and her llamita will delight young audiences in this adaptation of the traditional rhyme. (A 2014 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

Martin & Mahalia: His Words, Her Song. Pinkney, Andrea Davis. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Little, Brown

The synergistic influence of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahalia Jackson, on the Civil Rights movement -one with his words and the other with her powerful voice - is breathtakingly described in word and picture.

Mitchell Goes Bowling. Durand, Hallie. Illus. by Tony Fucile. Candlewick

Mitchell likes knocking things down! Dad wisely decides to take him bowling. Animated digital art depicts the ups and downs of this father-son outing -- with the highs celebrated with a steamin'-hot-potato dance!

Moo! LaRochelle, David. Illus. by Mike Wohnoutka. Walker

Using just the word "Moo!" to express his excitement, glee, fear, consternation, and embarrassment, an adventuresome cow has the adventure of a lifetime when he steals the farmer's car.

Mr. Tiger Goes Wild. Brown, Peter. Illus. by the author. Little, Brown

Mr. Tiger is tired of his proper clothing and gentlemanly manner. Venturing into the wild, he learns it's not all that he expected. Lush illustrations celebrate this expression of individuality and freedom.

Mr. Wuffles! Wiesner, David. Illus. by the author. Clarion

In a nearly wordless science fiction tale of epic and miniature proportions, a cat finds a new toy that is a tiny spaceship. Illustrations shine in this innovative picture book-graphic novel hybrid. (A 2014 Caldecott Honor Book)

My Father's Arms Are a Boat. Lunde, Stein Erik. Illus. by Øyvind Torseter. Trans. by Kari Dickson. Enchanted Lion

During one long Norwegian night, a father and son explore their powerful emotions of love and loss, but also hope and healing. Grief and loss are explored through a simple plot and complex characters. (A 2014 Batchelder Honor Book)

My Happy Life. Lagercrantz, Rose. Illus. by Eva Eriksson. Gecko

In this simple chapter book translated from the Swedish, Dani starts school and finds a best friend, who then sadly moves away; a portrait of an optimistic child working her way through a broken heart.

Nelson Mandela. Nelson, Kadir. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen

Kadir Nelson's rich paintings and lyrical text pay homage to the life of Nelson Mandela.

Niño Wrestles the World. Morales, Yuyi. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter

Niño, lucha libre hero, defeats almost all comers. Clever use of fonts, text bubbles, word art, and vibrant illustrations energizes this world-class wrestling match. (The 2014 Belpré Illustrator Medal Book)

Old Mikamba Had a Farm. Isadora, Rachel. Illus. by the author. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen

The children's Classic gets new life on the African plain. Kids will love the handsome illustrations as they sing EIEIO with spring boks, baboons, and wart hogs.

On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein. Berne, Jennifer Illus. by Vladimir Radunsky. Chronicle

Whimsical illustrations capture the untraditional imagination of one of the greatest minds of modern time, Albert Einstein.

Parrots Over Puerto Rico. Roth, Susan L. and Trumbore, Cindy. Illus. by Susan L. Roth. Lee & Low

A story of the rescue and return of the Puerto Rican parrot, a species once so abundant it blotted out the sun. (The 2014 Sibert Medal Book)

Penny and Her Marble. Henkes, Kevin. Illus. by the author. Greenwillow

After Penny finds a beautiful marble in her neighbor's yard, she is faced with a moral dilemma, explored with emotional truth in four brief chapters. (A 2014 Geisel Honor Book)

Robot, Go Bot! Rau, Dana Meachen. Illus. by Wook Jin Jung. Random

A girl bosses around her homemade robot using words that contain the long O sound and all its myriad spellings in this easy comic book-format reader

Take Me Out to the Yakyu. Meshon, Aaron. Illus. by the author. Atheneum

This colorful picture book playfully explores the similarities and differences between baseball games played in the U.S. and Japan as seen through the eyes of a young boy.

Ten Orange Pumpkins: A Counting Book. Savage, Stephen. Illus. by the author. Dial

A little bit scary and a whole lot of fun, ten orange pumpkins disappear one by one in this Halloween-themed picture book.

Tito Puente: Mambo King/Rey del Mambo. Brown, Monica. Illus. by Rafael López. Rayo

This vibrant, bilingual portrayal of Tito Puente, the King of Mambo, conveys the rhythm and movement of the musical legend through the use of bold colors, swirly lines, and carefully placed word art. (A 2014 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

The Tortoise & the Hare. Pinkney, Jerry. Illus. by the author. Little, Brown

The familiar Aesop's fable, here set in the American southwest, features a nearly wordless text and sunny, earthy, and luminous watercolors.

Warning: Do Not Open This Book! Lehrhaupt, Adam. Illus. by Matthew Forsythe. Simon & Schuster

This inventive presentation shows the importance of heeding warnings as mischievous monkeys, toucans, and alligators have fun breaking the rules.

The Watermelon Seed. Pizzoli, Greg. Illus. by the author. Disney/Hyperion

A watermelon-loving crocodile becomes distraught after swallowing a seed, believing it will grow inside of him. An innovative look at a childhood fear with color illustrations fresh as a cool slice of watermelon. (The 2014 Geisel Medal Book)

Xander's Panda Party. Park, Linda Sue. Illus. by Matt Phelan. Clarion

Party planning has never been so fun. The jaunty rhymes and lively illustrations capture Xander's zeal to create the perfect guest list in this playful picture book.

The Year of Billy Miller. Henkes, Kevin. Illus. by the author. Greenwillow

Seven-year-old Billy starts second grade with a bump on his head and a lot of worries, but as the school year unfolds, he grows and shines. (A 2014 Newbery Honor Book)

Middle Readers

The Animal Book: A Collection of the Fastest, Fiercest, Toughest, Cleverest, Shyest--and Most Surprising--Animals on Earth. Jenkins, Steve. Illus. by the author. Houghton

Readers will lose themselves in this compendium of animals living and extinct, chock full of interesting facts and beautiful illustrations.

Barbed Wire Baseball. Moss, Marissa. Illus. by Yuko Shimizu. Abrams

Set in the internment camps of WWII, beautiful Japanese-style ink-and-calligraphy illustrations bring to life the story of Kenichi Zenimura, the father of Japanese-American baseball.

Battle Bunny. Scieszka, Jon and Barnett, Mac. Illus. by Matthew Myers. Simon & Schuster

Not at all interested in his tame birthday gift, Alex remakes Birthday Bunny explode with chainsaws, megaton bombs, and pro-wrestling moves. An irreverent tale.

Battling Boy. Pope, Paul. Illus. by the author. First Second

In this explosive homage to superhero stories of yesteryear, the children of godlike beings are Acropolis's best hope for defeating supervillain Sinestro. The start of a trilogy.

Better Nate Than Ever. Federle, Tim. Simon & Schuster

Having run away from home, exuberant Nate experiences a variety of catastrophes and revelations on his way to becoming a Broadway star. Fresh, funny, and hopeful.

Bluffton: My Summers with Buster. Phelan, Matt. Illus. by the author. Candlewick

In this distinctively-visual, nostalgic graphic novel, Henry is resigned to spending a boring summer in Muskegon, Michigan, until young Buster Keaton arrives in town to spend the summer with his vaudeville troupe.

Bo at Ballard Creek. Hill, Kirkpatrick. Illus. by LeUyen Pham. Holt

Set during the Alaska 1920s gold rush, orphaned Bo is adopted by two tough but loving gold miners; she experiences plenty of adventure, charmingly illustrated.

The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible...on Schindler's List. Leyson, Leon. illus. Atheneum

Leon Leyson, the youngest person saved by Oskar Schindler, memorably describes the Krakow ghetto, the Nazi factory where he worked, and his life in the U.S. after the war.

The Boy Who Loved Math: The Improbable Life of Paul Erdős. Heiligman, Deborah. Illus. by LeUyen Pham. Roaring Brook

Readers will gain insight into the life of a genius in this colorful introductory biography of an brilliant unconventional mathematician.

Doll Bones. Black, Holly. Margaret K. McElderry

In a distinctive coming-of-age tale, three friends set out on a life-altering quest driven by the presence of a sinister china doll that haunts their dreams and waking hours. (A 2014 Newbery Honor Book)

Eruption!: Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives. Rusch, Elizabeth. Illus. by Tom Uhlman. Houghton

Compelling writing and informative photographs and maps explore the inner workings of volcanoes and highlights the work of a group of scientists dedicated to preventing the human tragedy caused by eruptions around the world.

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library. Grabenstein, Chris. Random

After notorious gamemaker Luigi Lemoncello designs the town library, Kyle and 11 kids are locked inside overnight and won't be free until they solve a series of puzzles based on famous books. Quirky and fun.

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table. Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. Illus. by Eric-Shabazz Larkin. Readers to Eaters

Farmer Will Allen and his Genius Project to encourage people to grow food for their own table, are introduced in this lively and engaging tale.

Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures. DiCamillo, Kate. Illus. by K. G. Campbell. Candlewick

In this homage to comic books, natural-born cynic Flora Belle Buckman and Ulysses, a flying, poetry-writing squirrel, join forces to overcome Ulysses' arch-nemesis, encountering a cast of quirky characters. (The 2014 Newbery Medal Book)

Gone Fishing: A Novel in Verse. Wissinger, Tamera Will. Illus. by Matthew Cordell. Houghton

Laugh-out-loud verse and humorous line drawings capture an older brother's frustration and a little sister's exuberance when they spend the day fishing with dad.

The Great American Dust Bowl. Brown, Don. Illus. by the author. Houghton

Employing graphic novel format, Don Brown paints a vivid and startling picture of the 10-year span of dust storms that devastated the Midwest, and explores the human causes of this environmental disaster.

How to Catch a Bogle. Jinks, Catherine. Illus. by Sarah Watts. Harcourt

In rough Victorian England, 10-year-old Birdie proudly works as an apprentice to a bogler, luring out the scary monsters that are eating children. Fast-paced, lots of historical detail, and starring a resourceful young heroine.

Knock Knock : My Dad's Dream for Me. Beaty, Daniel. Illus. by Bryan Collier. Little Brown

Beatty conveys loss and hope through poignant text and illustrations as a boy struggles to understand the absence of his father and their daily game of "Knock, Knock."

The Lightning Dreamer: Cuba's Greatest Abolitionist. Engle, Margarita. Harcourt

Tula fights for freedom and education for herself, and ultimately for women, slaves, and dissenters, in a poetic story of nineteenth-century Cuban abolitionist and writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. (A 2014 Belpré Author Honor Book)

Lincoln's Grave Robbers. Sheinkin, Steve. Scholastic

A thrilling account of a brazen plan by desperate counterfeiters to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln and use it as ransom for the release of a fellow felon.

Look Up! Bird-Watching in Your Own Backyard. Cate, Annette LeBlanc. Illus. by the author. Candlewick

This spirited, accessible introduction to the art and science of birding features immersive, fact-filled cartoon art punctuated with tongue-in-beak bird commentary via word bubbles and humorous asides. (A 2014 Sibert Honor Book)

The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius. Greenberg, Jan and Jordan, Sandra. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter

This fascinating account of the life and work of eccentric and inventive ceramic artist George E. Ohr is enhanced by photographs and information about where to see his art today. (A 2014 Sibert Honor Book)

Mister Orange. Matti, Truus. Illus. by Jenni Desmond. Trans. by Laura Watkinson. Enchanted Lion

When his older brother enlists in 1943, Linus Muller assumes family responsibilities that introduce him to “Mister Orange,” Dutch painter Piet Mondrian. A coming of age story and a celebration of the power of art. (The 2014 Batchelder Award Book)

Monster on the Hill. Harrell, Rob. Illus. by the author. Top Shelf

In this witty graphic novel set in an alternative 1860s England, towns are proud to have scary monsters; when Rayburn disappoints his villagers, they help him reach his full potential of terror.

P. S. Be Eleven. Williams-Garcia, Rita. HarperCollins/Amistad

In this riveting sequel to *One Crazy Summer*, the Gaither sisters return to their grandmother's house in New York City, where they struggle with the chaos of turbulent times and changing family relationships.

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale. Tonatiuh, Duncan. Illus. by the author. Abrams

An emotional story of the effects of undocumented immigration on those who leave and those who stay behind. Through traditional folk elements, readers follow young Pancho Rabbit in his arduous journey across the border in search of his father. (A 2014 Belpré Author Honor Book and Illustrator Honor Book)

Rooftoppers. Rundell, Katherine. Illus. by Terry Fan. Simon & Schuster

In a tale that soars with hope and humanity, Sophie has fled Victorian London to go mother-hunting in Paris. Bounding above the streets, a pack of homeless young “rooftoppers” assist in her search. Lyrical and poetic.

Serafina's Promise: A Novel in Verse. Burg, Ann E. Scholastic

Set in Haiti and told in verse, 11-year-old Seraphina and her poor but loving family endure hunger, floods, and earthquakes while the determined girl never gives up her dreams of going to school and becoming a doctor.

Soldier Dog. Angus, Sam. Feiwel and Friends

During World War I, 14-year old Stanley becomes one of the first “keepers” of Britain’s Messenger Dog Service, training two beloved dogs with whom he endures the horrors of trench warfare.

A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin, Bryant, Jen. Illus. by Melissa Sweet. Knopf

This engaging picture book biography of artist Horace Pippin captures the essence of his life and work through tightly woven narrative and vibrant illustrations. (A 2014 Sibert Honor Book)

Sugar. Rhodes, Jewell Parker. Little, Brown

After Emancipation, young Sugar's forbidden friendship with the plantation owner's son and her connection with Chinese immigrant workers advances her dream of a better life far from the plantation.

Treasury of Egyptian Mythology. Napoli, Donna Jo. Illus. by Christina Balit. National Geographic

In this exemplary book of folklore, Napoli introduces young readers to Egyptian mythology with vivid language and illustration and anchors the tales in intriguing and research-supported interpretation.

The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp. Appelt, Kathi. Atheneum

In this comical tall tale, the swamp is threatened by developers and an unlikely crew of characters including the Swamp Man, the raccoon brothers, and 12-year-old Chap set out to save it.

The War within These Walls. Sax, Aline. Illus. by Caryl Strzelecki. Trans. by Laura Watkinson. Eerdmans

With powerful text and stark illustrations, this novella provides a harrowing account of Jewish suffering in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II. (A 2014 Batchelder Honor Book)

When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky: Two Artists, Their Ballet, and One Extraordinary Riot. Stringer, Lauren. Illus. by the author. Harcourt

Illustrations dance across the page as Russian composer Stravinsky and choreographer Nijinsky collaborate on “The Rite of Spring,” creating a modern ballet that polarized their artistic world.

When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop. Hill, Laban Carrick. Illus. by Theodore Taylor III. Roaring Brook

Vibrant illustrations and brief text introduce DJ Clive Campbell, who took popular dance music, stretched the breaks in the songs, and turned basic rhythms into hip-hop.

Words with Wings. Grimes, Nikki. Boyds Mills/WordSong

Gabriella journeys from daydreamer to writer thanks to the intervention of an empathetic teacher. An engaging novel told in verse.

Older Readers

Becoming Ben Franklin: How a Candle-Maker's Son Helped Light the Flame of Liberty. Freedman, Russell. illus. Holiday.

Beginning with an independent young man arriving in Philadelphia, this informative and well-paced book shines a light on one of America's most interesting Founding Fathers.

Counting by 7s. Sloan, Holly Goldberg. Dial

After the death of her parents, genius outsider Willow begins to bloom again and becomes an agent for change for the diverse group of people she meets. A surprising and inspiring story about family and friendship.

Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers. Stone, Tanya Lee. illus. Candlewick

Bolden introduces the unsung story of the U.S. Army's first African-American paratroopers unit, moving gracefully among portraits of individual paratroopers, the history of the unit, and the complex social issues of the time.

Darius & Twig. Myers, Walter Dean. Amistad

Two best friends make a pact to succeed as they struggle to escape their inner-city lives. Strong writing realizes vivid characters in this gritty novel.

Diego Rivera: An Artist for the People. Rubin, Susan Goldman. illus. Abrams

A visually appealing and engaging introduction to the life and the work of an important figure in modern art, muralist Diego Rivera.

Emancipation Proclamation: Lincoln and the Dawn of Liberty. Bolden, Tonya. illus. Abrams

Bolden scrutinizes with clarity and flawless research the many paths that led to Lincoln's famous proclamation, reviewing its historical impact on the war-torn United States during a turbulent and bitter period.

Etiquette & Espionage. Carriger, Gail. Little, Brown

In this madcap, steampunk-mystery, Sophronia Temminnick learns that etiquette and espionage go hand-in-glove when she is covertly recruited from Mademoiselle Geraldine's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies of Quality. A paranormal mashup set in Victorian England.

Far Far Away. McNeal, Tom. Knopf

An insidious predator has been abducting innocent children. Jeremy, the only one who can hear narrator Jacob Grimm, must save himself and his friends with the storyteller's help.

Go: A Kidd's Guide to Graphic Design. Kidd, Chip. Illus. by the author. Workman

Graphic design rock star Chip Kidd introduces his world and encourages readers to new ways of looking and creating.

The Living. de la Peña, Matt. Delacorte

In a thrilling survival story, Shy's summer job on a cruise ship becomes a fight for his life. This page-turner adventure also raises important cultural and sociological issues. (A 2014 Belpré Author Honor Book)

March: Book One. Lewis, John and Aydin, Andrew. Illus. by Nate Powell. Top Shelf

Using the inauguration of President Obama as a framing device, Congressman John Lewis and graphic novelist Powell tell the story of Lewis's life and his participation in America's civil rights movement.

Navigating Early. Vanderpool, Clare. Delacorte

Sent to Morton Hill Academy after the death of his mother, Jack meets the unusual Early Auden. They set off on a quest that forces them to confront pirates, bears, doubt, loss and grief.

One Came Home. Timberlake, Amy. Knopf

In 1871 Wisconsin, 13-year-old Georgie tries to solve the mystery of her sister's disappearance, pulling readers along on her journey of self-discovery. (A 2014 Newbery Honor Book)

Paperboy. Vawter, Vince. Delacorte

A sensitive and resilient 11-year-old boy who stutters, ventures beyond the familiar and finds his voice while taking over his best friend's paper route in the Memphis summer of 1959. (A 2014 Newbery Honor Book)

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass. Medina, Meg. Candlewick

Piddy Sanchez's life is turned upside down when she finds out that Yaqui Delgado wants to kick her ass. While struggling to deal with the threat on her own, Piddy explores her identity, her culture, and the role of others in her life. A powerful story about bullying and resilience. (The 2014 Belpré Author Medal Book)

All Ages

Journey. Becker, Aaron. Illus. by the author. Candlewick

Finding a magical red crayon, a bored and lonely girl draws a door on her bedroom wall that leads her to a wondrous but perilous new world. (A 2014 Caldecott Honor Book)

Poems to Learn by Heart. Kennedy, Caroline. Illus. by Jon J Muth. Disney/Hyperion

Warm and humorous water color paintings accompany this collection of more than 100 familiar and imaginative poems, suitable for families to read aloud and recite from memory.

Members of the 2014 Notable Children's Books Committee include:

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