Learning Goals:

In this class you will write a 30-page primary-source based piece of historical scholarship. If you are on the exam option, writing this paper will help you see how history is constructed from sources; and the scholarly reading you will do may feed into your exam lists. If you are writing an M.A. thesis, this class should help you clarify what your thesis will be about. You will then draft a chapter of the thesis itself.

Good writing is important here. This is a writing seminar. You will be reading drafts of everyone else's papers and doing a formal critique of one of them (as someone will do a formal critique of yours). If you are not already in the habit of writing short, clear sentences, then get in the habit quickly. Take your long sentences, chop them apart, and keep only what is most important. Get to know Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*. You can buy it everywhere, it is short and pleasant, and it has a good index. **Read Chaps. 1-3.** Then find the parts you most need; read them again and again.

Always try to say what you mean without adding any simultaneous metacommentary on what you are saying. If you have a new thought that complicates things, add it as a new simple sentence later on, not as a gnarled phrase forced into the middle of the sentence you started with.

Why this focus on clear writing? Let us step back and think about what historians do: At bottom, we retell stories about the past, and in doing so we try to ask intelligent questions that our colleagues and readers might be interested in. We try to construct our stories and arguments out of new evidence. We are careful about our sources and we cite them clearly. We consult unpublished documents in archives. Some of us do interview or participate in archaeological digs. And then we try to communicate what we have found.

But while we are professional in the way we go about our research, and while we are in an empirical field grounded on evidence about the external world, we aren't scientists. History is an empirical but not a scientific discipline. History does not give quantifiable, experimentally verified, generalizable laws about human nature, the kind of laws that might allow for precise predictions. We cannot tell people what is going to happen in Syria. But historical perspectives about what is going on there are valuable even if they do not allow for prediction. If as historians we cannot aim for prediction and control we can aim a little lower, for wisdom -- and maybe tendencies.

But the question remains: If we cannot quantify and test precisely measured hypotheses, how do we know that what we are saying is true? What good are we? And what has all this got to do with clear writing? There are three main forms of quality control that we impose on ourselves as historians:

(1) While looking at the past, historians always look for new evidence and as many
perspectives as we can get. That is one reason we like as many old books as possible to be kept on the shelves in the library. The more ways we have looked at a story being told, and the more evidence about it we have seen, the more we can check and develop our ideas, and the more leads we will discover for when we go back to the archives. Primary-source based research -- the kind you will be doing in this class -- is our main way of testing and extending what we know about the past.

(2) Also, historical work is judged by whether it builds on what historians have written before. Historians look at whether new work revises and extends work that has already been published. Does it frame questions in a new way? Does it exploit new sources, or throw new light on sources that other historians have already used? Or on the other hand, does a piece of historical scholarship betray the writer's ignorance of the relevant historical scholarship? Your paper in this class should not merely report on what some primary sources say. You need to write an historiographically aware piece of scholarship. To do this, you are going to need to read quite a lot on your own, and talk to your thesis or exam advisor(s) about the historiography that you ought to be aware of.

(3) Finally, to a perhaps surprising degree, historians judge the accuracy and utility of each other's work by how simply and how clearly it is written. Does it tell the story or make the argument in a clear way, based upon good and properly interpreted evidence? We try to use clear language to diminish confusion and touch the essence of a topic.

So, do good research. Be thoughtful about what historians have written before now. And be clear in what you write.

Framing your Project:

You have a lot of work to do in this class, so you need to pick a subject very quickly. Over our first few class meetings we will spend a good deal of our time on some of the primary sources available to you and what you can do with them. But the more you bring to the table in terms of what you want to write about, and the more studying and reading you have already done on the topic, the further ahead you will be. If you have some historical interests, if you have been reading about them for some time, and if you have taken classes on them, you can probably begin to situate your proposed work against what has already been written.

Situating your Project Historiographically:

Let me stress that knowing the historiography does not mean finding the books on exactly this one narrowly defined topic and stopping there.

The books on exactly the topic you are researching are probably not the most important part of the historiographical background that you need to master. Let's consider an example. If you are writing about the political influence of Queen Victoria, the biographies of the queen would not be enough. You would also have to look at works on her prime ministers to see the influence they had – and to see what her influence looks
like to those scholars who are not primarily interested in her. You would need to look at key monographs on the larger political trends of the time, such as liberalism, conservatism, and imperialism. And you would need to consider the leading general treatments of the political and social atmosphere of the age. You need to become learned in your subject and in the scholarly conversations connected to it.

Another example: If you are writing about the rise of Napoleon, then the classic analyses of the French Revolution and its aftermath -- which are not going to have the word "Napoleon" in their titles -- are going to be more important for you than a lot of the biographies of the emperor. You will also need to look at biographies of Paul Barras and the Abbé Sieyès.

If you are researching the history of a shopping center in San Diego, you will need to know something about the growth of cities in the American west, and something about the history of American shopping.

When you write about the historical works of other people, do not take the reader through a mechanical, book-by-book tour of all the plusses and minuses of the most specialized works on your subject. You might include some comment on them, but you should focus on the higher-level historiographical questions that may come up.

Mark this well: The "historiographical section" of a piece of historical writing does not have to be a section at all. (Some committee chairs want historiographical sections in MA theses and some don't.) At bottom, what you are after is not a series of little book reports that get dropped one after another into a separate section called "Historiography." What you are after instead is historiographical awareness as an abstract quality. And that awareness should be integrated again and again throughout what you are writing. Maybe it will help to think of things this way: In this class, you are not writing the historiography section of an MA thesis -- even if a thesis advisor wants you to have a section like that in the thesis you eventually write. Rather than writing the historiography part of an MA thesis, you are writing one of the story chapters of the thesis. You are writing one of the main body chapters, not the historiographical introduction to the overall work.

To sum up: In this class you will write a self-contained story that you have researched, based largely upon primary sources. (For those of you doing a thesis, what you write here will be a part that will move you toward completion of the larger work. For those of you doing the MA exams, the paper from this class is meant to be self-contained.) Your historiographical awareness -- your knowledge of the major historiographical traditions concerning the French Revolution, say, if you are researching the young Napoleon -- will inform both the research you do in History 665 and the way you will present it. When you need to bring the discussion among the historians to the attention of the reader, then you will bring up the perspectives of Scholar X and Scholar Y in the body of your paper, and you will footnote these scholars accordingly. Your paper will have an introduction, as chapters do, but it will not have a big introduction on the scale of what a complete MA thesis would have.
Working with your Primary Sources:

Finding Primary Sources:

This will work out differently for everyone. Ancient historians might be able to look mostly at published primary sources in some of texts on the circulating shelves in the library. Or they can look at the archaeological evidence that informs their topic.

Even modern historians like myself can find themselves concentrating on published primary sources – such as the collected letters of Charles Darwin. Darwin's letters have been published in big wonderful books, and for the most part they make going to London to look at the original handwritten letters unnecessary.

Some primary sources are now published online. Old newspapers count as published primary sources, too. Some of you may be looking at those.

Others of you will be examining unpublished primary sources in archives. We have a substantial archive in the Special Collections Department of our library. So does UCSD. Two other archives in San Diego are in the basement of the San Diego History Center in Balboa Park, and on the top floor of the Central Library downtown. There are others, such as the Lambda Archives.

We will talk a lot about finding sources in the first few weeks of our class. The main point I want stress for the first time you read this syllabus is this one: Your paper for History 665 must be based more than anything on primary sources, not on the secondary works on the shelves of the library or in JSTOR. A paper based on secondary sources would be an undergraduate report. It would not be acceptable here.

Notetaking:

There are only two supremely, awe-inspiringly important things to say about this for now: (1) On every sheet, on every card, in every section of every computer file, on every napkin on which you scrawl anything you have found in doing your research, put the book and page number or the complete archival reference. While you might think you will remember where something in your notes came from, the reality is very different: Late at night two months later as you revise that section of your paper, you will not be able to remember or reconstruct where you got some key fact, and all because you did not take the time to systematically write the page number and every other piece of boring information on every note. Then, as you realise the awful reality of this fact that night as you are trying to get your paper done -- as the reality sinks in that you don't know where you got some key point, and you can't figure it out however hard you try -- your mind and heart will start inwardly falling apart, and you will need anger management therapy, and you will be that much closer to old age and dissolution. We are historians; we put a complete reference on EVERYTHING or we drive ourselves crazy. (2) And as you are taking your notes, if you are writing down what the source says, or what some secondary source says, and then you get some thought [[put your thought in double brackets like
this]. That way, you can tell the difference between what it was you thought while you were taking notes and the unbracketed facts and ideas that came from the source which you were taking notes on. There are many cases of famous historians getting busted for plagiarism. Some of these people committed the sin, I think, of taking sloppy notes. They failed to make a clear typographical distinction between what some other writer said and what they themselves thought about it. So months or years later, when they used their notes to create a draft, they misinterpreted what was in the notes and they took other people's thoughts as their own. And so in their published work they indeed presented those thoughts as their own work. Result: Plagiarism. Humiliation. Ruined careers.

To sum up: Just as you will not remember a page number or an archival reference if you do not write it down, you may not remember where the ideas in the source stop and your own ideas start [[unless you make a clear typographical distinction like this]].

(And by the way, don't use color as your only distinction if you are taking notes into a computer. Word -- to name one program -- can sometimes wipe away color choices. Use color if you want to, but use the brackets, too, so your markers are actual encoded textual characters and not just formatting.)

**Coding:**

So, you will need to take notes on your archival and library research. Another problem you want to avoid in doing so is winding up with a big sheaf of note papers that you have to go through from one end to the other every time you want to find something, or every time you want to write another section of your work. Believe me, this is not the best way to go about organizing your information. You won't get a lot of work done if you have to slog through a huge pile of material to find every new fact.

The solution is to sit down and code your notes in some way. There are many ways to code things, some on the computer (Zotero, for example) and some on paper. I'm going to discuss one coding method here in the syllabus so you can get a sense of what I mean.

Here we go: Let's say you have a whole bunch of notes and xeroxes. At very least, you could invest in a variety of different-colored tab-shaped sticky notes. (Yes, they are expensive, but you might want to splurge on this project). With your sticky-tabs in hand, you would then go through your notes and xeroxes, systematically marking the different events or issues. The sticky-tabs with their different colors would stick out past the edge of the page. When you've marked everything, you can go back through your huge pile of paper and find the colored stickies for each different subject. You can even write little stars or smiley faces on the ends of the stickies that mark the most important passages – those pieces of evidence that you could use to establish your original skeleton narrative. Or if you are into pretty colors, you can get both pastel and neon versions of each color. That way you could put a light pink sticky on each quotation relevant to subject X, but a neon pink sticky on Subject X's most important passages. If you change you mind later on, you promote or demote a passage by changing it from pastel to neon or neon to pastel.
Or you can write numbers on some of the sticky-tabs to preserve for the writing stage any sense of sequencing that that strikes you while you are doing your coding. Or you could write dates on the ends of the stickies for the same purpose.

No, your system won't be perfect. Some odd things won't fit your coding system; or you won't think to code for a particular issue until its importance becomes clear to you well into the writing process. In that case, you will have to take the time to slog through your notes yet again and code with another color – or maybe with the stickers you go and peel off the bananas in the grocery store. (Trader Joe's gives out stickers to children. You can exploit your child and go to Trader Joe's and get some, and then take them for yourself when you leave the store.)

So much for some of the intricacies of the World Famous Sticky-Tab System. As I said before, there are many coding systems, some computer-based and some paper-based. We will look at several examples in class. Cramming further details about the subject into the syllabus probably wouldn't be very helpful, and many people in the class may have their own ideas to share. I will bring some examples of coded notes to class so we explore the topic more fully. Why spend class time on this? For one thing, we need to consider whether different types of notetaking and coding systems are more appropriate for one kind of project or another. For now, I just want to stress that being able to quickly access particular information in your notes can help you both when you are constructing your original draft and when you are revising and extending it later on.

**Writing the Paper:**

**Drafting:**

It is usually best to go through events in chronological order, and to go back and forth among a few or your most helpful primary and secondary sources to construct your initial skeleton draft.

Then go back through your draft again and again, weaving in your other primary and secondary sources where they correct or deepen what you have already written.

In creating your initial skeleton draft, you may want to depart from the chronological arrangement if you are looking at chronologically overlapping stories that took place in different places. Then perhaps you would do these stories in different sections or chapters. But within each section the arrangement would still be chronological.

**To Outline, or Not to Outline?**

Note that I am asking you to write a skeleton version of the story or argument without doing a detailed outline first. If you want to do an outline because you are used to doing outlines and find they are helpful, fine. It may also be good to construct a timeline so you can get your chronology straight.
But personally I don't make outlines ahead of time. I find that I have to write through the sources to see how long the major parts of the story will be when I discuss them. Some parts of the story might be two sentences, and other parts five pages. But in an outline each one would simply be a separate lower-level heading, and they would look like they were the same size. For me, outlining becomes a useful tool once you have already written a substantial draft and you know how big things are. At that point, you may want to ask yourself the purpose of the different parts, whether they ought to go in a different order, and whether some parts are out of proportion and need to be cut down a bit while others need further research and expansion. An outline made then can be a useful tool as you try to perfect your work.

Weaving in More Things:

Once you have your initial skeletal write-up of your main story and your main sources, you will weave your other sources into it wherever they correct and deepen things. You can also use your early skeleton draft to see where you need to do more research. You will be able to see where you need to find more sources to weave in, and where you need to engage more deeply with the relevant historiographical questions – weaving those in wherever they fit.

Weaving layer after layer of sources and historiographical discussion into your original (more or less chronological) framework in this way may help you to avoid a major pitfall. Sometimes graduate students write their theses source-by-source. This can produce a series of essays on sources that between them may never make clear the sequence of historical events -- about which each source only provides one facet. Don't write discrete essays on each source. Remember the procedure I have described, where you juggle a few primary and secondary sources to establish the story and then you weave the other sources in, so you can round out and extend the picture. You should weave in the historiographical material, too.

I want you to go event-by-event or argument-by-argument, not source-by-source. You can mine several sources for what they say about this or that event, or this or that argument, then use the different sources to create one well-rounded account of the topic. That way you can make the individual sources (and the historiographical works you blend in) talk to each other, instead of putting the historiography and each of the main primary sources into different isolated sections or on different pages.

Course Schedule and Assignments:

Due to an oddity in the academic calendar this semester, our class meets for the first time in Week II, on 27 January. In the first two class meetings (Weeks II and III), we will go around the room discussing possible research projects, and we will examine primary source research opportunities in San Diego and online.
In Week III, we will look at research opportunities in the SDSU Library Department of Special Collections, and the class will meet there. You need to identify and begin to explore a substantial body of primary sources upon which your research will be based. In Week III, we will also discuss George Orwell's essay, "Politics and the English Language."

Book Analysis: In Week IV, turn in a three-page double-spaced analysis of the book of *Making Modern Love*, by Lisa Sigel. Using specific examples, discuss how the body chapters work (how they use evidence and how they make arguments), and compare and contrast how the chapters work with how the introduction works. We will discuss the book in class, and further explore research opportunities.

Primary Source Assignment, due in Week V: Over several pages, reproduce samples or examples of the major primary sources you are using. Mention exactly where they are – call numbers, street addresses, web links. For each source, write at least two paragraphs: (1) In one paragraph, discuss the context under which these sources were produced. (2) In the other paragraph, briefly discuss the works of other scholars who have used these sources. (We will use some class time in previous weeks to review how to find those sources.) How will your work be different from what other scholars have written? How will you bring other sources into the mix to revise and extend the story? Attach copies of your sources to the back of your paragraphs.

Be prepared to discuss these matters as we go around the room this week. What you have brought will be projected onto the screen while the class discusses it. We will cover about half of the students in the class.

Historiography Assignment: In a polished essay due in Week VI, discuss the major historiographical themes or questions that are important for your work, and the relevant books and articles. *Do not* discuss the narrower books and articles on your specific research topic. Simply list these on a fifth page, and describe each one in no more than one sentence.

In class in Week VI, be prepared to discuss your larger themes, the specific secondary sources you are planning to use, and how employing the primary sources you have chosen will take your further. We will cover the half of the class whose work was not discussed the week before, but we can also revisit the projects of people covered in Week V. Primary source assignments from the previous week will be projected on the screen while we discuss your work.

Class will not meet in Weeks VII, VIII, and X, while you work on your papers. In Week IX, we will meet to hear how everyone is doing, to address any concerns, and to discuss
how your different approaches to research and writing are working out. Are your research materials by this point online or on a thumb drive? Or are you going through papers in a dusty basement somewhere, and writing directly from them into your computer? Who is getting up really early to write before the sun comes up? Who can only work at night, once the day is done? Do you listen to music or watch Godzilla movies while you work? Is there anyone who has developed the habit of working in coffeehouses? Or bars? How many pages a day do you write, or how much of your sources do you get through in each session? Do you do your editing in a different time or place than where you do your writing?

In Week XI (the week after Spring Break) class will resume with a brief meeting so the students presenting in Week XII can distribute their drafts, and so we can touch base with each other before the presentations start. Over Weeks XII, XIII, and XIV, each student will make a 20-minute final presentation of research findings. You must also give a copy of your draft to all the other students and to me no later than one week before you present. Drafts of less than 22 pages or more than 30 will result in a lowering of the final course grade. One of the other students will write a three-page analysis and critique of your work. The critique is due at your presentation. After the author of the paper does her 20-minute presentation, the author of the critique will speak for at least five minutes, and then general discussion will ensue. Everyone in the room will have read all of the drafts for that day. Showing that you have done so is a good way to help earn a high participation grade. (Think of it this way: Everyone starts with an "F" for participation and needs to work up.)

Oral and written critiques must be substantive and constructive. Comment on the current quality of the draft and the room for improvement. Discuss the introduction, the thesis, the use of major pieces of evidence, the major analytical approach(es), the conclusion, and the correctness of the scholarly apparatus (notes and bibliography). Critiquers will be graded on the fullness, accuracy, and usefulness of the commentary. "It is nice" doesn't cut it. Neither does criticism that is mean-spirited or less than constructive.

**Formatting Rules and Other Technicalities:**

And now the formatting rules: Papers will be double-spaced in 12-point Times Roman, left-aligned (no justification), with 1-inch margins, no hyphenation, and Arabic-numeral page numbers centered at the bottom of every page. Do not include a cover-sheet. Block quotations (all quotations which would take up more than three full lines in the text) will be indented by a further half inch on both left and right, single-spaced, and presented without external quotation marks. You will employ footnotes and not endnotes. Footnotes will be in single-spaced 12-point Times Roman. Do not give URLs or access dates for journal articles – cite each journal article as though you consulted the printed copy. (Cite online-only journals by volume or issue number as though they were printed.) If you are citing non-journal websites, give the URL and access date if there is no other way to cite the source – but if there is another citation system that would be used for the paper version of the source, use that system. Do not left-indent any of the lines of your footnotes. On all other matters of style and formatting, follow the Humanities footnote-
based model of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edn).

Final papers will be 30-pages long, counting the footnotes – but not counting the bibliography and any pictorial appendices (pictures must appear in the appendix and not in the main text). A paper 28 pages or shorter (text and footnotes only) will be docked in grade. So will a paper of 32 pages or longer.

It is not expected that final papers will be turned in late. This paper is not something that you will be throwing together at the last minute, but a piece of professional work that you will build up in a continuous and deliberate way over the course of the semester. It is a key part of your graduate program, and it should not be pushed aside for weeks at a time while you turn to your TAing or grading duties. There is no reason for the paper to be late unless you or someone you care for has documented medical problems.

Patterns of grammatical errors are unacceptable at this level. Your grade will be severely penalized for handing in work that is grammatically faulty (whether the little papers or the big one). And I am not going to read a graduate-level 30-page paper where I have to stop and explain basic grammatical principles several times per page. I will simply give the paper a very low grade and move on.

Any form of academic dishonesty or cheating, such as the uncredited borrowing or copying of substantial concepts or language from others, will result in an "F" in the course (and not merely on the assignment), and referral to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

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Grading Formula: The book analysis due in Week IV is worth 8%. The primary source Assignment is worth 8%. The Historiography assignment is worth 10%. Class participation throughout the term is worth 15%; due to the participatory nature of the class, absences will by their nature reduce your participation and thus your participation grade. (Documented medical emergencies will have to made up for in some way.) Your written and oral critique of another student's draft is worth 10%. The final oral presentation on your own paper is worth 8%. Your final paper is worth 41%. Course grades will be lowered if your first circulated draft was less than 22 pages or more than 30. Any of the first three, shorter assignments that is turned in late will be docked. A late first draft will be docked very severely. A late final paper will not be accepted.

Work is not to be put off till some "free weekend," or some period with a perfect set of writing conditions. Free weekends and perfect conditions do not exist. If you are serious about your work, you should want to do it for a few hours at a time, several times over a normal busy week. If you are not doing your work, then maybe something is stopping you. Putting off your work till some mythically perfect time may be a way of putting off your confrontation with whatever may be causing the block. Maybe you don't know what to do about some aspect of the research or the writing, or you are stuck for some reason. If so, please come and talk to me. Let's try to solve the problem and get you back to work before you get too far behind.
Learning Outcomes and Grading Standards:

A final paper that makes a point through primary source research, and which sets its story and analysis against an appropriately and interestingly discussed historiographical background, will get an "A", if the paper manages not to distract the reader with bad grammar, stylistic slips, or citation errors. A paper that has occasional weaknesses in research, analysis, or writing will most likely get a B. A paper that is weak in two of these three areas will get a "C." A paper that is seriously flawed in all these ways may receive a "D." Also, a final paper with a major pattern of grammatical errors will be given a "D." The learning outcome of the class is the paper you write.

Outline of Schedule:

Week II (27 Jan.): Introduction to the course and each other. Introduction to finding primary sources.
Week III (3 Feb.): Discussion of research opportunities. Class meets in library. Discussion of George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language."
Week IV (10 Feb.): Further discussion of student research opportunities. Sigel Book Analysis Due.
Week V (17 Feb.): Projects of half the students are discussed. Primary Source Assignment Due.
Week VI (24 Feb.): Historiography Assignment Due, and the other half of the class has their projects discussed.
Week VII (3 Mar.): No class meeting while you research and write your big paper.
Week VIII (10 Mar.): No class meeting while you research and write your big paper.
Week IX (17 Mar.): Class will meet for brief discussions of how everyone's work is going, and for the scheduling of the final presentations. Until this point, no one will know who is presenting early and who is presenting late. So everybody had better work as though they were presenting early.
Week X (24 Mar.): No class meeting while you research and write your big paper.
Spring Break
Week XI (7 April): The briefest of class meetings so the Week XII presenters can distribute their drafts.
Week XII (14 April): The first group of 20-minute presentations. Week XIII presenters will distribute their drafts.
Week XIII (21 April): The second group of 20-minute presentations. Week XIV presenters will distribute their drafts.
Week XIV (28 April): The third group of 20-minute presentations.
Week XV (5 May): No class meeting while you polish your drafts.
Weeks XVI (Finals Week): Final draft due in my office by the 4:00 in the afternoon on Wednesday, 13 May. This is six days before I have to turn in grades based upon working through all of your 30-page papers; meanwhile I will have to finish reading the final exams from my other two classes. Late final papers will not be accepted. Computer crashes the day the paper is due are not acceptable excuses, because naturally you will have backed up various stages of your draft --
including one or more nearly complete versions -- on several thumbdrives and/or in Dropbox or on a Cloud somewhere. If you have a documented medical emergency that prevents you from turning the paper in by 4:00 on Wednesday, you will get an Incomplete for the class. When after several months of treatment your leprosy is no longer contagious and you are released from quarantine on Molokai; or when your cardiac surgeon has finally cleared you for returning to work, then and only then you and I will have to work out an agreement for when you will finish your paper (and when I will read it). This will be at some mutually convenient time over the subsequent year. I will not put you off spitefully, but I may not be able to take care of your paper as quickly as you would hope once you have finally got it done. I may have committee work or grading to do that I will not be able to put off, or I may be out of the country. I want to stress that this option to take an incomplete is only open to you if you have a real medical emergency of the kind that requires hospitalization or urgent care, and you have medical documentation to that effect. It is not open to you if you are feeling bad.

Language which the university now requires in every syllabus:
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

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