



**Kōia te
Mātauraka**

RĀKAIHAUTŪ ME TE WAKA URUAO KI TAUMUTU

Rākaihautū & the Uruao waka in the tradition of Taumutu Rūnanga

WHAKAMIHIMIHI | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This resource stands on the shoulders of mahi (work) carried out by countless others. Kōia te Mātauraka acknowledges Taumutu Rūnanga for gifting their pūrākau of Rākaihautū for educational use in their takiwā (territory). We also acknowledge Dianne Robinson for her unit on Rākaihautū (March 2024).

This resource was developed by Holly Bodman with support from Liz Hill-Taiaroa, Kalina Te Rahui, Nicole Solomon and Tamra Nutira (May 2024). It was peer-reviewed by Dianne Robinson (July 2024).

While this resource draws on Kāi Tahu sources, we acknowledge that it may benefit from the inclusion of more Kāi Tahu perspectives to deepen its richness. We encourage schools to engage with mana whenua to develop the key knowledge statements where possible.



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This unit is about Rākaihautū, captain of the Uruao waka and eponymous ancestor of the first peoples to settle in Waitaha. In Taumutu tradition, Rākaihautū discovered Te Waipounamu c.1250CE and was attributed with ahi kā status (lighting and tending the fires of occupation) in Te Waipounamu. (Note: Some whakapapa traditions date the landing of Rākaihautū as early as 750CE).

Understand

Learning about Rākaihautū and the Uruao in the tradition of Te Taumutu Rūnanga builds ākoka understanding that Māori history is the foundational and continuous history of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Know

By exploring Rākaihautū me te waka Uruao, ākoka build their knowledge about ways that the people of Te Taumutu Rūnanga are deeply connected to the local area through stories about their origins and arrival.

Do

In these learning experiences, ākoka will use different sources to retell the story of Rākaihautū, talk about how other people might tell it differently, and make observations about how people have acted in the past and how they act today.

Please note that we have intentionally not translated “waka” as “canoe”. The term “canoe” creates an image of a 2–4-person boat, between 4–6m long, with limited space. Polynesian voyaging waka were five times this size at up to 30m long (some have been recorded at over 30m which was longer than Cook’s Endeavour). Voyaging waka had sails and rigs, with single or double masts. They were double-hulled and could accommodate up to 180 people. There was space to store food and resources including seeds, plants, and animals.

How to use this rauemi (resource)

The pūrākau (story) of Rākaihautū which this unit draws upon has been gifted by Te Taumutu Rūnanga for educational use in their takiwā. Kaiako (teachers) and ākoka (students) may be familiar with variations in the pūrākau (Rākaihautū is important in the whakapapa of Te Tai Tokerau and Rarotonga, for example). We ask that kaiako acknowledge variations, while being explicit that the pūrākau shared in this unit is specific to Te Taumutu Rūnanga. The rūnanga requests their pūrākau is respected, and if adapted to other media, the essence of the pūrākau remains unchanged. Kaiako are free to adapt the learning experiences to meet the diverse needs of the ākoka in their learning settings. Te Taumutu Rūnanga is the legal entity representing the hapū of Ngāi te Ruahikihiki ki Taumutu; the name Taumutu also describes the people from that place.

Kaupapa Māori: mana whenua, pūrākau, taiao, tūākiri, tūrangawaewae, whakapapa, whenua.

Please note that kaupapa Māori cannot be captured in a single kupu (word). We recommend that kaiako allocate time for ākoka to explore the depth of meaning within each of the kaupapa above.

Key concepts: colonisation, culture, decolonisation, environment, identity, origin, place, traditions, values.



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The rich question to guide teaching and learning is: *Who is Rākaihautū and why is he important?* The Teacher Support Material is designed to be used in conjunction with the Rākaihautū Slides.

To support kaiako in teaching and learning, key knowledge statements weaving the “understands” and “knows” in context have been included. These statements are accompanied by a range of learning experiences (“do” practices) which support ākoka to develop understanding of the key knowledge statements. Literacy tasks have been embedded into the learning experiences, and opportunities to develop numeracy in context have been included. We have also included Kā Puna Rauemi (Source Cards) for teacher reference as the cards are not targeted at Years 0-3, but they could be used to develop the unit for older age groups. The unit is designed to take 2-3 weeks of class-based learning but could be extended if kaiako decide to develop the unit with an integrated learning focus.

To support ākoka to build conceptual thinking and systems thinking, we recommend that kaiako extend the unit by exploring other creation pūrākau within the national context and the global context. This could be done, for example, through teaching and learning about [Kupe](#), eponymous ancestor of iwi from Te Ika-a-Māui and captain of the Matawhaorua / Matahorua waka, and the [Wagyl creation story](#) of the Noongar people, one of the indigenous tribes of Australia. Consider drawing on the voyaging traditions and creation stories of ākoka in your class for alternative national and/or international contexts.

Please note that rauemi developed by Kōia te Mātauraka recognise the unique Kāi Tahu mita (dialect) in which ‘k’ replaces ‘ng’. This practice is becoming more commonplace as hapū and iwi re-indigenise their unique use of te reo Māori. Ākoka may notice that some sources observe the ‘ng’ while others do not. We encourage kaiako to engage in kōrero (discussion) with ākoka about this. We ask that kaiako take time to practice the correct pronunciation of relevant kupu Māori, including kupu in the Kāi Tahu mita, prior to beginning this sequence of lessons. Like with many languages, the mispronunciation of te reo Māori can lead to incorrect word usage. For example, the word keke has over six different meanings depending on the context and use of the tohutō (macron) to mark long vowels. The mispronunciation of names of people or places can also diminish the mana (prestige/status) of the person or the site. For support with pronunciation, see [Te Aka](#) which has the option to hear the word (though note that Te Aka does not follow the Kāi Tahu mita).



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Key knowledge statements: Tūrangawaewae me te taiao | Place & Environment

- **“Ko Rākaihautū te takata nāna i timata te ahi ki ruka ki tēnei motu”.** “Rākaihautū was the man who lit the fires of occupation on this island.”
- Whakatauaikī attributed to Wī Pōkuku, Moeraki (1880).
- Rākaihautū and the Uruao is a whakapapa pūrākau (historical origin story) of Te Taumutu Rūnanga which has been passed down over many generations, spanning 800 years. The pūrākau explains the creation and naming of many places in Te Waipounamu (the South Island) including mahika kai (resource-gathering sites)¹ and roto (lakes).²
- In te ao Māori (the Māori world), the naming of places is called tapa whenua, whakaikoa whenua, or whakahau whenua. Naming places involved several traditions including using Polynesian names; taunaha (naming after body parts) to emphasise personal claims to land; naming places for their landscape features; naming places after people to embed whakapapa links in the whenua; naming for historical or spiritual reasons; and naming to celebrate cultural icons.
- The naming of landscape features helped to form oral maps, often told as a kōrero or whakapapa (genealogies). Māori place names tell stories of tipuna (ancestors), explorers, origins, and creation. They helped to record history before te reo Māori was written down.
- To Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki ki Taumutu place names are a critical part of their tuakiri (identity). They are a personal and social anchor tying them to their whakapapa (genealogy), their culture, their history, their values, and their tūrangawaewae (place in the world). By knowing, using, and correctly pronouncing the te reo Māori place names for places in our takiwā, we uphold the mana of Taumutu histories and identities.
- Rākaihautū was an eponymous ancestor of Te Taumutu Rūnanga and captain of the waka Uruao which sailed from Hawaiki to Te Waka o Aoraki (South Island) in the 13th century (c. 1250CE).³ The Waitaha people descend from Rākaihautū. (Note: Some whakapapa or genealogical traditions date the landing of Rākaihautū as early as 750CE).
- The kin of Rākaihautū – Te Kāhui Tipua (the group of Tipua people), Te Kāhui Roko (the group of Roko people) and Te Kāhui Waitaha (the group of Waitaha people) – sailed with him. They were explorers, leaders, scientists, astronomers, and gardeners.
- In one tradition Waiariki-o-āio, the wife of Rākaihautū, was the chief navigator. Their son Rakihouia, also known as Rokohuia, travelled with his wife Tapūiti.

¹ Mahika kai are places where hapū (sub-tribes) gathered resources to sustain life such as kai (food) and harakeke (flax) for clothing.

² See the glossary for a comprehensive list of places and geographical features named by Rākaihautū.

³ The waka name is sometimes referred to by northern iwi as Uruaokapuarangi, but for Ngāi Tahu they exclusively use “Uruao”.



- After landing at Whakatū (Nelson), Rākaihautū made the prophecy, **“He Puna Karikari, He Puna Waimarie, He Puna Hauaitu.”** “There will be lakes dug by the hand of man, There will be lakes plentiful and rich with kai, There will be frozen lakes.”⁴
- Rākaihautū travelled down the centre of the motu (island) with one landing party. As they traversed the whenua, Rākaihautū named mountains and dug out many lakes with his kō, a digging stick named Tūwhakarōria. While the purpose of a kō is as a digging implement, symbolically Rākaihautū used Tūwhakarōria as a pou whenua (marker) to name and claim the many significant waterways and landmarks of Te Waka o Aoraki.
- At Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere), there was an abundance of kai (food) for example: inanga (whitebait), pātiki (flounder), tuna (eels), aua (yellow-eye mullet), kanakana (lamprey) and pūtangitangi (paradise ducks). Rākaihautū and his son claimed this abundant resource as their māhika kai (resource-gathering site) and named the lake Te Kete-Ika-a-Rākaihautū (the Fish Basket of Rākaihautū).
- Rākaihautū also laid claim to Banks Peninsula, calling it Te Pātaka o Rākaitauhū (the Storehouse of Rākaihautū).
- Rakihouia and Tapūiti sailed the Uruao around the East coast with a second group which landed at Kaikōura and then continued down to Te Waihora. Rakihouia claimed the coastline, naming it Kā Poupou o Rakihouia (the Eel Weirs of Rakihouia).
- The mountains behind Kaikōura (or the cliffs at Kaikōura) are known as Te Whata Kai o Rakihouia (the Lofty Storehouse of Rakihouia). There is a species of seabird named after Rakihouia called Tītī o Rakihouia or Kaikōura Tītī, also known as the Hutton’s Shearwater.
- When Tapūiti and Waiariki-o-Āio met again at Wainono hāpua (Wainono lagoon) in South Canterbury, they developed a preference for hao (short-finned eel) from a nearby river. This river came to be named Waihao, as the hao came from this water source.
- Kā Pākihi Whakatekateka o Waitaha (the Canterbury Plains) are named after the people of Rākaihautū. Within this takiwā is Kaitorete Spit which is a site of historical significance because some people believe that the bones of Rākaihautū are buried there.
- In another tradition, the Uruao landed at Whangaroa in the far north of the North Island. The people of the Uruao surveyed the land of Muriwhenua, sometimes called Te Hiku o Te Ika a Maui (the Tail of the Fish of Maui). They discovered that many who had arrived in Aotearoa earlier than themselves had settled there. The desire to find land for themselves prompted them to move on. They sailed southward, following the west coast, finally making landfall at Whakatū.

⁴ This whakatauaiki was shared by Hana O’Regan on Te Wānanga o Aotearoa podcast ‘Taringa’, Episode 14 – Iwi o te wiki – Kāi Tahu (10 October 2017). <https://www.taringapodcast.com/e/taringa-ep-14-iwi-o-te-wiki-kai-tahu/>



- In the past, indigenous place names were often replaced by the names of colonisers seeking to assert their authority and versions of history (following the principle of “terra nullius”, meaning “nobody’s land”). For example, Pūhai or Tūhiraki, the mauka (mountain) where Rākaihautū rested his kō Tūwhakarōria, was later renamed Mount Bossu after a French explorer. The erasure of indigenous place names represented Eurocentric values.
- More recently, there has been a return to honouring Māori place names as part of the wider social movement towards decolonisation. For example, the new Crown Research Institute ‘AgResearch’ building on site at Lincoln University was gifted the name Tūhiraki by Te Taumutu Rūnanga. Outside the building is a sculpture by Riki Manuel called Tū Whakarōria. In so doing, the Crown acknowledges mana whenua naming traditions in the takiwā.

Do practice: Te whakaaro arohaehae mō ngā wā o mua | Thinking critically about the past

Prior to beginning this unit

- Communicate home to let whānau know that you are about to start a unit on Rākaihautū ki Taumutu (the Taumutu perspective). Ask if their tamaiti has a pepeha which they can send to you and explain what it means so that you have a clear understanding of the whakapapa of that tamaiti. If a whānau knows their tamaiti is Kāi Tahu but doesn’t have knowledge of their hapū links, Kōia te Mātauraka can facilitate communication with the Kāi Tahu Whakapapa unit to establish where the tamaiti is from if whānau wish.
- We recommend that you book a visit to Te Pā o Moki marae. Call 03 371 2660 or email taumutu@ngaitahu.iwi.nz. Extend the invitation to whānau to join you on the trip.
- Spend time practising the pronunciation of the names of people and places in the pūrākau about Rākaihautū. Te Aka Māori Dictionary is a great place to start, though note that Te Aka doesn’t use the Kāi Tahu dialect.

Learning experience tuatahi: Activating prior knowledge

- **“Ko Rākaihautū te takata nāna i tīmata te ahi ki ruka ki tēnei motu.”** Rākaihautū was the man who lit the fires of occupation on this island.
- Whakatauaikī attributed to Wī Pōkuku, Moeraki (1880).
- Project the whakatauaikī on Slide 2 on to the whiteboard. Explain to the class that it’s ok if they’ve heard the whakatauaikī before, and it’s also ok if it’s new to them. To gauge how many ākoka are familiar with it, ask them to raise their hand if they know it.



- Then ask ākoka to share with a partner what they ALREADY know about Rākaihautū. Then ask for volunteers to share their knowledge with the class. Capture the collective prior knowledge of the class around the thought bubble on Slide 3 and take a photo of it (you will need this at the end of the unit).
- Afterwards, build on ākoka prior knowledge so that all tamariki know that Rākaihautū was captain of the Uruao waka and the first person to discover Te Waipounamu. He was an explorer, leader, scientist, astronomer, and gardener. The Waitaha people are descended from Rākaihautū.

Learning experience tuarua: Thinking critically about the past

- The intention of this learning experience is to build ākoka understanding that places in our takiwā are significant to Ngāi te Ruahikihiki ki Taumutu. Taumutu expresses their connections to places through their placenames which reflect their histories. In the past, when tauwi (foreigners) came to Waihao and renamed Taumutu placenames – such as Tūhiraki to Mount Bossu – they erased Taumutu placenames and diminished the mana of those places and their people.
- Read the pūrākau of Rākaihautū me te waka Uruao aloud to the class. To access the pūrākau, visit the ‘Kupu Tuku Iho | Our History’ page on the Taumutu website: <https://tetaumuturunanga.iwi.nz/our-history/> (scroll down to the third story). Prompt ākoka to listen for the place names while they listen.
- Hand out the reading comprehension worksheet which includes a variation of the pūrākau aimed at 5-7-year-olds.
- Once ākoka have finished the worksheet, discuss the pātai (questions) below together.
- Today, some organisations are taking action to restore the mana of Taumutu placenames. One example from our takiwā is the Crown Research Institute AgResearch who commissioned Ngāti Porou artist Riki Manuel to create a sculpture of Tū Whakarōria. The sculpture is placed outside the new AgResearch building called ‘Tuhiraki’ on the Lincoln University campus. The building was gifted the name by Te Taumutu Rūnanga (see Slide 4).
 - Which place names did we hear in the pūrākau? (Spend time here on getting everyone’s pronunciation correct through role-modelling this yourself).
 - Do we know any other names for these places?
 - Why do these places have different names?
 - Who decides they can rename a place and why?
 - Is it fair to rename a place? Why or why not?
 - Why is it important to know about Taumutu placenames?



- How can we restore the mana of Taumutu placenames?

Numeracy in context opportunity: Timelines and number lines

Watch the first half of 'Aotearoa Story' by Gilberthorpe School which focuses on Rākaihautū (play from beginning 17 mins 45 secs):

<https://vimeo.com/924455562/24974079ca>

- Kaiako can ask tamariki: What differences did you notice in Gilberthorpe School's retelling of the story of Rākaihautū? Why do you think Gilberthorpe tamariki told the story this way?
- Go to Slide 6 to introduce the concept of a timeline. Explain that we use a timeline to measure history. Time is counted backwards into the past, and forwards into the future. On a timeline, we measure years, decades (blocks of 10 years), centuries (blocks of 100 years), and millennia (blocks of 1,000 years). On a timeline, centuries are divided evenly into 10-year intervals to represent a decade.
- To explore the concept of a timeline, kaiako could create a number line appropriate for the development level of their class and a run skip-counting task. See Slides 7-9 and the timeline/number line activity ideas sheet. As an extension to this activity, give ākoka a copy of the timeline on Slide 6 to take home and add the birth years of all their family members.

Numeracy in context opportunity: Early mapping skills

- Use the map of Kā Puna-karikari-a-Rākaihautū (the springs of water dug by Rākaihautū) as a grid-referencing activity.
- Project Slide 10 on to the whiteboard and see how many of the springs of water dug by Rākaihautū the class can name.
- Project Slide 11 on to the whiteboard and use the accompanying worksheet to teach early mapping skills.
- Explain that on maps, land is always green, and waterways (creeks, streams, rivers, lakes) and oceans are always blue.

If you have time, this mapping task can be explored further with the following arts-based activity.

Preparation: this activity involves clay, and later, paint. If your kura has an art space available we recommend booking it in advance, otherwise tables/desks will need to be covered in butcher paper or newsprint. If your kura has aprons for art activities, it would be great to borrow a class set for the next two lessons. You will also need a safe space to leave the clay to dry, before retrieving it in a day or two for painting.

- Take the class outside to an area where they can find a small kō or digging stick (it might be your school field or a park nearby). Return to the classroom and re-read the pūrākau of Rākaihautū aloud, while ākoka hold their kō.



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- Project Slide 11 on to the whiteboard and explain to the class that they are each going to create their own model of Te Waipounamu using clay.
- Hand out the clay and explain that they can look at the map to help them create their model.
- Instruct ākoka to use the kō to dig the springs of water dug by Rākaihautū around the motu.
- In addition to the waterways, kaiako can point out further topographical features on the map, such as hills, cliffs, ridges, valleys, and mountains. Ākoka could be encouraged to add Ka Tiritiri-o-te-Moana (the Southern Alps) to their clay model.
- Afterwards, kaiako should carefully place the clay creations into a safe space to dry overnight. Make sure you label the clay with children's names so they can find theirs again.
- In one to two days' time, ākoka can collect their clay creations of Te Waka o Aoraki and paint the whenua green and the lakes blue in accordance with mapping conventions.

Learning experience tuatoru: Talking about how people tell the story of Rākaihautū differently

- The intention of this learning experience is to bring ākoka awareness to the different ways that the same story can be told through visual art.
- Slides 12-17 show different artworks which tell the story of Rākaihautū. We encourage kaiako to select three artworks to focus on, depending on their level of confidence in unpacking the symbols in each artwork. See the list of possible interpretations of symbols on Slide 18.
- Project the selected artworks on to the whiteboard and ask ākoka:
 - What are the common symbols in all the artworks?
 - Which parts of the story has the artist(s) told using symbols?
 - How do the symbols in each artwork change the way that we would retell the story?
 - Why do you think people might tell the story of Rākaihautū differently?
 - Which symbols would you use to retell the story and why?

Learning experience tuawhā: Retelling the story of Rākaihautū

Preparation: this is an arts-based activity which can be done in a classroom or an art room. For years 0-3, we recommend giving ākoka a choice of **collage**, **crayon and dye**, or **sgraffito** (scratch art where the bottom layer is coloured in bright pastels and then covered with a layer of black pastel or paint, and once dry, you use something with a point to scratch your design).



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Materials: For collage you will need A3 white paper, coloured paper, glue, and paintbrushes. For crayon and dye you will need A3 white paper, different coloured crayons, and dye. For sgraffito you will need A3 white paper, coloured pastels, either black pastels or black paint, and something with a point for scratching such as a toothpick.

- Tell ākoka that they are going to create their own artwork about Rākaihautū, using at least three symbols. Give them time to think about the symbols they would like to include, and then time to sketch the symbols.
- Provide ākoka with the art supplies suggested above.
- Allocate one to two learning blocks for ākoka to retell the pūrākau verbally and then in writing, using their artwork to help them.

Wrap up: Synthesising new learning

- On the whiteboard, project the photo recording the class's prior knowledge brainstorm from the start of this unit. Tamariki could volunteer to read out a statement from the photo.
- Ask the class "What do know NOW about Rākaihautū and why he is important?" Give ākoka time in groups to brainstorm their new knowledge. Identify a kaikōrero from each group to feed back to the class. Record the new knowledge around the thought bubble on Slide 20. Kaiako could take photos of both thought bubbles and project these on to the whiteboard side by side so that tamariki can see and discuss how much they've learned.

Alternative integrated curriculum task: Retelling the story of Rākaihautū through film

Kaiako with an interest and/or experience in media may like to create a film with their class based on the learning experiences in this unit. Creating a film provides opportunities to integrate multiple curriculum areas including:

- social sciences in learning and retelling the pūrākau about Rākaihautū;
- structured literacy in script-writing;
- drama in narrating the film;
- numeracy in calculating the distances between the lakes of Rākaihautū and the dimensions of costume, prop, and set design;
- geography in annotating maps used in the film;
- arts in the creation of costumes, props, and sets;
- film and editing production;



- digital structures, animation, and AI.

The consultant who led the production of Aotearoa Story with the support of Creative New Zealand, Will Alexander, is available to support schools with film projects in a consulting capacity: william.alexander153@gmail.com.

Alternative arts-based learning experience: Retelling the story of Rākaihautū through a mural

Kaiako with an arts background may wish to do a class mural as a collaborative art project. We recommend drawing on the following scenes for inspiration:

- Rākaihautū and his kin on the Uruao leaving Hawaiki
- the Uruao in Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean)
- the test of Tangaroa
- the landing at Whakatū (Nelson)
- the Kā Puna-karikari-a-Rākaihautū (the spring waters dug by Rākaihautū)
- Te Kete-Ika-a-Rākaihautū also known as the Fish Basket of Rākaihautū (Banks Peninsula)
- Kā Poupou o Rakihouia also known as the Eel Weirs of Rakihouia (Kaitorete Spit)
- The kō of Rākaihautū, renamed Tūhiraki on the mauka above Wainui, now known as Tūhiraki (Mount Bossu)

For further learning activities about Rākaihautū, visit the ‘Teacher Resources’ page on the website of Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu:

<https://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/assets/Documents/Rakaihautu-TSM-vs-April2024.pdf>

Reference List

<https://tetaumuturunanga.iwi.nz/our-history/>

Robinson, D. (2024). ‘Rākaihautū. Teacher Support Material – People, Places and Events – Aotearoa New Zealand Histories’. <https://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/assets/Documents/Rakaihautu-TSM-vs-April2024.pdf>

<https://ngaitahu.iwi.nz>



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<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1586/polynesian-navigation--settlement-of-the-pacific/>

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<https://www.taringapodcast.com/e/taringa-ep-14-iwi-o-te-wiki-kai-tahu/>

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<https://www.waimate2gether.co.nz/waihao-downs-school-copy-1>

<https://learnz.org.nz/mapmywaahi221/discover/early-exploration-and-place-naming>

<https://www.linz.govt.nz/our-work/new-zealand-geographic-board/place-name-stories/maori-oral-history-atlas/rakaihautu-naming-great-lakes-canoe-aoraki>

<https://www.waikato.ac.nz/news-events/news/putting-aotearoa-on-the-map-new-zealand-has-changed-its-name-before-why-not-again/>

<https://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/-/media/files/com/downloads/explore/museum/fact-sheets/indigenous-creation-story.pdf>

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