

HOUSEMATES

Vacation Without Parents

DIE
WG



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FORMAT FACTS

Original Producer / Flying Producer:

E+U TV film and television production

Original Title:

'Die WG' / 'Die Jungs-WG'/
'Die Mädchen-WG'/ 'Die Mixed-WG'

Working Title:

Housemates – Vacation without Parents

Country of Origin:

Germany

Language:

German

Genre:

Factual / 10+

PREMISE

The original format 'Housemates' is aired on the German public broadcasting kids and youth channel Kika.

Each 'Housemates' season usually follows five girls or five boys whose big dream has come true: they are invited to spend three weeks in a beautiful villa, situated in a wonderful spot in Europe. What makes it even more than a holiday: they are doing so without their parents. During their time together, the housemates have lots of fun. But for the first time they must take responsibility for their everyday lives as well.

Documenting the protagonists in a neutral way, helps young viewers to develop an attitude which comes in handy within their family lives, their circle of friends, for school and for their development of values.

Developing attitude is not done by pointing fingers at others, but by the way other children get depicted in the show. Therefore, it is important to present the protagonists in a positive way, as role models, even when dealing with difficult topics or situations.

Housemates is cheerful, entertaining and at the same time enriched with informative elements. The format is not about power games, social exclusion or display of weaknesses.

It's about showing how strong young people can be.





UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITIONS

Today, 'Housemates' is one of the most successful formats for the age group 10 – 15 in Germany. However, it is extremely popular far beyond that, also considering international adaptations.

GERMANY LINEAR: ABOVE AVERAGE TV RATINGS ON KIKI

From the start of the first season in 2009, TV ratings in German were above average for the time slot.

LINEAR MARKETSHARE IN RELEVANT TARGET-GROUP 2017 – 2022

Marketshare age 10 – 13 (in %)

Year	2017/2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Housemates Boys	10,9 %		11,4 %		16,5 %
Housemates Girls		14,6 %		15,5 %	11,4 %

GERMANY NON-LINEAR: TOP KIDS SHOW WITHIN THE ZDF MEDIA LIBRARY

- Each 'Housemates' season is regularly among the top 5 watched contents over all genres including adult drama, documentaries and shows.
- 'Housemates' has been the most watched program within the kids genre over the last years (considering accumulated views per library title per year. Each of the three best performing titles were 'Housemates' episodes in 2022, 2021, 2020).
- Top watched episodes have up to 380K views per day
- In 2021, 'Housemates' accumulated 27 million views in total (with an average of 74K views per day)

GERMAN LONG-RUNNING REALITY HIT SHOW FOR TEENS

The show has achieved the status of a true evergreen in German TV by now. 'Housemates Boys' has accumulated over 140 episodes in 8 seasons, while 'Housemates Girls' can look back on over 130 episodes in 7 seasons. On top of that, several specials, spin-offs, and brand extensions have taken the franchise to even higher levels.

IMPRESSIVE YOUTUBE PERFORMANCE

The YouTube channel has around 300K subs and counting. Individual episodes have up to 1.8 million views on average, generating a whopping 200K hours of playback time in total. The channel can be found regularly in the YouTube Trends, along with a surpassing CTR of 6.2% of all impressions.

VIVID SOCIAL MEDIA FANBASE

Communities have formed on all common social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Former residents stay connected and share experiences with their fans. Also contributing to community building are the numerous funny memes and catchy songs that have been released over the years.

MULTIPLE AWARD-WINNING FORMAT

- 'Housemates' was nominated and won multiple awards, among others:
- Housemates' was nominated for the most prestigious German TV award 'Grimme Preis'
 - 'Housemates' won the kids TV award 'Golden Sparrow Award'
 - 'Housemates' was furthermore nominated for the 'Prix Jeunesse'

ABOUT HOUSEMATES

A TRAILBLAZER IN REALITY TV FOR KIDS AND TEENS IN GERMANY

The first season of 'Housemates' ('Housemates Boys - A Month Without Parents') started in October 26th, 2009 on KiKA with 20 episodes. In 2010 the pendant 'Housemates (Girls)' was broadcasted for the first time. Since then, new seasons of 'Housemates (Girls)' and 'Housemates (Boys)' have alternated annually. In 2020, three boys and three girls, all former 'Housemates' participants, came together in a virtual version of 'Housemates' for the first time. In 2021, the first season with a mixed gender cast was produced.

When 'Housemates' went into production in 2009, reality TV for children and young people was still new territory within Germany's TV landscape. ZDF started an exciting experiment together with the production company E+U TV: Five young people from different parts of Germany spend four weeks without their parents. They live together in a house, have to get along with themselves and the other protagonists during this time and rehearse being an adult in a safe environment. In 20 episodes (16 episodes since 2021), viewers experience the protagonists successfully managing the household or struggling in their attempts to do so; how they cook for themselves but also how they experience great activities and adventures and thus grow together into a team and become friends in just four weeks (three weeks since 2021).

What once started as a one-off experiment has become one of the most successful brands in German children's and youth television. Since 2009, KiKA has been broadcasting one season per year, alternately as 'Housemates (Boys)' and 'Housemates (Girls)'; currently two seasons are produced per year. In 2021, a mixed flat share with girls and boys was realized for the first time.

The show fulfills a big dream of many children: being out of home, without parents and getting in the shoes of a grown-up for a limited period of time. What all seasons have in common: the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists are showundisguised, giving viewers a projection surface for their own attitudes and dreams for the future. The whole show is realized with an high-quality look and feel in an entertaining and humorous way. Attention is paid to mutual respect, which deliberately does not give any room for competition or exclusion.

In the meantime, there is a committed fanbase and active community on social media like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. A kind of 'Housmates family' has developed in which children and young people can mingle and exchange their thoughts.

Today, 'Housemates' is the top coming of age reality format for 10 – 15 year old's in German-speaking countries: the series stands for intelligent and responsible entertainment for TV and streaming.



A photograph of two young men in winter sports gear. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket with a bright green collar and is looking down at the snowboard. The man on the right is wearing a dark jacket with a colorful graphic, a beanie, and goggles, and is smiling at the camera. They are standing in a snowy mountain landscape with a small building and trees in the background.

SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL ADAPTATIONS

'Housemates' has a proven track record and also sold internationally. Without exception all adaptations of 'Housemates' went into multiple seasons wherever it launched.

There are currently three adaptations up to date.

NETHERLANDS

Dutch title: Zonder Ouders Op Vakantie

Running since: 2022

Format per season: 10 x 20'

BELGIUM

Belgian title: Zonder Ouders Op Vakantie

Running since: 2022

Format per season: 10 x 20'

GERMANY

'Housemates – the Reunion' for FUNK (German public service young adult channel)

Reunion after 10 years staying together for the first time

Running: 2020 and 2021

Format: 20 x 20'

STRUCTURE

Each 'Housmates' episode pursues one goal: to present the world of the young protagonists authentically and lovingly and in an entertaining way. The format follows a clear structure, which sets the frame for the depiction of the protagonists in a documentary style.

THE PREMISE

Five young people who don't know each other spend several weeks without their parents in a shared villa in an exiting place. They not only get to know each other, but also the country as well as local people.

ONE EPISODE, ONE DAY

One episode, one day: As a rule, one episode depicts one day. It starts in the morning with a getting up or breakfast scene and ends in the evening with a concluding 'good night' scene.

THE MIX OF ELEMENTS IN ONE EPISODES

Each episode usually consists of the following elements:

- Household and everyday activities (such as 'cooking', 'cleaning', 'doing the laundry', but also 'hair styling' in the bathroom)
- Bigger activities (such as 'go-karting', 'ice hockey training', 'cooking school', or 'one-day internships')
- Smaller activities (such as 'visiting a hairdresser' or 'shopping')
- Talks between the residents that can either result from the experienced activities, or just happen situationally (such as 'living vegan', first relationships, bullying in school etc.)

The balancing of elements within one episode is handled in post-production by the responsible author, who assesses the footage of the day. The aim is to bring all those elements together in order to tell an entertaining and coherent story of the day.

STANDARDS FOR THE FIRST AND FINAL EPISODE

Certain standards have been established for both the first and final episode:

The first episode always consists of a distinctive pattern to introduce the cast. One protagonist after another gets introduced at recognizable landmarks of the location. These introductions get intertwined with short pre-shot homestories to give further insight in the protagonists background and character. The second main element of the first episode is always the joint exploration of the shared villa.

The final episode also contains two distinctive main elements: the preparation and organization of a final party, inviting as many people as possible whom the protagonists have met along the way. At the very end there is the farewell the next morning – at this point the narration shifts from commenting the present into giving an outlook on the next day when the protagonists will return to their own lives outside the shared villa.





CORE VALUES



'Housmates' offers a glimpse into the world of five adolescents – it's about attitudes, opinions and experiencing new things. Many children dream of living like 'Pipi Longstocking' – without paternalism from their parents, trying out adulthood. In 'Housemates', this dream becomes reality.

The format needs protagonists who can express themselves well and verbalize their emotions (please see 7. Casting-guidelines). Girls and boys who can address conflicts and find solutions to emerging problems.

Thus five strong, emotionally stable young people who are curious and open-minded are required. Although they may differ in their hobbies and opinions, they are equally mature in order to form a team with members at eye level. On the threshold of adulthood, the protagonists are allowed to try out what it takes to make decisions independently and self-responsibility but also what problems and conflicts can be encountered along the way.

The viewers experience how strongly and proactively the residents manage their everyday lives, what opinions they have and what questions are on their mind. The viewers can also experience how 'cool the big ones' are, while being sensitive at the same time. The viewers realize how respectfully the protagonists exchange ideas with each other – about issues that concern children facing puberty and which our protagonists reflect openly, yet occasionally critically, looking for an attitude. Thus, the format encourages viewers and provides them helpful orientation.

Diversity, especially when selecting the protagonists, is an important requirement. From the beginning, young people from all stripes were represented in 'Housemates.' Children from big cities and from the countryside, children from working-class families as well as academic households, children with the most diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Protagonists get casted with different migration biographies, e.g. from Belarus, Turkey, Ghana, Vietnam, Syria and diverse sexual orientation.

'Housemates' is a reflection of a diverse society in which young people grow up in.

During the shoot, a pre-defined frame of narration is given. On the one hand, it relies on the basic premise of being on vacation without parents and on the other hand on participating in daily activities.

One day, the protagonists can do an internship in a retirement home, getting in conversation with another generation when recording a podcast, another day they can go to a wakeboarding workshop or on a self-planned camping trip where they have to set up their tent and cook for themselves.

Within this frame of narration however, the protagonists act freely and authentically. In this way Housemates keeps its documentary character.

The 'Housemates' fanbase appreciates and expects a harmonic atmosphere in the show. It is not about creating and facilitating conflicts among the protagonists. It is about building friendships and respectful cooperation within a team. The format deliberately neither creates competitive, nor excluding situations. Any conflicts that arise are resolved by the protagonists themselves in a respectful manner. The friendly interaction in the group serves the viewers' longing for friendship and affiliation. Based on trust in the group and the unusual freedom without parental care, the young people try out and grow with the challenges of sharing a house.

There are important dos and don'ts that define the core values of the brand.

CORE VALUES

Additionally, there are important dos and don'ts that define the core values of the brand.

DOS

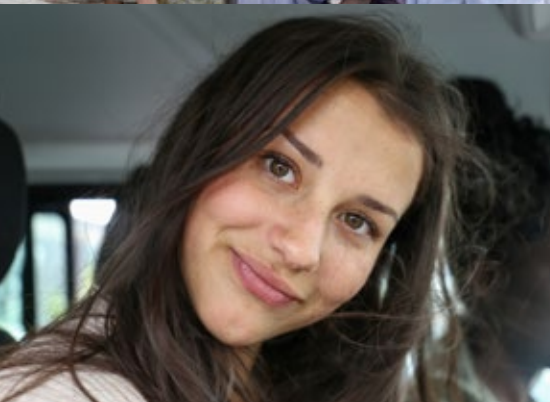
- Maintain reflection and classification of what has been experienced (either using soundbites, quotes, or interactions within the group)
- Use credible and comprehensible settings
- Use cool and colorful actions and challenges
- Depict everyday life in the shared house with small and large successes and drawbacks
- Keep the balance between everyday life and challenges that can realistically be mastered
- Discuss on various relevant topics
- Include social projects – in addition to all the fun, this is about responsibility and empathy
- Create a varied challenge – not only regarding sports and activities, but also socially and in discussions
- Let adults just participate marginally, and just as far as the topic requires (e.g. having a coach in sports activities around or a mentor in a social project, etc.)

DON'TS

- Beware of judgement and labelling of any kind (aka Person A is the greatest, Person B is the coolest, etc.). This should neither be done by the protagonists themselves nor by adults or in the off-text
- Beware of off-text interpretation of situations or feelings (either you see it, or the cast verbalizes it – otherwise it is not relevant)
- Beware of exaggerated politeness: the protagonists should treat each other with respect, but not come across as unnaturally nice people
- Beware of overdosing „ideal world” narratives – show serious conversations, social projects and real encounters or conflicts
- Beware of clichés. The viewers should be taken seriously and do not need simplified and labelled narration. They know better than that.

Dose if at all clichés wisely and question them (for one thing ...not all girls are chicks, not all boys are machos...)





CASTING GUIDELINES

The careful selection of the protagonists is the most important element for the format's success. The cast should meet the following requirements:

- Ensure diversity. Casts' protagonists of all stripes, having different socioeconomic, cultural, religious backgrounds, a diverse sexual orientation etc.
- Select credible and authentic protagonists
- Ensure a good team composition
- Ensure emotional closeness between the team members
- The team is strong due to the contribution of each individual. Working together is more beneficial than working against each other. In this regard there is a clear demarcation to other reality formats where conflict is deliberately used as a driver of action
- We are looking for extroverted young people who enjoy presenting themselves and being in front of a camera.
- The protagonists must be eloquent, have strong opinions and need to be able to participate in discussions that sometimes can be demanding and somewhat sophisticated.
- The protagonists should be robust enough for everyday shooting, but also have a certain childishness, which is important for the basic premise of the format. The age of the protagonists can range from 13 to 16 years old, whereby the regionally applicable child labor regulations must also be taken into account. It is important that the final cast is not too heterogeneous in terms of age or level of development, so that the group and friendship dynamics can develop during the shooting period.
- Conflicts are deliberately not cast. This means that the group should be different enough that there is something relatable for everyone yet homogeneous enough to not provoke conflicts in the first place. Unlike many adult reality formats, viewers want harmony and close friendships between the protagonists.

A multi-stage casting process has proven to work best. After a casting call on TV and social media, the casting agency or the casting editors create around 60 proposals in the form of a portfolio with a biography, questionnaire, photos and a casting video. From this selection, the production company and broadcaster select around 30 candidates with whom an introductory video is produced ('casting Homestories'). These Homestories serve to observe the immediate environment (home, family and friends of the applicants) and to judge the eloquence of the applicants by their interactions with them. From these Homestories, 10-12 candidates are selected for a personal final casting, in which at least one parent takes part. The main purpose of this final casting is to make the children and parents familiar with the project and to give them an insight into the upcoming shooting. It is extremely important that both the protagonists and their parents have a clear idea of what to expect in advance.

Exemplary time frame of the casting for Housemates 2022 Vienna

Start casting	January 2022
Applicant folders complete gradual submission	late January to mid-March 2022
Commissioning of Homestories at caster (in consultation with channel)	at the end of March 2022
Homestories complete at E+ U	by mid-May 2022
Selection of the TOP 10 E+U/ZDF	in mid-May 2022
Invitation of candidates for final casting	mid/late May 2022
Final casting with ZDF	at the end of May 2022
Shooting period	June 20th - July 10th, 2022

VENUE, MAIN LOCATION AND SET DESIGN

LOCATION

Housemates' appealing premise is to go on a 'Holiday without parents'. In this respect, the shooting location should be fascinating for our audience. A combination of an urban city together with a beach or sea has turned out to be ideal for storytelling. Examples of past season locations include:

- Valencia
- Barcelona
- Nice
- Lisbon

But well-known holiday locations with good infrastructure have also proven to work well:

- Grand Canary
- Majorca
- Lake Garda
- Seefeld/Tyrol (as a winter location)

Pure city locations with great potential for activities are also possible:

- Vienna
- Amsterdam

HOUSEMATES' MAIN LOCATION

Since season 1, the main setting of Housemates has been a shared villa – a spacious house with a garden and features such as a pool or whirlpool. The house and its furnishings should create a 'wow effect' for the audience. The house must also meet the following main criteria:

- If possible, it should stand alone to ensure trouble-free filming.
- It needs at least three bedrooms (two bedrooms for the protagonists and one bedroom for the protagonists' supervisors)
- It needs at least two bathrooms and an additional toilet (a protagonists bathroom used as set, a bathroom for the supervisors, a toilet for the team).
- Rooms for the technical equipment, the team residence, and the production office
- It should have a spacious kitchen to be used as filming set
- Parking for the production vehicles
- The location of the house should be as near as possible to the locations of the planned activities to the city center and to the team accommodation.
- If necessary, enough storage space for the existing furnishings that cannot be used for the shoot.

FURNISHING AND SET DESIGN

The furnishing and features of the set should follow the taste of a 10 to 15-year-old target group: colourful, comfortable, with lots of funny details and enough relaxation opportunities that can also serve as locations for the talks. Since the furnishings in equipped holiday properties usually do not correspond to this, existing furniture is often stowed away.

Villa location schedule:

Ideally three months before the start of shooting: finding a set supplier on site

Ideally two months before the start of shooting: inspection of the location with the set designer and director as well as the local producer

Ideally from six weeks before the start of shooting: mood board for the equipment, coordination of the equipment elements, purchase of the equipment elements

When renting the location, it should be noted that in addition to the actual shooting time, at least one week should be planned for setting up the villa and – depending on the staffing – three days to a week for resetting the original location.



PRODUCTION DETAILS

SHOOTING PERIOD NUMBER OF EPISODES

There are currently four formats in production:

- 20 episodes of 25 minutes each (original number of episodes Germany, shooting period 4 weeks)
- 16 episodes of 25 minutes each (current number of episodes in Germany, shooting period 3 weeks)
- 10 episodes of 25 minutes each (current number of episodes in the Netherlands and Belgium, shooting period 12 days)
- 20 episodes of 20 minutes each ('Housemates – the Reunion' for FUNK in Germany)

It needs at least 10 episodes, preferably 15 episodes, to give the cast enough room to grow 'from strangers to friends' and to establish a connection with the audience.



TIMING

The most important production steps of Housemates are:

- 1) Casting start (at least three months before the start of shooting)
- 2) Determination of the general shooting location and search for a local producer to obtain filming permits and sourcing possible activities and the villa (at least three months before the start of shooting)
- 3) First preview: the director and local producer make the decision for a villa (at least two months before the start of shooting) and inspect possible team accommodations
- 4) Further sourcing for activities (at least six weeks before the start of shooting)
- 5) Second preview (director, unit manager, local producer): preparation of the shootings at the activity locations, detailed timing of team travel from and to sets. (at least four weeks before the start of shooting)
- 6) Final casting and selection of cast (at least three weeks before shooting begins)
- 7) Arrival of the pre-team (director, recording manager, lighting, cameraman); a week before shooting begins
- 8) Furnishing and equipping the villa (one week for the start of shooting)
- 9) Shooting period (one episode, one day of shooting – two off-days after five consecutive days of shooting, one day to set photos, one day as a buffer-time)
- 10) Post-production phase (at least two screening days per episode and six editing days).

SHOOTING CONCEPT AND TECHNIQUE

In order to generate the best possible look and to realize parallel storytelling, there are two on set production units.

Thus, the five protagonists can be splitted up in two groups each experiencing something else over the day.

The units consist of:

- realization
- camera
- sound recording

Each afternoon every unit gets replaced by the second shift.

Using four fully staffed units has proven to work best in order to cover the whole day from waking up to going to bed.

The show is currently being shot on the Sony FX-9, the sound is recorded separately and synchronized with via ClockIt.

Additionally, up to five GoPros are used, especially during the daily activities.

The dailys are backed up every day by a data wrangler.

PRODUCTION TEAM

**IN ADDITION TO THE PROTAGONISTS,
THE FOLLOWING CREW IS INVOLVED
IN THE SHOOTING:**

Director/Producer

2 Unit Managers (in shift work)

1 Local Producer

2 Drivers/Receptionist Assistants (Locals)

Equipment and Equipment Assistance
(only preparation and dismantling, Locals)

4 Realizers

4 Cameramen

4 Sound Engineers

1 Data Wrangler

2 Protagonist Supervisors (in shift work)





POST PRODUCTION

THE POST-PRODUCTION FOLLOWS THE STEPS BELOW:

- Ingesting and synchronizing materials (always two cameras roll in parallel, plus GoPros, sound files are produced separately)
- Production of screening HDDs (hard disks that get screened by the editors)
- Editors screen the materials of one day and plan the rough cut
- Editing (cutting one episode in about six days)
- Editorial feedback and correction loops should be considered
- Finalizing each individual episode (using graphics, inserts, opener and closer etc)
- Color grading (about a day per episode)
- Sound mix
- Soundtrack with off-speaker
- Payout

SUPERVISION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

TAKING CARE OF THE PROTAGONISTS

The protagonists receive mentoring by qualified pedagogical personal. Two supervisors work in shifts to look after the protagonists during the shoot. They also stay in the villa to generally be close by. The supervisors have the following main tasks:

- Supervision of the protagonists during the breaks in shooting and after the end of the shooting day
- Main contact person of the protagonists in case of worries, problems etc.
- Contact person for the parents of the protagonists during the shooting time
- Ensuring sufficient hydration, nutrition, sun protection, etc.
- Supervision and organizing leisure program on off days
- Supervisors are explicitly not involved in cooking, cleaning or washing clothes – the protagonists are responsible for themselves.

GENERAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Each season of Housemates undergoes a general risk assessment, minimizing inherent risk related to shooting in the villa as main location, driving production cars etc... Causes of risk, such as tripping hazards, slippery stair surfaces or pool curbs get identified, listed and measures to reduce hazards are taken.

Immediately before shooting begins, a safety briefing is scheduled for the entire crew by the unit managers, including escape routes, location of fire extinguishers and first aid supplies.

RISK MANAGEMENT ON ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE MAIN LOCATION

In addition to the general risk management, an individual risk assessment for each activity gets prepared and communicated personally to the crew and protagonists involved.

When selecting activities, the following rules apply to protect the crew and protagonists:

- Only age-appropriate actions are to be carried out by the protagonists. Age restrictions have to be observed (e.g. age limits for karting, tandem skydiving, etc.)
- All activities are only to be carried out by experienced and professional local service providers holding all the necessary licenses if applicable.



SOCIAL MEDIA CONSULTING

The housemates will get exposed to the general public due to the broadcast, streaming and Social Media.

After the broadcast, it is not unusual that social media followers can jump from less than 100 to around 200k within just two weeks time. Considering this exposure in Social Media, there is the need to provide guidance to the protagonists. Therefore the production needs to provide fixed structures and adequate measures to give guidance and counselling regarding social media related questions. The following procedure has been established in Germany.

The effects social media can have on the protagonists is already addressed early on in the casting.

Casted protagonists need to have stable personalities and be resilient in order to cope with the wave of attention social media can have on their lives.

Furthermore, social media dos and don'ts get already discussed early in the process.

It is suggested to implement fixed contact persons the protagonists can turn to for social media questions. These contacts either get provided by the production company, and/or the channel.

Before the shooting, there is a final social media briefing also including the parents, where behavioral guidelines get discussed once again.

Those guidelines can change according to cultural norms.

The following dos and don'ts get regularly discussed in the country of origin (not exhaustive).

- Expectation management – the protagonists will usually get compared with another. This is not to be taken personally.
- Don't discuss with haters
- Do not let yourself get instrumentalized for interests not being your own
- No advertizing is allowed
- Think before you post!
- (...)

The official youtube channel gets moderated. Comments of insulting, discriminating, or otherwise inadequate nature get cleared.

Six weeks before the launch and four weeks after, the social media accounts of the protagonists get taken over by the broadcasting channel and then being turned into official accounts. After having consulting and a fixed contact for continuing guidance, the protagonists will post contents on their own.

In rare cases legal counselling needs to be provided, claiming and deleting inadequate third-party contents.



LEGAL NOTICE

The following copyright notice needs to be included in the credits:

"Based on a show idea of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) Germany"

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