

FERPA Guidelines for Merged Courses in Canvas

Quick links: [Inbox \(email\)](#) • [Groups](#) • [Discussions](#) • [Conferences](#) • [Collaborations](#) • [Group Assignments](#) • [Peer Reviews](#) • [Zoom](#)

Overview

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of a student's education record, which includes access to student information in course sections they are not enrolled in. This means that students should not be able to identify students in other course sections, unless they physically meet in the same classroom at the same time. When course sections are merged in Canvas, students may be able to see other students who are enrolled in a different section. Therefore, merging class sections in Canvas can violate students' rights to privacy by sharing protected information.

To provide faculty the option of merging their courses, NIC has created guidelines on how to make a merged course FERPA compliant.



These instructions do not apply to courses that are designated as cross-listed in the course catalog, such as AIST/ANTH or ENGL 101/101P.

Global and Course Settings Modifications

Several settings have been modified at the administration and course levels of Canvas:

- The Chat function has been disabled in all Canvas courses.
- Students are prevented from creating discussions in the course Discussions page.
- Student access to the People page has been turned off.
- The Conferences tool is hidden from the course navigation menu.

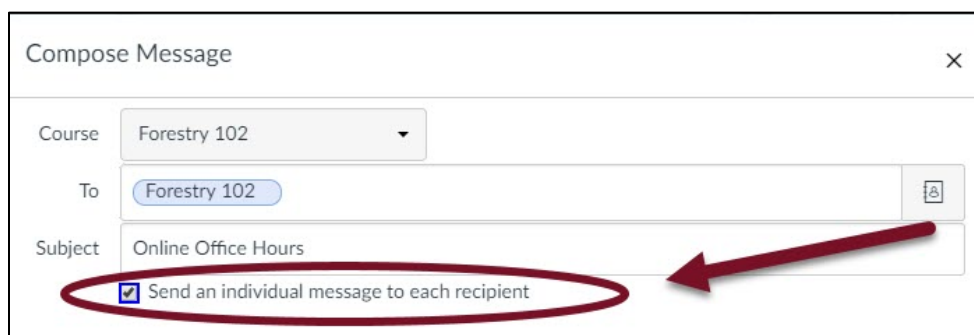
Students are restricted to interact only with students in their own section. Students cannot:

- Invite students from other sections into Conferences using the conference tool
- See the Canvas Profile of other users, including their instructor's.
- Send messages through the Canvas Inbox to students not in their section.

Canvas Inbox

Although students cannot send messages to students in other sections, they *are* able to choose **Reply all** and send messages to all students, even those outside their section, if the instructor has sent a message to all the students in the course. To prevent this, instructors are required to ensure that all messages sent to students using the Canvas Inbox do not allow students to view recipients not in their section. When composing a message to all students in the course, you must check the box that says "**Send an individual message to each recipient.**" This will prevent students from

seeing the names of other students who also received the message, and from being able to reply to all of them.



Compose Message ×

Course: Forestry 102

To: Forestry 102 👤

Subject: Online Office Hours

Send an individual message to each recipient

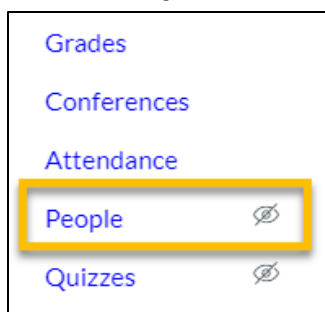
FERPA Guidelines for Course Tools

These guidelines apply to the following course tools: Groups, Discussions, Conferences, Collaborations, Group Assignments, and Peer Reviews.

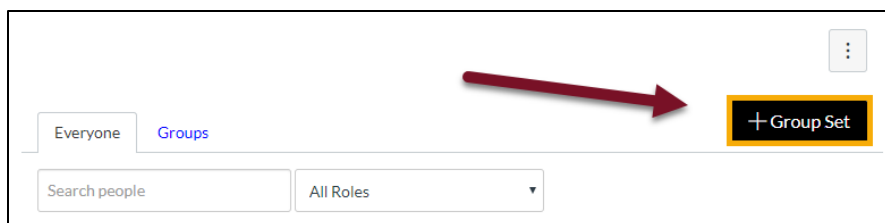
Groups

Instructors can prevent interactions between students by creating separate groups for each section in a merged course. The groups can be used in Discussions, Collaborations, and Group Assignments.

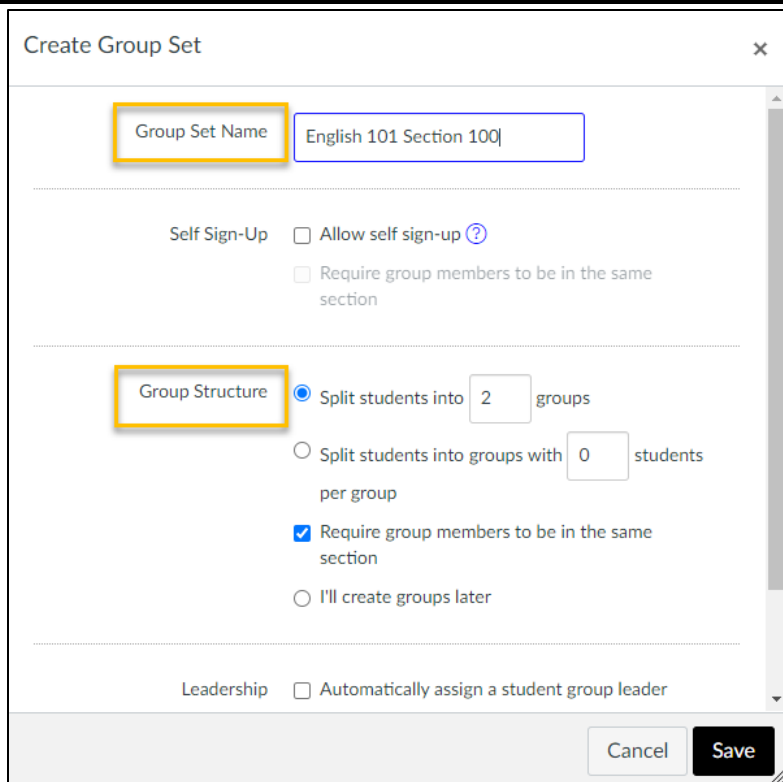
1. Select **People** in the course navigation (the link is disabled for students, but instructors can use it).



2. Select **+ Group Set**.



3. In the **Create Group Set** dialog box, add a **Group Set Name**. Since students see all of their groups from all of their courses on one Groups page, it is important to include both a section name and a course name in the group title (for example, a student could have a “Group 1” in two different courses).



4. If you have two sections merged, you'll split students into two groups; if you have three sections, you'll have three groups and so on. Enter your number of groups or students in the **Group Structure** section. Use the “**Require group members to be in the same section**” option to have Canvas automatically sort students into groups by section. Choose **Save**.



Students who have joined a course after the instructor has set up section groups will need to be manually added to the correct group.

Discussions

Students will be able to see replies to a discussion, even if they are in other sections. Instructors have two options to create discussions that are viewable only to students within their own sections.

Option 1: The instructor can create separate discussions for each section, which will create multiple assignments and columns in the gradebook.

Option 2: The instructor can create a discussion assigned to groups, which will create a single assignment and column in the gradebook.



Adding a separate due date for each section on the same discussion will not prevent students from seeing the replies from students not in their section.

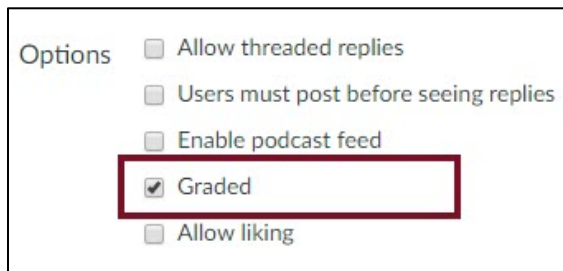
Option 1

Create and assign a separate discussion for each section. Each will show up as an assignment in the gradebook.

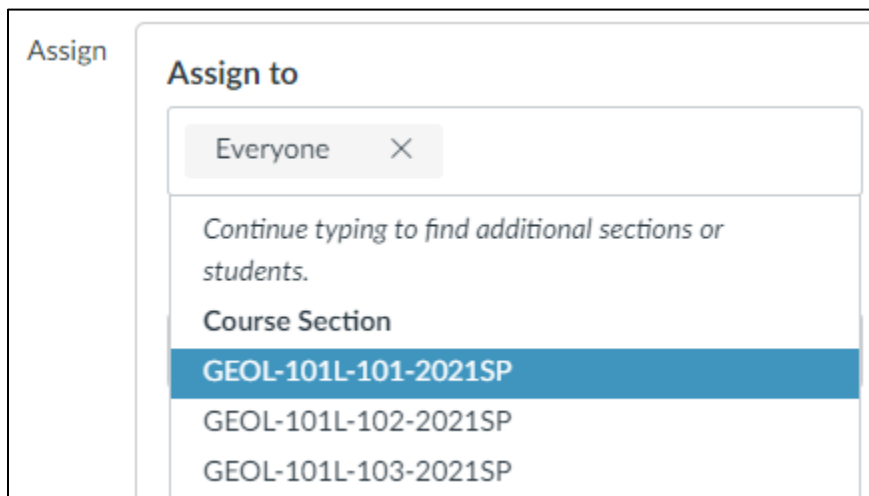
1. Use the **+ Discussion** button on the Discussions page to create a new discussion post.



2. After you have created your Discussion prompt, check the “Graded” check box under **Options** to make it a graded assignment.

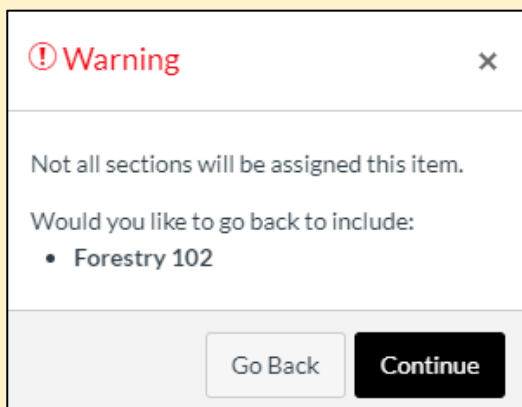


3. Assign the discussion to one of the course’s sections; select **Save**.



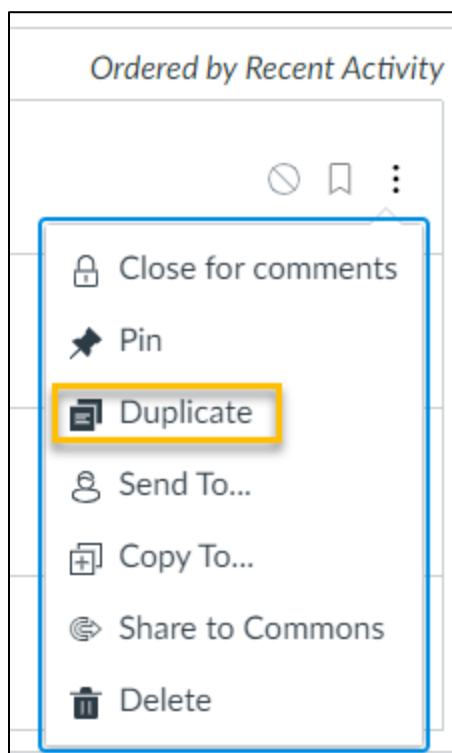


When you save the first discussion and assign it to a section, you will receive a warning from Canvas that prompts you to assign the other sections.



Select "Continue" to save the discussion settings.

4. Create a duplicate discussion and assign it to a different section.
 - a. Go to the Discussions page. Select the option icon (three vertical dots) next to the discussion post, then **Duplicate**.



The duplicated discussion will appear on the Discussions page with "copy" appended to the name of the duplicated discussion title. It will be unpublished and not assigned to any section.

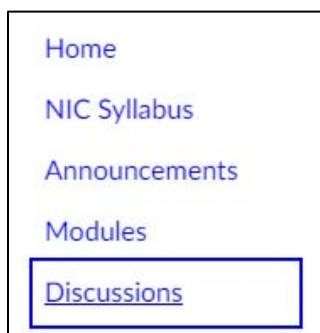
5. Open the duplicated discussion and select **Edit** to assign the discussion to another course section.
6. Select **Save**.

Repeat steps 4-6 until you've created a separate discussion for each section in the merged course.

Option 2

For students, Group Discussions appear only in the Groups section of the course and not in the main Discussion area. However, you still create Group Discussions on the main Discussions page. To create a Group Discussion, you will first need to create your Groups (see page 2), and then create a Graded Group Discussion.

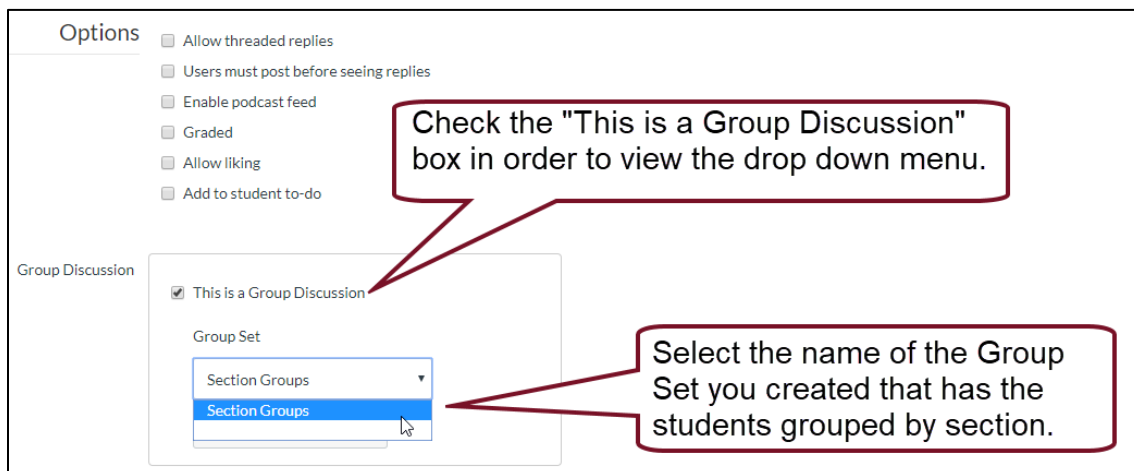
1. Select **Discussions** in the Course Navigation Menu.



2. Select **+ Discussion**.



3. Choose **"This is a Group Discussion"**, then select your previously created Group Set.



Canvas will create a separate discussion for each group within the selected Group Set. Students will access it by navigating to Groups, choosing the course and the discussion.

Conferences

Conferences in Canvas use a web conferencing platform called BigBlueButton, which contains a chat space for student interaction that cannot be disabled or restricted by section. To use Conferences in merged courses, instructors must invite each section to separate Conferences and check each student's name during the creation of the Conference. Conferences cannot be held concurrently (e.g. you cannot be in two Conference rooms at the same time).

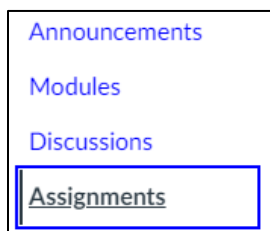
Collaborations

Collaborations use Google Docs or Office 365 to create collaborative documents, editable by any student who has access to the course. To use Collaborations in merged courses, instructors must create separate collaborative documents for each section by using the Groups selection option. Collaborations require that Groups are set up prior to the creation of the collaborative document.

Group Assignments

When instructors create Group Assignments, they can use an existing group or create a new group just for one assignment.

1. Click on the **Assignments** link in the Course Navigation Menu to open the Assignments page.



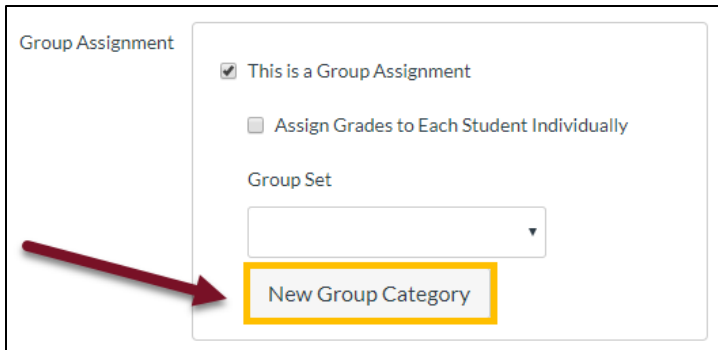
2. Select **+ Assignment** to add a new assignment.



Turn Any Existing Assignment Into a Group Assignment

Do you already have assignments in your course from before it was merged? **Visit the Canvas Guide “How do I assign an assignment to a course group?”**

3. Choose **“This is a Group Assignment”**, then select **New Group Category**.



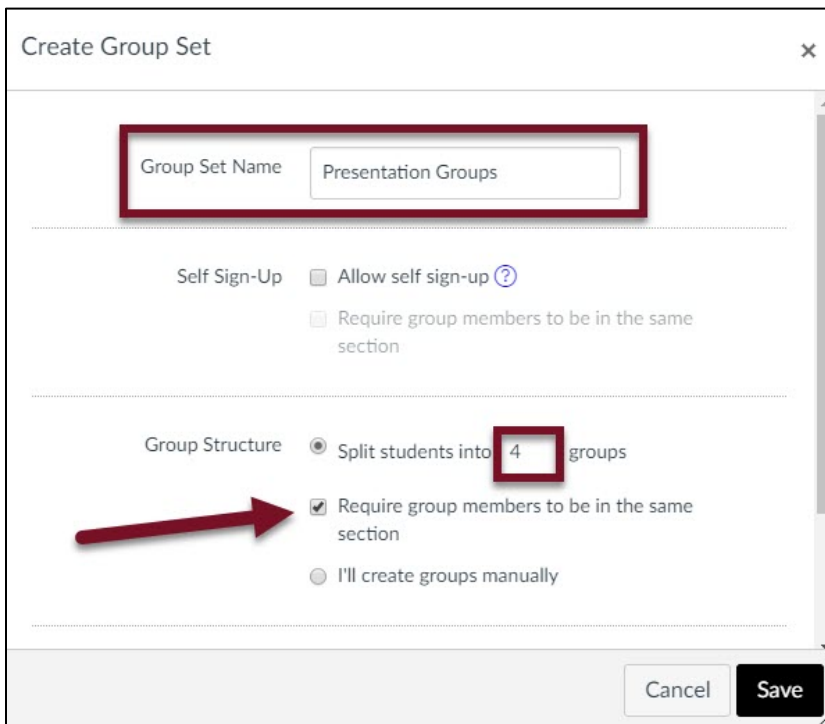
Group Assignment

This is a Group Assignment

Assign Grades to Each Student Individually

Group Set

In the pop-up window, name the Group Set, set the number of groups, and check “**Require group members to be in the same section.**”



Create Group Set

Group Set Name

Self Sign-Up Allow self sign-up [?](#)

Require group members to be in the same section

Group Structure Split students into groups

Require group members to be in the same section

I'll create groups manually

Cancel Save

Peer Reviews

There isn't a way to assign Peer Reviews by groups or section. Therefore, instructors must select “**Peer Reviews Appear Anonymously**” or “**Manually Assign Peer Reviews**,” to ensure peer reviews are not assigned to students in different sections. Note: the Anonymous Peer Review option does not allow students to use the DocViewer to leave annotations on the document.

For more information about North Idaho College's FERPA policy visit www.nic.edu/ferpa

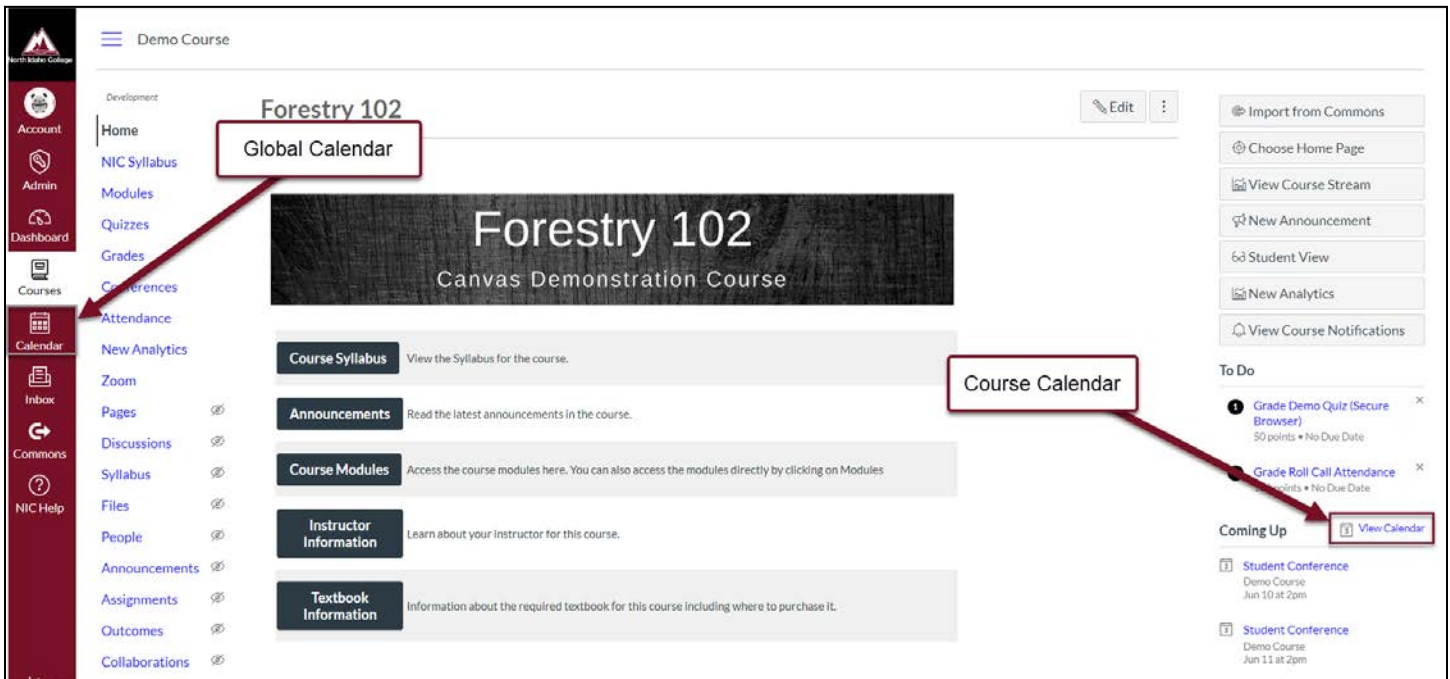
Zoom Settings for Merged Courses



FERPA law protects student privacy, including information that may be given over Zoom such as the student's name. Normally, the student's name would be allowed to be revealed under "directory information". However, in a merged Canvas course the student's name is tied to their Student ID, and would reveal or elude to which section they are in — which is NOT covered under "directory information". *Therefore, holding a Zoom meeting in a merged course with ALL of your students is NOT FERPA compliant.*




It is possible to separate Zoom meetings into sections using **More Options** on the Calendar.

1. Create and schedule a Zoom meeting (instructions for this can be found in the **Zoom Integration for Canvas Guide** on eLearning's website).
2. Select **View Calendar** on the Home page or **Calendar** on the global navigation.


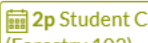



3. Select a meeting; a pop-up will appear — choose **Edit**.

Today ← → June 2020 Week Month Agenda +

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31	1	2	3	4	5 	6
7	8	9	10 	11 	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Week Month Agenda +

WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3	4	5 	6
10 	11 	<div data-bbox="495 1092 1177 1522"><h3>Live Weekly Class Check-In</h3><p>Jun 5, 2pm - 3pm</p><p>Calendar Demo Course</p><p>Location Zoom Online Meeting</p><p>Details Click here to join Zoom Meeting:911-259-2095</p><p>Delete Edit</p></div>	
17	18		

4. Another pop-up will appear; select **More Options**.

5. Select **“Use a different date for each section”** and enter a different date. The meetings can be on the same day at different times. Select **Update Event**.

This process will create two separate sessions with individual links for each section, or more depending on how many sections are in the course. *It will also automatically place the students in the appropriate session.* Students from Section 1 will not be able to join the session for Section 2 and

vice versa. Students will only see their section's link on their calendar and to-do lists. Make sure that these links are not included in an all course announcement or an email to all students.



Cloud recordings for separate sections

If the process above was used to create separate sessions for each section and each session was recorded to the cloud, a separate recording will be available for each session. Instructors should take precaution to share the correct password associated with the session to the appropriate course section's students.

For more information or assistance with Canvas, call eLearning at 208-665-5095 or email elearning@nic.edu



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