

Last Man Standing Politics Texas Style

Last Man Standing Politics: Texas Style Texas, a state renowned for its independent spirit and fiercely competitive political landscape, often showcases a unique brand of "last man standing" politics. This isn't a simple, cut-and-dried narrative, but a complex interplay of factors shaping the state's political discourse and outcomes. This delves into the intricacies of this phenomenon, examining its origins, manifestations, and implications. **Understanding the Lone Star State's Political Culture** Texas's unique political culture plays a crucial role in the "last man standing" dynamic. Deep-seated libertarian values and a history of limited government influence a tendency toward fierce ideological polarization, often making consensus-building difficult. This isn't just about parties; it extends to various interest groups vying for power. The state's expansive size and diverse demographics contribute to the complexity. Rural and urban interests, conservative and progressive perspectives, all vie for influence, often resulting in protracted and intense battles over policies. • **Historical Context:** The state's history, from its early days as a part of Mexico to its emergence as a major player in the American economy, has shaped the political attitudes and philosophies prevalent today. • **Strong Ideological Divisions:** Texas's political discourse is frequently characterized by deep-seated ideological divisions along lines of fiscal conservatism, social values, and individual liberty. **Manifestations of Last Man Standing Politics** The "last man standing" dynamic is evident in several key aspects of Texas politics. • **Legislative Battles:** Legislative sessions in Texas are frequently characterized by

intense debates and negotiations, where differing viewpoints clash. Legislation often goes through numerous amendments and revisions, a testament to the struggle for dominance. The ultimate "winner" frequently emerges only through a series of compromises, often favoring a more conservative outcome. For example, debates over school choice, abortion access, and LGBTQ+ rights often hinge on these intricate power struggles.

- **Local Elections:** The same intensity and focus on winning at all costs isn't limited to state-level politics. Local elections, from city councils to school boards, can mirror the same confrontational dynamics, often driven by competing visions for the community.
- **Judicial Appointments:** Texas's judges, at all levels, are often the subject of intense political scrutiny during appointment processes, where the focus is frequently on identifying the candidate who best embodies the prevailing ideological views.
- **Media and Public Discourse:** The media landscape also plays a role in shaping the perception of the "last man standing" dynamic. Certain media outlets may actively promote narratives that emphasize conflict and confrontation, further feeding the political battles. The rise of social media has amplified these narratives.
- **The Role of Interest Groups and Lobbying:** Texas's diverse interest groups are significant players in the state's political ecosystem. These groups represent everything from agricultural businesses to environmental organizations, and each group employs sophisticated lobbying strategies to influence policymakers and public opinion.
- **Funding and Resources:** The financial strength of various lobbying groups is a critical factor in these battles. Groups with substantial funding can effectively shape the legislative agenda and sway public opinion, leading to a system where resources play a significant role in defining policy outcomes.
- **Influence on Public Perception:** Interest groups exert significant influence on shaping public perception of issues. They carefully craft narratives that position their favored policies as beneficial to the broader community, thereby making it challenging

to achieve consensus. **Consequences and Implications** The "last man standing" mentality in Texas has far-reaching consequences. •

Policy Gridlock: The emphasis on individual victory over collaborative solutions can lead to policy gridlock, hindering progress on essential issues and often resulting in legislation that's overly simplistic or fails to address the complex challenges facing the state. • **Erosion of Public Trust:** The often-acrimonious nature of these political battles can erode public trust in the political process, leading to a sense of disillusionment and disengagement. •

Potential for Undermining Democratic Principles: The competitive, often aggressive style of politics may, at times, run the risk of undermining the principles of consensus-building and compromise, elements fundamental to a healthy democracy. **Case Studies in Texas Politics** Examining past political battles in Texas reveals the dynamics of "last man standing" politics in action. •

Specific Examples: Analyzing specific legislative battles, contentious gubernatorial races, or noteworthy court cases can illustrate how the state's political culture has influenced political outcomes. For instance, the debates surrounding abortion rights, education funding, and environmental regulations showcase this dynamic in action. **Building Bridges and Fostering**

Collaboration While the "last man standing" dynamic is a powerful force in Texas politics, it's not insurmountable. Efforts to foster collaboration, seek common ground, and build bridges between different viewpoints remain crucial. • **Promoting Dialogue:**

Strategies for enhancing civil dialogue and understanding across the ideological spectrum can help in mitigating the intensity of political conflicts. • **Focus on Shared Values:** Highlighting shared values and common goals, such as economic prosperity, community safety, and education, can help in bridging divides. •

Encouraging Civic

Engagement: Educating and engaging citizens in the political process can empower them to demand accountability and promote the discussion of more complex, nuanced solutions. **Key**

Takeaways • Texas politics is a complex and dynamic arena, heavily influenced by a "last man standing" mentality. • This competition is evident in legislative battles, local elections, judicial appointments, and public discourse. • The significant role of interest groups and lobbying strategies accentuates the struggle for influence. • The emphasis on winning, at times, leads to policy gridlock and erodes public trust.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Is the "last man standing" mentality unique to Texas?* While Texas exhibits strong characteristics of this approach, similar dynamics exist in other states and political systems around the world.
2. **Can the trend be reversed?** Reversing this trend requires a multifaceted approach, including fostering dialogue, promoting consensus-building, and empowering citizens to engage in the political process. Significant shifts in values or demographics may also play a role.
3. **How do the media contribute to this dynamic?** Media framing, particularly through the lens of confrontation and conflict, can actively fuel the "last man standing" trend.
4. **What is the long-term impact of this political style?** The long-term impact can include policy gridlock, eroded public trust, and challenges in effectively addressing complex state issues.
5. **What role does ideology play in shaping Texas political outcomes?** Deep-seated ideological differences often drive the "last man standing" dynamic in Texas, making compromises and consensus-building increasingly difficult.

Last Man Standing Politics: Texas Style

Ah, Texas. The Lone Star State. A place where everything is bigger, bolder, and often, more intense. This sentiment extends to its political landscape, which can feel like a perpetual game of "last

man standing." From fiery debates in the state capitol to the grassroots activism that shapes local elections, Texas politics often embodies a unique brand of high-stakes, no-holds-barred competition. Let's dive deep into what makes "last man standing" politics Texas style so compelling, and sometimes, so darn exhausting.

The Roots of Texas Political Grit

To understand this phenomenon, we have to look at the very foundations of Texas. Its history is one of fierce independence, a spirit forged in revolution and a deep-seated distrust of overreach, whether from federal authorities or even powerful corporate interests. This independent streak translates directly into its political culture. Texans often value self-reliance, a strong sense of community (though this can be fiercely debated and divided), and a belief that individuals and local entities should have the final say. This ethos naturally breeds a political environment where compromise can be seen as weakness and a dogged pursuit of one's principles is celebrated. Think of the Alamo – a stark reminder of a desperate, last stand against overwhelming odds. While modern politics rarely involves actual armed conflict, that spirit of unwavering resolve is still palpable.

Republican Dominance and the "Texas Two-Step"

For decades, Texas has been a reliably red state, with the Republican Party holding significant sway over state government. This dominance isn't just about winning elections; it's about shaping the narrative and the policy agenda. Within the Republican Party itself, there are often internal battles, a constant jostling for position

and influence. This can manifest in primary elections that are often more competitive and ideologically charged than the general election. It's in these primaries that the "last man standing" aspect truly comes into play. Candidates must appeal to the most engaged and often most conservative wing of the party to secure victory. This can lead to a progressive shift in the party's platform over time, as the most vocal and committed voices rise to the top.

A unique aspect of Texas Republican politics is the infamous "Texas Two-Step." This informal, yet powerful, system allows precinct chairs to endorse candidates in certain races, a move that can significantly impact the outcome of primaries. It's a way for party leadership and influential figures to consolidate support and effectively pick their preferred candidate, sometimes before the broader electorate even gets a chance to weigh in. This internal maneuvering can feel very much like a closed-door battle for supremacy, with alliances formed and broken behind the scenes.

Democratic Efforts to Break the Mold

While Republicans have enjoyed a long run of success, the Democratic Party in Texas is far from dormant. In fact, in recent years, there have been significant efforts to challenge the established order. This often involves intense grassroots organizing and a focus on mobilizing underrepresented demographics. The challenge for Democrats in Texas is immense, as they often face uphill battles in deeply conservative districts. Their "last man standing" narrative is one of perseverance, of chipping away at a seemingly insurmountable majority, and of hoping to flip key districts and statewide races. It's a fight for relevance and a struggle to redefine the political landscape of a state that has long resisted a dramatic shift to the left.

The Role of Ideology: From Moderate to Maximalist

Texas politics has seen a significant ideological shift over the years. What might have been considered a mainstream conservative stance in the past has often been supplanted by more maximalist, ideologically pure positions. This is a direct consequence of the "last man standing" dynamic. In a primary system that rewards ideological purity and fervent dedication, candidates who are perceived as too moderate can be easily defeated. This pushes the political discourse further to the right, with issues like border security, gun rights, and fiscal conservatism often taking center stage and being debated with an almost religious fervor. The stakes feel incredibly high for these issues, and politicians are often judged on their unwavering commitment to their cause.

Key Battlegrounds and Defining Issues

The "last man standing" mentality plays out on several key battlegrounds in Texas politics. Border security, for instance, is a perennial issue that ignites passions and defines political stances. Debates around immigration, border wall funding, and state-led enforcement efforts are intense and often become litmus tests for candidates. Similarly, gun rights are deeply ingrained in the Texas identity, and any perceived threat to Second Amendment freedoms can trigger fierce opposition and passionate defense. Property rights and a distrust of government regulation also feature prominently, often pitting landowners and businesses against environmental concerns or expansive development plans.

Then there are the cultural issues. Texas is a state with deeply held religious and social values for many of its residents. Debates around education, LGBTQ+ rights, and reproductive freedoms can become

incredibly charged. In these arenas, it often feels like a fight for the soul of the state, with each side digging in its heels, unwilling to cede ground. The "last man standing" isn't just about winning an election; it's about preserving a way of life or ushering in a perceived new era.

The Impact on Governance and Policy

This high-stakes, often adversarial political environment has a profound impact on governance and policy in Texas. Compromise can be difficult to achieve, leading to legislative gridlock on some issues or, conversely, the swift passage of highly partisan legislation when one party holds significant power. The focus on ideological purity can sometimes lead to policies that are implemented without broad consensus or careful consideration of unintended consequences. The "last man standing" approach can prioritize winning the battle over crafting the most effective, long-term solutions.

Furthermore, the intense competition and often personal attacks in Texas politics can discourage qualified individuals from running for office. The constant scrutiny, the often vitriolic nature of debates, and the pressure to conform to party orthodoxy can be a significant deterrent. This can leave voters with a limited pool of candidates, further reinforcing the "last man standing" narrative as the same familiar faces and ideologies often vie for power.

What Does the Future Hold?

The "last man standing" nature of Texas politics is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. The state's unique history, its demographic shifts, and its deeply ingrained political culture all contribute to this enduring characteristic. However, the dynamics are always

evolving. The growing diversity of Texas, particularly in its urban centers, is creating new political forces and challenging established norms. We are seeing increased engagement from younger voters and a growing awareness of issues that may not have been at the forefront in previous decades.

Ultimately, "last man standing" politics Texas style is a reflection of a state that is proud, passionate, and often fiercely divided. It's a political arena where conviction is paramount, where battles are fought with unwavering resolve, and where the very essence of the Lone Star State's identity often hangs in the balance. Whether you're a seasoned political observer or a curious newcomer, understanding this unique brand of Texas politics offers a fascinating glimpse into the heart of one of America's most influential and dynamic states.

Understanding Last Man Standing Politics in the Texas Political Landscape

In the evolving narrative of American political dynamics, the concept of "last man standing politics" has found a distinctive

expression in Texas—where individualism, resilience, and regional identity converge. This political style, rooted in the idea of perseverance through prolonged contest, captures the enduring spirit of Texans who value self-reliance and tenacity over short-term victories. Unlike traditional race-centric campaigns focused on swift dominance, last man standing politics emphasizes endurance, personal connection, and sustained grassroots engagement.

The Texas Context: A Crucible for

Resilient Campaigning

Texas, with its vast geography, diverse population, and deeply ingrained cultural resistance to centralized authority, provides fertile ground for this style of politics. The state's political history is marked by fierce independence—whether in defiance of federal overreach or through fierce community-led initiatives. This legacy shapes a campaign environment where candidates must not only articulate vision but also demonstrate an ability to withstand prolonged challenges

and maintain momentum across multiple election cycles. In Texas, being a “last man standing” is less about winning every primary or primary runoff and more about refusing to be driven out of the race, no matter how difficult the path.

Core Principles and Strategic Applications

At its core, last man standing politics in Texas revolves around three key pillars: authenticity, long-term engagement, and localized messaging. Candidates who thrive under this model

prioritize genuine connection with constituents, often engaging in door-to-door outreach, community forums, and local events that reinforce trust and visibility. Rather than relying solely on flashy media buys or national endorsements, they emphasize storytelling rooted in regional values—be it rural livelihoods, energy independence, or local governance. This approach allows them to build a durable base capable of weathering setbacks, shifting political winds, and even opposition from well-funded

rivals. The strategy thrives on consistency and presence, turning every interaction into an opportunity to reinforce identity and reliability.

Benefits of Sustained Grassroots Engagement

One of the most significant advantages of this political style is its ability to foster authentic community trust. In a state where skepticism toward political elites runs deep, candidates who demonstrate resilience and commitment often gain a credible edge. By committing to long-term

presence rather than fleeting campaigns, they position themselves as dependable stewards rather than transient contenders. This strengthens voter loyalty and empowers communities to see politics not as a game of dominance, but as a shared journey of progress. Furthermore, the focus on localized messaging ensures that policies resonate with real, on-the-ground concerns, increasing both relevance and impact.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Last Man Standing Politics in Texas

As Texas continues to grow in political influence, the last man standing approach is poised to evolve while retaining its foundational ethos. With increasing demographic shifts, rising urban centers, and polarized political discourse, the demand for leaders who embody endurance and integrity will only intensify. Future iterations of this style are likely to integrate digital tools—social media engagement, targeted content, and data-driven outreach—without sacrificing the personal touch that defines the Texas model. This hybrid

approach balances tradition with innovation, ensuring that resilience remains a cornerstone of political success. Ultimately, last man standing politics in Texas reflects more than a campaign tactic; it embodies a cultural mindset—one that values persistence, authenticity, and the quiet strength of never truly backing down.

In the sprawling, often defiant landscape of Texas politics, the phrase "last man standing" is more than just a colloquialism; it's a potent descriptor of a political culture deeply rooted in

individualism, fierce competition, and a pragmatic, often ruthless, pursuit of power. This article delves into the intricate dynamics of "last man standing politics, Texas style," exploring its historical origins, defining characteristics, key players, and the profound impact it has on the state's governance and its citizens.

The Genesis of Texas Grit: Historical Roots of "Last Man Standing"

To understand Texas politics, one must first acknowledge the state's foundational myths and historical experiences. From the

Republic of Texas era, with its legendary figures like Sam Houston and Mirabeau B. Lamar, to the rugged frontier spirit, Texas has cultivated a narrative of self-reliance and a deep-seated skepticism of external authority. This historical backdrop has imprinted a political ethos characterized by:

The Frontier Mentality and Self-Reliance

The vastness of Texas, its history of independent statehood, and its emphasis on individual liberty have fostered a political culture that values strong, decisive leaders who can navigate

complex challenges without undue interference. This "can-do" attitude, while often beneficial, can also manifest as a reluctance to compromise or acknowledge shared responsibility, embodying the "last man standing" ideal.

A Legacy of Powerful Personalities

Texas has a rich tradition of larger-than-life political figures who have shaped the state's trajectory. From Lyndon B. Johnson's commanding presence in Washington to Ann Richards' charismatic leadership, and more recently, figures like Rick Perry and Greg Abbott, these individuals have often embodied

a style of politics that prioritizes personal conviction and the ability to outmaneuver opponents. Their dominance often leaves little room for dissent or coalition-building, reinforcing the notion of a single, ascendant figure.

The Influence of Oil and Business Interests

The state's economic power, largely fueled by oil and gas, has historically translated into significant political influence. Powerful business interests often align with and support candidates who champion their agendas, creating a competitive

environment where financial backing and strategic alliances are crucial for survival. This economic clout can amplify the "last man standing" dynamic, as well-funded campaigns and well-connected individuals often have a distinct advantage.

Defining Characteristics of "Last Man Standing" Politics in Texas

The "last man standing" approach in Texas manifests in several distinct ways, shaping both the rhetoric and the substance of its political discourse. These characteristics often create a high-stakes, intensely competitive environment:

Unwavering Ideological Purity (Often)

In a state with a dominant political party, there's often immense pressure to adhere to a strict ideological line. This can lead to candidates prioritizing loyalty to the party base over bipartisan appeal. Compromise is often viewed as weakness, and opponents are not just political adversaries but ideological enemies to be vanquished. This is particularly evident in Republican primaries, where candidates vie to prove their conservative bona fides.

Intense Intra-Party Competition

While Texas is often seen as a

Republican stronghold, the real battles frequently occur within the party itself. Gubernatorial races, Senate seats, and even lower-level positions can become fierce contests between ambitious Republicans vying for the nomination. These primaries are often where the "last man standing" drama unfolds, with candidates employing aggressive tactics and sharp rhetoric to eliminate rivals.

The Power of the Executive and the Governor's Office

The Texas Governor's office is one of the most powerful in the nation, with significant veto

power and control over the state's agenda. This concentration of power naturally attracts individuals who relish wielding authority and are adept at navigating the political landscape to achieve their objectives. Governors like Rick Perry, who served a record 14 years, exemplified this by consistently consolidating their influence.

A Culture of Fierce Independence and Skepticism of Federal Overreach

A core tenet of Texas identity is its independent spirit and a deep-seated distrust of federal government intervention. This

translates into a political approach that prioritizes state sovereignty and often frames policy debates as a struggle against an overreaching federal authority. Leaders who can project an image of defiant independence often resonate with Texas voters, further solidifying the "last man standing" narrative.

Strategic Alliances and Shifting Loyalties

While individualism is prized, the pursuit of power in Texas often involves intricate and sometimes fluid alliances. Politicians may forge partnerships to advance their agendas, but these

allegiances can be transactional and prone to dissolution when individual interests diverge. This strategic maneuvering adds another layer of complexity to the "last man standing" dynamic, as players constantly assess who benefits whom.

Key Players and Their Roles in the Texas Political Arena

The "last man standing" dynamic is not just an abstract concept; it's embodied by the individuals who navigate and dominate the Texas political scene. These figures, from seasoned veterans to rising stars, employ various strategies to achieve and

maintain their positions:

The Incumbent Governor

The Governor of Texas often stands at the apex of this political pyramid. Their ability to control the legislative agenda, veto bills, and command media attention makes them a formidable force. Re-election campaigns for Texas governors are often high-stakes affairs, where they must defend their record while fending off challengers who seek to capitalize on any perceived weaknesses.

Powerful Committee Chairs and

Legislative Leaders

Within the Texas Legislature, certain committee chairs and leadership positions hold significant sway. These individuals can shape legislation, control the flow of bills, and wield considerable influence over their colleagues. Their ability to build consensus (or conversely, to block opposition) is crucial to their political survival.

Influential Texas Business Leaders and Lobbyists

The economic engine of Texas is inextricably linked to its political landscape. Wealthy business leaders and well-connected

lobbyists play a critical role in funding campaigns, shaping policy debates, and influencing electoral outcomes. Their support can be a deciding factor in the success or failure of candidates.

Grassroots Activists and Ideological Champions

Beyond the established figures, passionate grassroots activists and ideological champions on both the left and right play a crucial role in shaping the political discourse and mobilizing voters. Their influence is often felt in primary elections, where they can coalesce around candidates who best represent

their values.

The Impact on Governance and Policy

The "last man standing" brand of politics in Texas has profound implications for how the state is governed and the policies that are enacted. While it can lead to decisive action, it also carries significant drawbacks:

Policy Gridlock and the Difficulty of Compromise

The adversarial nature of Texas politics, with its emphasis on ideological purity and the elimination of opposition, can make compromise exceedingly

difficult. This can lead to legislative gridlock, particularly on contentious issues, as different factions refuse to cede ground, embodying the "winner-take-all" mentality.

The Concentration of Power and Potential for Authoritarianism

When power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or a single party, there is a risk of authoritarian tendencies. The "last man standing" approach can sideline dissenting voices and limit the scope of public discourse, potentially leading to policies that benefit a select few at the expense of the broader

populace.

A Focus on Ideological Battles Over Pragmatic Solutions

The constant struggle for political dominance can shift the focus away from practical problem-solving and toward ideological posturing. Debates may become less about finding the most effective solutions and more about asserting partisan dominance, hindering progress on critical state issues like education, infrastructure, and healthcare.

Voter Disengagement and Frustration

For many Texans, the relentless

political battles and the perceived lack of compromise can lead to cynicism and voter disengagement. When the political arena feels like a zero-sum game where the "last man standing" wins regardless of the broader consequences, citizens may feel their voices are not heard or that their participation makes little difference.

The Future of "Last Man Standing" Politics in Texas

The "last man standing" ethos is deeply ingrained in the Texas political psyche. However, several factors could influence its future trajectory:

Demographic Shifts and Evolving Electorate

As Texas's demographics continue to evolve, with a growing and increasingly diverse population, the traditional political landscape may be challenged. New voters and changing cultural values could force a recalibration of political strategies and potentially foster a more inclusive and collaborative approach.

The Rise of Digital Activism and Alternative Media

The proliferation of social media and alternative news sources provides new platforms for

political discourse and mobilization. This can empower grassroots movements and challenge the dominance of established political actors, potentially democratizing the "last man standing" dynamic.

Potential for Reform and a Call for Collaboration

There is a growing sentiment among some Texans for a more collaborative and less adversarial political culture. Calls for bipartisan cooperation and a focus on pragmatic solutions could gain traction, leading to a gradual shift away from the "winner-take-all" mentality.

In conclusion, "last man standing politics, Texas style" is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, shaped by history, culture, and economic forces. It is a testament to the state's fierce individualism and its penchant for strong leadership. While this approach can foster decisive action, it also carries inherent risks of gridlock and limited inclusivity. As Texas continues to grow and evolve, the enduring appeal of the "last man standing" will undoubtedly be tested, potentially paving the way for a more nuanced and collaborative future for the Lone Star State's political landscape.

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Questions & Answers About last man standing politics texas style

N o	Question	Answer
1	What does 'last man standing' really mean in Texas politics, and why is it such a prominent concept?	'Last man standing' in Texas politics refers to the highly competitive and often drawn-out nature of primary elections. Candidates must secure a majority (50% + 1 vote) to win outright. If no one achieves this, the top two finishers go to a runoff election, making it a true test of endurance and political survival.
2	How does Texas's majority requirement in primaries contribute to the 'last man standing' phenomenon?	The requirement for a majority vote in primaries, unlike systems with simple plurality winners, forces a second round of voting if no candidate reaches that threshold. This runoff is the defining element of the 'last man standing' dynamic, as it extends the election cycle and intensifies the competition.
3	Are there specific examples of Texas races that perfectly illustrate the 'last man standing' political battle?	Yes, many statewide and congressional races in Texas have gone to runoffs, showcasing this dynamic. For instance, U.S. Senate races or gubernatorial primaries frequently see multiple candidates splitting the vote initially, necessitating a runoff showdown between the top two.
4	What are the key strategies candidates employ in Texas to win a 'last man standing' runoff election?	Candidates in runoffs often pivot their messaging to appeal to the voters who supported eliminated candidates. This can involve consolidating endorsements, focusing on more specific policy issues, or intensifying get-out-the-vote efforts, as turnout is typically lower in runoffs.

5	Does the 'last man standing' system in Texas favor well-funded candidates, or can grassroots movements still succeed?	While fundraising is always an advantage, grassroots movements can succeed. A strong ground game, effective volunteer network, and a compelling message can resonate, especially in a runoff where a dedicated base of supporters can make a significant difference. However, sustained campaigning often requires financial resources.
6	What are the criticisms or drawbacks of the 'last man standing' electoral system in Texas?	Criticisms often center on voter fatigue, the potential for lower turnout in runoffs, and the perception that the system can lead to the election of candidates with less broad appeal. It also prolongs the election process, which can be costly and create uncertainty.
7	How does the 'last man standing' aspect of Texas politics influence the overall political landscape and party dynamics?	This system can lead to more ideologically pure candidates winning nominations, as they often appeal to a more engaged base in the runoff. It also can create internal party friction as candidates battle it out, and the winner then needs to unify the party for the general election.

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