



The Student Leader- January 2013

The newsletter of the oldest state student leadership organization in the nation.

Convention is on the way!

In just a few months, the VSCA Convention will be here, and we couldn't be any more excited at the state office. All relevant Convention materials are now available on the website. If you have made your way to the newsletter on the website, you must have seen the information about Convention!

The VSCA Convention is the highlight of student leadership across Virginia for middle, elementary, and high school youth. We are excited to have the Virginia Board of Education with us at Convention. The Board of Education will host a Forum at the VSCA Convention in which they will listen to the ideas that the student have about education in the Commonwealth. Your students will have the opportunity to get their voices heard by some of the most influential educational leaders in Virginia. This is truly leadership in action. The VSCA Convention, the highlight of student leadership in Virginia, will take place April 12 - 14 in Williamsburg.

Included in this issue is information about our VSCA Convention Keynote speaker. Also, look for articles on the VSCA Achievement Award and involvement on the state level. I would encourage every SCA to apply for the Achievement Award and to consider pursuing leadership opportunities at the state level.

Continue to provide the VSCA state office with any feedback possible from Leadership Workshops and other VSCA activities. I would encourage you to try some of the project ideas in this newsletter. Please give me feedback if you attempt one of these activities. Also, if you have a great idea that you have tried, please submit the idea to me. I always LOVE printing the great ideas of student leaders and advisers of Virginia in this newsletter.

Don't forget this year's theme: VSCA: *Steering the LEADership Forward.*

Important upcoming Dates:

Feb. 4 – Postmark deadline for Achievement Award, Adviser of the Year Award and Administrator of the Year Award

Feb. 12 – Postmark deadline for 2013 – 2014 Advisory Committee Elections Forms

Feb. 18 – Early Registration for Convention Postmark Date

Feb. 28 – Deadline for the Call for Presentations for Convention

Mar. 4 – Registration Deadline for VSCA Convention

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Upcoming Event:

VSCA Convention – April 12 - 14

VSCA STATE CONVENTION
April 12-14, 2013
Williamsburg Hotel and Conference Center
Williamsburg, VA

****Begin to make your plans for the VSCA State Convention.****

****State Convention will be held at the Williamsburg Hotel and Conference Center
April 12-14, 2013.****

****Elementary, Middle and High Schools are included.****

****State Convention features team building activities, opportunities to learn from other students and advisers, motivational speakers, a state service project, workshops on numerous SCA topics, an awards banquet, a dance, opportunities to network with students and advisers from your region and other parts of the state, state officer campaigns and elections, and resolution workshops. This is far from a complete list of all the exciting opportunities at Convention.****

****Convention really helps to unite student councils and give them a sense of purpose. For many advisers, attending the VSCA State Convention is an indispensable activity for their student leaders.****

****More information is posted at www.scaleader.org.*****

UPDATE



VSCA State Convention Service Project – Links for Louisa *VSCA: Steering the LEADership Forward*

The service project for the 2013 Virginia Student Councils Association State Convention is “Links for Louisa.” The community of Louisa was dealt a devastating blow by the earthquake of 2011. The school system continues to need significant assistance to maintain essential services and supports to students throughout the county. The Convention service project that reaches out to a community in need supports the 2012 – 2013 State Councils’ theme.

What you need to do to participate in the VSCA State Convention service project:

- **Sell Spirit Links at your school. The links are just a small piece of construction paper. Each link should be sold for twenty-five cents.**
- **The schools collect the money. Each school donates the money to Louisa County Public Schools.**
- **Connect the Spirit Links sold in your school and bring the entire chain to Convention (if possible).**

Good luck in the Reaching out to Louisa project. With the help of your school’s student council with this project, the VSCA will truly be *Steering the LEADership Forward*.

If you have questions or need more information, contact VSCA Director Mike Nelson at 804.370.0822 or mnelson@scaleader.org.

UPDATE: PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST AT VSCA STATE CONVENTION:

**WHEN: Saturday, April 13, 2013
10:10 – 10:50 a.m.**

WHERE: VSCA Annual State Convention

HOW LONG: 3 to 5 minutes

**TOPIC: Address the Convention theme –
“Steering the LEADership Forward”**

Participants will be judged on physical delivery, vocal delivery and content.

Come prepared to sign up on-site at the Convention!

UPDATE: BOARD OF EDUCATION TO BE A PART OF THE VSCA STATE CONVENTION

The Virginia Student Councils Association is fortunate that the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia will once again be conducting a Forum on matters concerning student leaders at the VSCA State Convention in Williamsburg.

At the Regional Meetings on Friday, April 12th, student leaders will have the opportunity to discuss and share their opinions on various topics of interest relating to schools and the Board of Education. These regional discussions will help students to focus their ideas and plan out what they would like to say to the board on Saturday, April 13th. *This year, students are encouraged to present to the board and the VSCA a written record of their comments at the forum.*

Members of the Board will listen to the students and their concerns in an open forum format. Board members will also be involved informally in the Convention, allowing for students to have more relaxed conversations with the Board.

All in all, the presence of the Board of Education at the VSCA State Convention will elevate student leadership in Virginia to a new level!

VSCA CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT:

MR PHIL TO BE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

One of the most influential and active voices for student leadership for the past thirty years is Mr. Phil and the Virginia Student Councils Association is pleased to announce that he will be our keynote speaker for the 2013 Convention.

Mr. Phil has spoken across the country to numerous student leadership organizations. He conducted many seminars and workshops at state leadership conventions. Mr. Phil has often been featured at the National Association of Student Councils Conference.

Mr. Phil has an engaging speaking style. He challenges student leaders to go above and beyond and reach out to others. Mr. Phil encourages and promotes student leadership that embraces all students. The message that Mr. Phil brings even engages advisers. Mr. Phil is that rare speaker who can communicate a meaningful message to students and adults. The Virginia Student Councils Association is honored to have such an accomplished talent coming to our Convention in 2013.

The VSCA Achievement Award: Why You Should Apply!

State Theme: VSCA: Steering the LEADership Forward

Every Student Council should apply for the VSCA Achievement Award. The Achievement Award is not as difficult as you might think to get. Many student councils do so much more than is required by the stipulations of the Achievement Award.

In order to receive the Achievement Award, an SCA must have at least one activity that fits in with the theme. The VSCA theme for 2012 – 2013 is *VSCA: Steering the LEADership Forward*. In addition, the SCA must do seven more additional activities if they are a high school, six if they are a middle school SCA, and five if they are an elementary school. The application form lists many different and varied activities that qualify.

To apply for the VSCA Achievement Award go to www.scaleader.org. On the website, find the link to the Achievement Award. It is included in the Convention Awards packet. Print this out and follow the instructions. All schools that are awarded the Achievement Award are recognized at the VSCA Convention.

PARTICIPATION AT THE STATE LEVEL GET INVOLVED!

The VSCA Advisory Committee Needs You!

If you would like to take your leadership to the next level, I would encourage you to consider getting involved on the state level with the Virginia Student Councils Association Advisory Committee.

The VSCA Advisory Committee is made up of a President School, Vice President School, Secretary School, eight Regional Representative Schools at the High School level, three middle school representatives, and three elementary school representatives. In addition, there are appointed member schools. The members of the advisory committee are elected at the annual VSCA Convention. While there is an individual student and adviser that serve on the advisory committee for each elected position, they are actually representing their entire student council from their school.

Involvement on the VSCA Advisory Committee allows students to take an active role in guiding student leadership across the state. These student leaders are instrumental in planning the state convention and leadership workshops. Service projects and other ideas are formulated by the student leaders on the VSCA Advisory Committee.

If you have any interest in running for a state office, pay attention to www.scaleader.org.

Great Ice Breakers

We would love to feature ideas and projects from Virginia schools. Please share great ideas as you find them. In this newsletter we are sharing some of the great ideas from the Washington State Student Council Association website.

1. Activity: *Library Ice Breaker*

The collection of books in a library is a great resource for a metaphoric icebreaker. Framing a question around the sentence stem, "What book title in the library best explains..." can help students think abstractly about a concrete subject. This icebreaker can be used any time during the school year for a variety of purposes such as getting acquainted, event evaluation, group check-ins, goal setting, etc. Possible sentence stems include:

- What book title best explains who you are?
- What book title best explains the goals you have for student leadership this year?
- What book title best explains your evaluation of our last project?
- What book title best explains your feelings right now?
- What book title best explains the next school issue our leadership team should work on?

2. Activity: *Merry-Go-Round*

Directions: Props: None

Using a variety of strategies as many times as you would like, attempt the following challenges:

#1 Time how fast it takes your group to sing a round of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" one word at a time with only one person in the group talking at a time. Everyone must say a word before someone can say a second word.

#2 Time how fast it takes to send a "hand clap" around the circle three times. A five second penalty is added to the time if someone claps out of turn or at the same time as someone else. One person claps at a time, then the next person, then the next person...etc.

#3 Using the same criteria as above...time the following:

- a foot stomp
- a pen/pencil on a notebook (5 seconds if pen falls off)
- a handshake

3. Activity: *Line Up*

Directions: Props: None

Using a variety of strategies as many times as you would like, attempt the following challenges:

#1 Time how fast it takes your group to line up in the following orders...a five second penalty is added in the end for each person out of order. You must check your work!

- alphabetical first name • alphabetical favorite color
- alphabetical last name • alphabetical favorite activity
- alphabetical favorite food • alphabetical favorite animal
- alphabetical favorite music group • alphabetical favorite candy

#2 Extra Challenges... • **Without talking...**line up by birthday day and month

- **Without sight...** line up alphabetically by middle name

4. Activity: *In the News*

Directions: Props: 3 sheets of newspaper per person

Give each person in the group three sheets of newspaper then attempt the following challenges:

#1 Alpha Quest: Time how long it takes your group to find a word that begins with each letter of the alphabet. For the letters X, Q, and Z, you may count a word that has the letter in it, BUT if you do, you must add a 10 second penalty for each letter found this way.

#2 Using only the three sheets of newsprint given to each person, completely cover your entire group with newspaper so no body parts can be observed

#3 Using only the three sheets of newsprint given to each person, construct a free standing tower.

5. Activity: *Straw Power*

Directions: Props: 1 straw per person

a) Group stands up and forms a circle

b) Hold straw in right hand, cross right arm over left arm in front of chest

c) Using only tips of index fingers, hold straws up between each person

d) Once in this position, **attempt to do the following challenges:**

#1 As a group, make one complete walking rotation

#2 Untwist your arms to face outward, then re-twist to come back inward

#3 Move arms high and low

#4 Sit down and stand up

#5 Sing a chant or song while doing a Radio City Rockettes' kick

#6 Create your own challenge!

6. Activity: *Balloon Frantic*

Directions: Props: 1 balloon per group

a) Group stands up and forms a circle holding hands. Blow up a balloon and tie it off

b) In a controlled fashion, without breaking hands and without the balloon hitting the ground,

attempt to do the following challenges:

#1 Pass the balloon in a clockwise direction, then switch counterclockwise

#2 Pass the balloon in any direction, but every third person must "hit" the balloon with only his or her head

#3 Keep the balloon up only using feet...only using shoulders...only using elbows...only using knees...

#4 Pass the balloon around in alphabetical order by first name...by last name

#5 Create your own challenge!

7. Activity: *People Mover*

Directions: Props: No props needed

a) Group stands up and forms a circle then **attempts the following challenges:**

#1 As quick as you can, form the following shapes with your bodies: a square...a rectangle...a triangle...a star...

#2 By connecting your bodies and using your imagination, use everyone in your group to create... a vacuum cleaner...a bug zapper...a bowler at a bowling alley...Once you've tried the above, come up with your own idea then call a facilitator over to see if they can guess what you have made with your bodies.

#3 **a)** Form a circle and hold hands. **b)** Without breaking hands, rotate 360 degrees clockwise, then 360 degrees counterclockwise (you might want to set down markers to help guide your 360 degree rotation). **c)** Pick someone in your group to time how fast it takes you to do these two complete rotations. **d)** Develop a strategy that allows you to complete this challenge the fastest.

8. Activity: *Pass the Can*

Directions: Props: one #10 can per group or small bucket Using only your feet, pass the can around the circle from person to person without the can touching the ground.

- a) As a group, sit down in a circle with your feet facing inside the circle.
- b) Pick someone in the circle to time how long it takes the group to pass the can around the circle one time.
- c) Each time the can touches the ground, add 5 seconds to your time.
- d) Compete against yourselves and try to improve your time.
- e) Stop after each attempt and brainstorm ideas of how the group might be able to go faster.

9. Activity: *The Sound of Music*

Directions: Props: None

Attempt the following challenges:

#1 On the count of three take a deep breath, and then start "humming." See who can hum the longest with just the one breath.

#2 Each person in the group chooses a song to sing **WITHOUT TELLING** anyone what the song is. On the word "sing," all group members start singing their songs. During the activity, you may only sing. No talking is allowed. If you choose to stop singing your song and start singing someone else's song, link arms with them. The activity ends when everyone is singing the same song or small groups of people are singing songs that they don't want to change.

#3 Pass a sound around the circle. Someone makes a sound and "throws" it to a person across the circle. That person "catches" the sound by making the same sound that was "thrown" to them. To continue the activity, the person who just "caught" a sound, now "throws" a new sound across the circle to another person who "catches" this new sound. For an advanced challenge, have more than one sound traveling around the circle.

10. Activity: *Engineers*

Directions: Using only the materials provided, attempt the following challenges.

Props: bag of assorted items: rubber bands, chenille stems, paper clips, band-aids, construction paper, tape, pencils, straws, etc. Challenge #4 utilizes a tub of water.

#1 Connect the items to design something that can be stretched to cover the greatest distance.

#2 Connect the items to design the tallest free standing structure.

#3 Connect the items to design a small replica of a famous monument or building.

#4 Connect the items to design something that will float.

11. Activity: *Word Chains*

Directions: Props: Paper & Pencil for #3 Attempt the following word challenges.

#1 As a group, pick a category: geography, sports, animals, music, or fruits and vegetables. One person starts the chain by stating a word in the category. The person to the right states another word in the category that starts with the last letter of the previously stated word. Continue the chain around the circle. For an extra challenge, send one category around to the circle to the left and one category around to the right.

#2 Attempt to say each tongue twister together as a group. Try each one ten times in a row at the fastest rate possible: "Unique New York;" "Toy boat;" "Thick socks;" "Red leather, yellow leather;" "The big black bug bled black blood;" "She makes a proper cup of coffee in a copper coffee pot;" "Watch the wacky wristwatch;" "Six thick thistle sticks."

#3 Write a letter to someone going around the circle one word/punctuation mark at a time starting with the word "Dear _____," and ending with the words, "Sincerely Yours_____." Attempt to write a grammatically correct letter that ends with the last person in the circle closing with, "Sincerely Yours." For an extra challenge, start a letter to the right AND to the left!

12. Activity: *Count Me In!*

Directions: Props: None

Attempt the following challenges:

#1 Use your bodies to form the shape of your Zip code one number at a time.

#2 Without talking other than to say a number, count to the number that represents the amount of people in the group. Each person may only state one number during each attempt. Start with everyone looking at the ground. If two people say a number at the exact same time, the group needs to moan "Arggghhhhhh" in despair...then start the count over.

#3 As a group count together to 30 with the following synchronized clapping pattern. After stating each multiple of three (3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 21, 24, 27), the group needs to clap once. After stating each multiple of five (5, 10, 20, 25), the group needs to clap twice. After stating each multiple of three and five (15, 30), the group needs to clap three times.

13. Activity: *Dramatics*

Directions: Props: None

#1 Complete each direction before reading the next one. a) As a group, select a category: sports, music, funny faces or professions. b) Choose three distinct motions & accompanying sounds that relate to the category. c) Practice the three motions/sounds as a group. d) Form a circle with everyone's back facing the center of the circle. e) On the count of three, everyone spins around and makes one of the three motions/sounds. d) WITHOUT TALKING...the goal is to get everyone in the group to make the same motion/sound. Continue to turn your backs to the center of the circle and spin on the count of three until all members of the group have the same motion/sound.

#2 Build a machine with your bodies that completes a task. Each person in your group must be a part in the machine. A part must have a motion and a sound and it must interact with at least one other part.

#3 Select a leader for the activity. The leader is the "person" and the other members of the group are the "mirrors." The mirrors should duplicate at the same time as accurately as possible whatever the leader does or says.

14. Activity: *The Dice is Right*

Directions: Props: dice (two)

Attempt the following challenges.

#1 Roll the dice. Based on the number showing, brainstorm a list of things the group has in common. Roll the dice three times.

#2 Roll one die. Based on the number showing, form groups of that number as accurately as possible.

#3 Number group members from 1 to 12 (if more than 12, pair up the extra people). Roll the dice. The person with the number showing must lead the group for 15 seconds making sounds and motions the group must imitate. Roll the dice ten times.

#4 Number the group members from 1 to 12. Before rolling the dice, pick one of the following categories: TV shows, movies, athletes, musicians, state capitals, country capitals, lakes, mountain ranges, U.S. political leaders, or world political leaders. Roll the dice. The person with the number showing must name as many items related to the category as shown on the dice. The person will have twice the number of seconds showing on the dice to complete the task. Roll the dice ten times.

15. Activity: *Choices*

Directions: Props: Talking Stick

Attempt the following challenge:

#1 You must choose only one person in your group to receive a prize. Use Fist to 5 or Thumb Up/Thumb Down to make your decision.

Parameters:

- The prize must not be shared.

- The group must unanimously agree on its choice within the time limit. If the group does not reach consensus, no one receives the prize.

- Only one person can speak at a time. Use the talking stick.

- Once a decision has been made send the prizewinner to the facilitator.

- Once the prizewinner is back in your circle, answer the questions below.

Questions

1) Describe the decision-making process? Was it easy or difficult? Why or why not?

2) Explain the feeling tone (attitude) of the group concerning the task.

16. Activity: *Step Dance Spotlight*

“If you can speak, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance.”

Bob Marley

Props: None

Introduction:

“Stepping is a dynamic and popular performance tradition among African-American fraternities and sororities...This complex performance event and ritual involves various combinations of dancing, singing, chanting and speaking, and draws on African-American folk traditions and communication patterns as well as material from popular culture...Stepping involves great creativity, intelligence, wit, and physical skill.”

from “Stepping, Saluting, & Cracking: The Cultural Politics of African-American Step Shows” by Elizabeth C. Fine

Directions:

Create a 30 second (or less) group step dance routine. A step dance is a synchronized group routine that incorporates moves, sounds, and rhythms from the following sources: cheerleading, military, drill-team, hip-hop, break dancing, call-and-response, and almost anything from popular culture such as advertising, jingles, television theme songs and top 40 hits

Spirit Day Ideas

These great ideas were provided by the Kansas Student Council Association Website.

- 50's Day
- 60's Day
- 70's Day
- 80's Day
- Americana Day
- Baby Day
- Backwards Day
- Bad Hair Day
- Bass Pro Shop Day
- Beach Attire Day
- Brown Bag Day
- Button Day
- Celebrity Imitation Day
- Class Color Day
- Clown Day
- College Day
- Copy Cat Day
- Crazy Day
- Crazy Socks Day
- Cross Dress Day
- Decades Day
- Disney Day
- Door Decorating
- Fake an Injury Day
- Futuristic Day
- Gangster Day
- Garage Sale Day
- Geek Day
- Generic Day
- Geriatric Day
- Grandpa/Grandma Day
- Greek Day

- Grubby Shoe Day
- Hat Day
- Hats and Shades Day
- Hawaiian Day
- Heavy Metal Day
- Hero Day
- Hillbilly Day
- Hobo Day
- Hoody Day
- Inside Out Day
- Little Kid Day
- Loud Day
- M*A*S*H Day
- Mismatch Day
- Nerd Day
- Occupation Day
- Olympics Day
- Pajama Day
- Parents Prom Attire Day
- Pick-a-Day in History Day
- Prehistoric Day
- Sports Fan Day
- Sports Uniform Day
- Surfer Day
- Tacky-Dresser Day
- Tea Party Day
- Teacher-Look-Alike Day
- Tie Day
- Tie-Dye Day
- Toga Day
- Tourist Day
- Twins Day
- Wild West Day
- Wizard of Oz Day

Service Project Ideas

These great ideas are from the Kansas Association of Student Councils.

- Adopt-a-Grandparent
- Babysitting Service (for Valentine's Day, Christmas shopping, etc.)
- Big Brother/ Big Sister Programs
- Bike Safety Day
- Blood Drive
- Book Drive
- Car Seat Safety Day
- Cemetery Clean-Up
- Citizen of the Year
- Children's Hospital Visits
- Chauffer Service for Elderly (esp. Election Day)
- Coat and/or Blanket Drive

- Community Scavenger Hunt
- Computer Workshops for Community/Elderly
- Fall Clean-Up Day (Rake leaves, clean gutters, etc.)
- Food Drive
- Get-Out-And-Vote Campaign
- Greeting Card Service (sending special occasion cards to faculty, staff, school officials, etc.)
- Grocery Carry-Out Service
- Highway/Road Cleanup (pick up trash)
- Holiday Decorating Service (for nursing homes, hospitals)
- Lawn Mowing Service
- Literacy Drive
- Nursing Home Visits
- Reading Books to Children
- Senior Citizens Prom
- Singing Telegrams
- Snow Shoveling Service
- Special Olympics
- Toy drive
- Usher for Civic Events (Concerts, Lectures, etc.)
- Valentine's for Veterans
- Vandalism Clean-Up (school & community)
- Veteran Center/Hospital Visits

Nine Things Every Student Council Advisor Should Know

I found this list on the Kansas Student Council Association website. Please enjoy. These thoughts are not exhaustive, but they are meant to stimulate discussion and thought. There are probably many reasons why someone like me should NOT speak these thoughts, but there is one very big reason why I should: we have problems. Our world has problems, our schools have problems, our communities have problems. Maybe these thoughts can help in one way or another.

- **1. There are no answers, only might helps.**
No one person and no one program has all the answers, but there are many "might helps," that is many programs, thoughts, concepts, etc. that might help us in our work with young people.
- **2. Remember your family**
As important as a school or student council is, it is not the most important thing in our lives. Our families are, or our personal development is. When we begin spending more time on our job (whatever our job may be) than we do with our own families or development, we have made a mistake.
- **3. Generally speaking, teenagers are powerless**
They need advocates. Many people in our schools are not at all convinced that young people can accomplish very much. We have to run interference for our young people, not only with the principal (who must be informed by us), but the whole faculty.
- **4. The problems adolescents have are not the same as adult problems, but they are just as important and have the same intensity.**
This means that we must be totally open to listening to what their problems are, even ones that we think that we can solve easily. It also means that we have to acquaint ourselves with what they are doing—that is, we must know their music, their movies, how they are thinking, etc. We are not their age, and we never will be. In fact, teenagers are FRAGILE in many ways. They are in a stage of development that is not mature, and we can never forget that, no matter how "mature" we may think they are.
- **5. Peer pressure is the single most important force in an adolescent's life**
Simply put, this is the single most important factor that philosophically dictates what they do and what they say. We must never put ourselves in a situation where we say: "You choose us or them." We will lose every time.
- **6. Popularity in some form constantly occupies young people's minds**
Specifically that which occupies their actual lives is popularity as expressed in some type of sexual/physical attraction. It goes without saying, of course, that boys and girls are different, but we must always remember that they are VERY different, especially in this area. This is acted out in their lives in especially this way: girls, by their dress and makeup; boys, by their actions and talk. The media is absolutely shameless in taking advantage of them, especially advertisements.
- **7. What you do speaks so loudly that the young people cannot hear what you say**
There are legitimate reasons that allow an adult to act differently from a teenager, but in general, young people do not think so. For adolescents, it is clear-cut: if you tell me what to do about my moral behavior, then your moral behavior in the same area ought to follow the same rules, e.g. alcohol, language, attitude, smoking, and sex.
- **8. You are very important to your student council**
Besides the fact that they often need good adult examples, they need our expertise. Usually, they cannot accomplish the goals themselves, but they have to feel that it is their project. We are the wind beneath their wings. We are their motivation.
- **9. In fact, you may be the single most important factor in their future lives**
Granted, their life is their own creation, so to speak, but we may be the most important influence in their lives right now. When they think back to their high school, will they think of us? And how will they

think of us?

And finally...

Please continue to send in great ideas so wonderful activities of great student leaders can be shared with student councils throughout the state. Please submit ideas to Mike Nelson, VSCA Director at mnelson@scaleader.org, and he will try to get as many ideas as possible in our monthly newsletters.

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