



University of  
Reading

The guide to the

# Life Tools

Programme 2023–2024



**Learn > Develop > Succeed**

Creating the pathway to academic and personal success.

# Life Tools programme

## How the Life Tools programme benefits you

The programme is designed by experts to contribute to your ongoing personal, academic and professional development.

During Welcome Week, talks will be on campus. During the academic year, the programme will be delivered both as webinars and also a combination of on campus and online (hybrid). The webinars consist of a 45-minute online interactive presentation on Blackboard, followed by time for questions about the topic. You can use the mic, chat and Mentimeter to participate. There are no assessments or evaluations. You can try them out to see what topics interest you and learn more about the programme. You can check the details of the programme and book your place at [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](http://reading.ac.uk/life-tools), and also find the link to the Life Tools Blackboard organisation.



“ It was an awakening experience, I became more understanding of myself and how to improve aspects of my life (such as sleep). It taught me ways to manage my academic life and prepare for exams. The Life Tool’s Programme helped me to navigate and take control in many areas of my life ”

(Third year student)

**Our Life Tools programme won the RSU staff-student partnership excellence award in 2018-19**

The Life Tools programme is free and open to all students.

## The Life Tools Certificate

- The aim of the certificate is to provide evidence of the skills you have developed.
- It is a way of acknowledging and rewarding your commitment to your personal and professional development.
- You can obtain a certificate when you have completed all of the elements required, and it will appear in your academic transcript.

For more information go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](http://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)

## The Life Tools Blackboard

You can find resources on the Blackboard organisation. Once you enrol, you can access recordings, podcasts and receive a weekly email with information about upcoming webinars/talks, as well as general information on the topics covered.



Manage academic demands  
Invest in your academic and professional development  
Enhance personal wellbeing

The topics covered are categorised under the following headings:

- **Creativity**  
to develop strategies to increase your ability to problem-solve and find creative solutions.
- **Knowledge**  
to increase your awareness to inform your decisions and actions to do well both personally and academically
- **Tools**  
Strategies to develop skills to do well in your studies
- **Wellness**  
to develop strategies to enhance your emotional resilience and keep well
- **Global awareness**  
increase your understanding of cultures and adapt to new situations in the workplace in the future



Creativity



Knowledge



Tools



Wellness



Global Awareness

Each talk is colour coded by the category it most relates to, although most of them have a crossover with other categories.

# Life Tools

## Talks/Webinars Programme

DATE	TALK/WEBINARS	DAY	TIME*	SELECT YOUR TALK	
SEP 19	● Living and Studying in the UK	TUE	10:00-10:45		
	● Prepare for University	TUE	12:00-12:45		
	● Maximise your university experience	TUE	14:00-14:45		
20	● Prepare for University	WED	11:00-11:45		
	● Settling in, getting to know others	WED	13:00-13:45		
	● Live well on a student budget and prevent debt	WED	14:30-15:15		
21	● Maximise your university experience	THU	11:00-11:45		
	● Living and Studying in the UK	THU	13:00-13:45		
	● Settling in, getting to know others	THU	14:30-15:15		
28	● A Good Night's Sleep	THU	13:00-13:45		
29	● Settling in, getting to know others	FRI	13:00-13:45		
OCT 05	● Managing Uncertainty: Adapting to Change	THU	13:00-13:45		
	06 ● Focusing or Forgetting?	FRI	13:00-13:45		
	12 ● Under Pressure?	THU	13:00-13:45		
	13 ● Stressed? Learn ways to maintain your health	FRI	13:00-13:45		
	19 ● Jumpstarting your brain (procrastination)	THU	13:00-13:45		
	20 ● Ignite your motivation: keep learning	FRI	13:00-13:45		
	26 ● Bouncing back from setbacks		THU	13:00-13:45	
		● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
	27 ● A Good Night's Sleep	FRI	13:00-13:45		

DATE	TALK/WEBINARS	DAY	TIME*	SELECT YOUR TALK
NOV 02	● Confidence: "I Can" and "I Will"	THU	13:00-13:45	
	03 ● Mindfulness: a brief introduction	FRI	13:00-13:45	
09	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
	● Feedback: food for thought	THU	13:00-13:45	
10	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
	● Focusing or Forgetting?	FRI	13:00-13:45	
16	● Emotional Intelligence	THU	13:00-13:45	
17	● Imperfect Perfectionism	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
JAN 11	● Ignite your motivation: keep learning	THU	13:00-13:45	
	12 ● Under Pressure?	FRI	13:00-13:45	
18	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
	● Stressed? Learn ways to maintain your health	THU	13:00-13:45	
19	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
	● A Good Night's Sleep	FRI	13:00-13:45	
25	● Imperfect Perfectionism	THU	13:00-13:45	
26	● Mindfulness: a brief introduction	FRI	13:00-13:45	
26	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	

\* For more details, and to book a place on a webinar, go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](http://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)



DATE	TALK/WEBINARS	DAY	TIME*	SELECT YOUR TALK
FEB 01	● Confidence: "I Can" and "I Will"	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
02	● Ace Presentations and Collaborations	FRI	13:00-13:45	
08	● Stressed? Learn ways to maintain your health	THU	13:00-13:45	
09	● Focusing or Forgetting?	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
15	● Ignite your motivation: keep learning	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
16	● Imperfect Perfectionism	FRI	13:00-13:45	
22	● Emotional Intelligence	THU	13:00-13:45	
23	● Bouncing back from setbacks	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
29	● Feedback: food for thought	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
MAR 01	● Preparing for exams: evidence based revision techniques	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Stressed? Learn ways to maintain your health	THU	13:00-13:45	
08	● Under Pressure?	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
14	● Focusing or Forgetting?	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
15	● Confidence: "I Can" and "I Will"	FRI	13:00-13:45	
21	● Preparing for exams: evidence based revision techniques	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	

DATE	TALK/WEBINARS	DAY	TIME*	SELECT YOUR TALK
APR 18	● Preparing for exams: evidence based revision techniques	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
19	● A Good Night's Sleep	FRI	13:00-13:45	
25	● Feedback: food for thought	THU	13:00-13:45	
26	● Mindfulness for exam prep	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	FRI	14:30-15:00	
MAY 02	● Ignite your motivation: Keep learning	THU	13:00-13:45	
	● Learners Mindset: Prevent Procrastination and get things done	THU	14:30-15:00	
03	● Emotional Intelligence	FRI	13:00-13:45	
	● Beyond University	FRI	14:30-15:15	

RECORDED	TALK/WEBINARS	SELECT YOUR TALK
All the talks listed above, as well as the topics listed here, can be accessed via the Life Tools Blackboard organisation.	● Romantic relationships – navigating changes and challenges	
	● Socialising and substances: When is it too much?	
	● Supporting a distressed friend	
	● Thinking ahead: the workplace and you	

\* For more details, and to book a place on a webinar, go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](http://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)

 @UoR\_LifeTools  
 @UoR\_studentlife

# W

WELCOME

# Welcome Week

## Prepare for university

Improve concentration, avoid procrastination, and be productive. Learn about the Life Tools Certificate, Blackboard and blog. Maximise your potential to do well academically.

Tues 19 Sep  
12:00–12:45  
Palmer G10

Wed 20 Sep  
11:00–11:45  
Palmer 106

For more information go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)  
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### OUR TOP TIP:

Focus on what you want to learn and maintain a regular routine.

YOUR TIP:

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PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Living and studying in the UK

Useful information on how to adjust to a new environment and to a different cultural and educational system.

Tues 19 Sep  
10:00–10:45  
Palmer 106

Thu 21 Sep  
13:00–13:45  
Palmer 106

For more information go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)  
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### OUR TOP TIP:

Ask others about life in the UK, and practise your language skills.

YOUR TIP:

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PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Maximise your university experience

Find out about how to manage the transition to university, enhance your study skills and increase your knowledge.

Tues 19 Sep  
14:00–14:45  
Palmer 106

Thu 21 Sep  
11:00–11:45  
Palmer 106

For more information go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)  
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### OUR TOP TIP:

Create a healthy routine and focus on learning.

YOUR TIP:

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PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Settling in, getting to know others

Whenever we go to a new place, what interests us most is getting to know people, and establishing relationships that have the potential to last. Find out how you can do this.

Wed 20 Sep  
13:00–13:45

Thu 21 Sep  
14:30–15:15

Fri 29 Sep  
13:00–13:45

Palmer 106

For more information go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)  
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### OUR TOP TIP:

Explore what activities are available and try one to learn something new.

YOUR TIP:

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PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Live well on a student budget and prevent debt

Is it hard to balance your essential expenses with treating yourself? Know your budget, and make it work for you. Find out about Blackbullion, an online tool to manage your budget at [blackbullion.com](https://blackbullion.com)

Wed 20 Sep  
14:30–15:15  
Palmer 106

For more information go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)  
 @UoR\_LifeTools

### OUR TOP TIP:

Keep track of your expenses and plan for what you want to do.

YOUR TIP:

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PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## A good night's sleep

Sleep is essential for our health and wellbeing. It is also key to learning and remembering. Find out about what influences your sleep pattern and tips to help you sleep better.

Thu 28 Sep 13:00–13:45

Fri 27 Oct 13:00–13:45

Fri 19 Jan 13:00–13:45

Fri 19 Apr 13:00–13:45

### OUR TOP TIP:

*Plan technology free time before bedtime.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Ace presentations and collaborations

Developing working relationships with others is an essential skill for academic collaboration. A good presentation can help you to manage group projects effectively.

Fri 02 Feb 13:00–13:45

### OUR TOP TIP:

*Simple is clearer, consult with each other*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Beyond university

Finishing your degree is a time of change.

Saying good bye to friends, as well as looking ahead and preparing for life beyond university.

Fri 03 May 14:30–15:15

### OUR TOP TIP:

*Keep in contact and follow up with friends. Maintain hope for the next stage.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Bouncing back from setbacks

Life at university can present many challenges, and sometimes things do not work out as hoped. Dealing with setbacks is a key skill to learn from these situations.

Thu 26 Oct 13:00–13:45

Fri 23 Feb 13:00–13:45

### OUR TOP TIP:

*Listen to yourself, maintain energy levels*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Confidence: "I can" and "I will"

Do you find that although you know what to do, you doubt yourself? Do you wonder how to achieve your goals? Are you concerned about making mistakes? Learn strategies to develop a confident mindset, challenge negative thinking and develop strategies to maintain your health and well-being.

Thu 02 Nov 13:00–13:45

Thu 01 Feb 13:00–13:45

Fri 15 Mar 13:00–13:45

### OUR TOP TIP:

*Change from "I can't" to "I can". Focus on possibilities.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Emotional Intelligence

People who know themselves well and can manage their emotions effectively do well both at work and in life. Learn strategies to communicate with others effectively. This is a key competency for work and life.

Thu 16 Nov 13:00–13:45

Thu 22 Feb 13:00–13:45

Fri 03 May 13:00–13:45

### OUR TOP TIP:

*Increase self-awareness, self-manage and relate to others well.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Feedback: food for thought

Managing sensitive feedback is key to make progress with your studies. Find out ways in which you can make the most of the information and advice so that you can develop your knowledge and skills that you can then take into the workplace.

Thu 09 Nov 13:00–13:45  
Thu 29 Feb 13:00–13:45  
Thu 25 Apr 13:00–13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*It's not personal, it's to improve your work*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Focusing or forgetting?

In the digital age we are constantly surrounded by stimuli that distract us. Do you notice that you read a lot, but find it hard to remember the material? Find out how to manage distractions, focus better, remember what you are learning and make progress in your studies.

Fri 06 Oct 13:00–13:45  
Fri 10 Nov 13:00–13:45  
Fri 09 Feb 13:00–13:45  
Thu 14 Mar 13:00–13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Switch off distractions and create a calm, focused work environment.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Ignite your motivation: keep learning

Learn about what influences our motivation and understand your preferred style of studying better, identify your priorities and structure your time to complete tasks in time. Find out strategies to motivate yourself so that you can increase your knowledge and enjoy your learning.

Fri 20 Oct 13:00–13:45  
Thu 11 Jan 13:00–13:45  
Thu 15 Feb 13:00–13:45  
Thu 02 May 13:00–13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Identify your priorities, and structure your day.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Imperfect perfectionism

Do you find that you want to continually improve your work? Does it feel frustrating when it is not just so? Do you find yourself going over your work many times and do not feel you are making progress?

Find out why good enough is good enough.

Fri 17 Nov 13:00–13:45  
Thu 25 Jan 13:00–13:45  
Fri 16 Feb 13:00–13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Failure is part of life. We learn from it to make progress going forward.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Jump-starting your brain

Difficult to get started? Can't get finished? Fear of making mistakes? This creates unnecessary pressure to meet unrealistic standards. Find out what you can do to get started, make progress and hand in your work in on time.

Thu 19 Oct 13:00–13:45

*Check the Learner's mindset section for information on webinars on this topic during the academic year.*

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Break tasks down into small chunks.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Learners Mindset: Prevent procrastination and get things done

Do you find it challenging to get started or continue with your assignments? Do you feel there is too much to do and do not know where to start? It can be frustrating, worrying and demotivating.

Academic work requires focused time and effort. Studying for your degree requires reading lengthy and more complex texts. It can be challenging to focus on one task for a set period when we are used to scanning websites and reading content online presented in a bite-sized format. As a result, it takes longer to get work done.

But it does not have to be this way. The Learner's Mindset webinars provide

the space to review strategies to prevent procrastination so that you can make progress with your work.

Learning to prevent procrastination requires consistent effort and practice. Having a group of people with the same goal – to do well in your degree – is a great way to feel energised and motivated to do your work.

Each week's webinar (30 mins) we cover different strategies and tips to develop skills. It is your opportunity to ask questions (you can use the chat, Mentimeter and mic). The webinars provide the opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas with others. It is space for learning.

Thu 26 Oct 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 03 Nov 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 09 Nov 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 17 Nov 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 12 Jan 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 18 Jan 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 26 Jan 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 01 Feb 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 09 Feb 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 15 Feb 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 23 Feb 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 29 Feb 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 08 Mar 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 14 Mar 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 21 Mar 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 18 Apr 14:30-15:00  
 Fri 26 Apr 14:30-15:00  
 Thu 02 May 14:30-15:00

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Create reminders to get started and focus on the benefit of making progress.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Mindfulness: a brief introduction

In a busy world we need to create space to pause. This enables us to manage our thoughts, reduce the impact of demands and derive a sense of wellbeing. Find out what Mindfulness is about, and the benefits for health and learning.

Fri 03 Nov 13:00-13:45  
 Fri 26 Jan 13:00-13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Mindfulness is the opposite of mindlessness. Take time each day to check in with yourself.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Mindfulness for exam prep

Tips to reduce tension and maintain your balance during revision.

Fri 26 Apr 13:00-13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Take a moment to breathe, pay attention to your environment.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Managing uncertainty: Adapting to Change

Studying for a degree and preparing for the future, requires learning to manage change. Find out about ways to maintain your balance as you adapt to new situations and keep well and develop your potential.

Thu 05 Oct 13:00-13:45

### ★ OUR TOP TIP:

*Focus on what you can do now and maintain your energy level.*

YOUR TIP:

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON




## Preparing for exams: evidence-based revision techniques



Do you feel you have a lot to revise in a short period of time? Are you worried about your results, or what to do if an exam doesn't go well? If so, you are not alone. Find out how to do well and keep well while under pressure.

Learn how to regulate emotions to increase concentration and memory, boost motivation, and reduce procrastination to manage your revision and exams effectively.

Fri 01 Mar 13:00-13:45  
Thu 21 Mar 13:00-13:45  
Thu 18 Apr 13:00-13:45

 **OUR TOP TIP:**  
*Start early, do a bit each day. Manage your energy levels.*  
**YOUR TIP:**

\*For more details, and to book a place on a webinar, go to [reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)


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I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Stressed? Learn ways to maintain your health

Life at university can be very busy and at times it may become stressful. Managing symptoms at an early stage is key to prevent them from having a negative impact on your health, wellbeing, and ability to study. Find out strategies to help reduce the impact of stress and maintain your health to study productively.

Fri 13 Oct 13:00-13:45  
Thu 18 Jan 13:00-13:45  
Thu 08 Feb 13:00-13:45  
Thu 07 Mar 13:00-13:45

 **OUR TOP TIP:**  
*Eat well, sleep well, get some fresh air.*  
**YOUR TIP:**


I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

## Under pressure?

Preparing for a degree requires higher levels of depth in your work, while juggling multiple deadlines and managing expectations to achieve the academic standards required.

Build on your strategies to manage pressure, maintain your strength, and learn better while keeping well.

Thu 12 Oct 13:00-13:45  
Fri 12 Jan 13:00-13:45  
Fri 08 Mar 13:00-13:45

 **OUR TOP TIP:**  
*Set realistic goals and be your best friend.*  
**YOUR TIP:**

I PLAN TO ATTEND ON

# Student feedback

“ Each talk gives us some insight into why we do what we do, and what measures we can take to reduce maladaptive studying behaviours such as procrastination. The online format also enables us to access the talks wherever we are in the world, while also letting us directly interact with the speaker and other students to share our experiences and related tips. ”  
(1st year student)

“ Life Tools helped me find new confidence and new ways of thinking to improve my experience at Reading. ”  
(3rd year student)

“ I believe the Life Tools programme helps us students reduce some of the stress and pressures that come along with the workload. ”  
(1st year student)

“ After the webinars I felt very inspired and motivated which I loved! ”  
(1st year student)

“ I work more productively in a shorter amount of time. ”  
(1st year student)

“ You can interact with international students... which make you have more of an open mind. ”  
(2nd year student)

## Blackboard (weekly emails)

“ Receiving blackboard emails for the Life Tools programme is appreciated because the emails are so useful to navigate the programme, and see what webinars are available for each week. ”  
(2nd year student)

# Other services

## Study Advice

0118 378 4242  
studyadvice@reading.ac.uk visit [reading.ac.uk/study-advice](https://reading.ac.uk/study-advice)

## RSU activities

0118 378 4100  
enquiries@rusu.co.uk visit [rusu.co.uk/student-activities](https://rusu.co.uk/student-activities)

## Student Financial Support

0118 378 5555  
studentfunding@reading.ac.uk visit [reading.ac.uk/money](https://reading.ac.uk/money)

## Blackbullion (online financial resource)

visit [blackbullion.com](https://blackbullion.com)

## International Student Advice

int.adv@reading.ac.uk visit [reading.ac.uk/essentials/international](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/international)

## Accommodation

Halls hotline 0118 378 7777  
visit [reading.ac.uk/essentials/accommodation](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/accommodation)  
Accommodation 0118 200 5011  
visit [reading.ac.uk/accommodation](https://reading.ac.uk/accommodation)

## Sportspark

0118 378 8799  
sport@reading.ac.uk visit [sport.reading.ac.uk](https://sport.reading.ac.uk)

## Careers

0118 378 8359  
careers@reading.ac.uk visit [reading.ac.uk/careers](https://reading.ac.uk/careers)

## Student Welfare Team

0118 378 4777  
studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk visit [reading.ac.uk/welfare-team](https://reading.ac.uk/welfare-team)

## Counselling and Wellbeing

0118 378 4216  
counselling@reading.ac.uk visit [reading.ac.uk/counselling](https://reading.ac.uk/counselling)



The Life Tools programme is free and open to all students.



## Life Tools

 For more information, you can email: [talks@reading.ac.uk](mailto:talks@reading.ac.uk)  
[reading.ac.uk/life-tools](https://reading.ac.uk/life-tools)

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