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# A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY B

PSYB4: Approaches, Debates and Methods in Psychology  
Mark scheme

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2185  
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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

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## Section A Approaches

### OPTION A

#### Question 01

**Sophie has made new friends at her 6<sup>th</sup> Form College. She has recently passed her driving test and has the use of her parents' car. Her parents are concerned because Sophie stays out until after midnight during the week, even though she has promised to be home by 11 pm.**

**Explain how Sophie's parents could use two different types of reinforcement to encourage Sophie to be home by 11pm. [4 marks]**

**AO1 = 2 marks, AO2 = 2 marks**

Credit for application of knowledge of positive and negative reinforcement, although some candidates might refer to partial reinforcement schedules/vicarious/primary/secondary reinforcement etc.

Note that one mark can be given for each of two identifiable types of reinforcement outlined (not simply named).

For example: Positive Reinforcement:

Sophie's parents could use positive reinforcement by rewarding Sophie each time she arrives home on time (1).

Second mark could be for either a concrete example of a reinforcer eg extra money or clothes or for elaboration of operant conditioning principles eg stamping in of appropriate behaviour (1).

For example: Negative Reinforcement:

Sophie's parents could use negative reinforcement by warning Sophie of consequences if she arrives home late (1).

Second mark could be for either a concrete example of a negative reinforcer eg she will be 'grounded'/lose the use of the car, or for elaboration of operant conditioning principles eg Sophie should comply with the expected behaviour to avoid the unpleasant consequence (1).

Do not accept answers that merely describe punishment rather than negative reinforcement.

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**Question 02**

**Explain one similarity between the behaviourist approach and social learning theory. [2 marks]**

**AO2 = 2 marks**

One mark for brief explanation of a similarity between the behaviourist approach and social learning theory, a second mark for expansion of the similarity.

Similarities include: reinforcement, learning, S-R approach, use of experiments, position re: nature v nurture, the role of experience etc.

Expect a clearly identified similarity for 1 mark.

If examples are used and you are left to infer the similarity – maximum 1 mark.

For example:

One similarity is that both social learning theory and behaviourists use carefully controlled scientific experiments that generate laws that apply to all/social learning theorists use laboratory experiments to investigate observational learning and imitation and the behaviourists conduct laboratory experiments to investigate learning.

**Question 03**

**Behaviourists often use animals in their research. Briefly discuss one strength of using animals in research and then applying the findings to human behaviour. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

One mark for a relevant strength of the use of animals and a second mark for elaboration/counterarguments.

For example:

Strengths of using animals in research include: controlled research on animals is easier to conduct (smaller, shorter gestation period); some argue animal research is ethically more acceptable.

Answers may also refer to evolutionary similarities between humans etc.

Any animal research can be credited.

**Question 04**

**Outline Freud's psychodynamic theory and one post-Freudian theory. Compare these two theories. [12 marks]**

**AO1 = 4 marks**

Up to four marks for relevant knowledge and understanding of Freud's psychodynamic approach and one post-Freudian theory (probably Erikson, although alternatives are acceptable). Award 2 x AO1 marks for each theory. Knowledge will most likely focus on the key assumptions/features of the approaches:

Freud: Tripartite structure of personality, theory of psychosexual development, levels of consciousness, libido, life and death instincts, anxiety, defence mechanisms etc.

Erikson: Psychosocial development, emphasis on the ego, psychosocial theory etc.

Klein: Object relations theory, developmental positions etc.

Jung: Individuation, ego, persona, self, collective unconscious, shadow, archetypes, symbolism etc.

Credit description of relevant evidence up to one mark.

**AO2 = 8 marks**

Up to 8 marks for identification of points of similarity/difference and for analysis of the comparative points identified between Freud's theory and one post-Freudian theory.

Discussion may focus on one similarity and one difference in detail or a broader discussion of a number of comparisons.

Discussion and analysis should be focused on the comparisons identified.

Award up to 2 marks for general evaluation.

Credit use of relevant evidence.

Comparison points might include:Differences –

Erikson defined stages in psychosocial terms unlike Freud's theory of psychosexual development; Erikson had 8 stages, 4 of which focused on the years after puberty unlike Freud who had 5 stages that ended at puberty.

Erikson focussed on lifespan whereas Freud focussed on childhood.

Erikson's theory presents a positive and optimistic view of humans whilst Freud had a negative view of human conflict.

Methods: Erikson – psycho-histories/cross-cultural research whilst Freud conducted case studies.

Erikson focussed on the ego whilst Freud's emphasis was on the id.

Similarities –

Both Erikson and Freud had stage theories and both agreed on the levels of consciousness and 3 parts of personality.

Also common to both Erikson and Freud was a conflict to be resolved at each stage of development and both had a belief in strong instinctual forces and defence mechanisms.

## Mark bands

### **10-12 marks Very good answers**

The answer is clearly focused on the question and shows sound knowledge and understanding of Freud's psychodynamic approach and one post-Freudian theory. Comparison is full and includes thoughtful analysis. Most comparative comments are well developed. The answer is well organised and mostly relevant with little, if any, misunderstanding.

The student expresses most ideas clearly and fluently, with effective use of psychological terminology. Arguments are well structured and coherent, with appropriate use of sentences and paragraphs. There are few, if any, minor errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The overall quality of language is such that the meaning is rarely, if ever, obscured.

### **7-9 marks Good answers**

Answer shows knowledge and understanding of Freud's psychodynamic approach and one post-Freudian theory. Comparison is evident and the answer is mostly focused on the question although there may be some irrelevance and/or misunderstanding.

The student expresses most ideas clearly and makes some appropriate use of psychological terminology. The answer is organised using sentences and paragraphs. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling may be present but are mostly minor, such that they obscure meaning only occasionally.

### **4-6 marks Average to weak answers**

Answer shows some knowledge and understanding of Freud's psychodynamic approach and one post-Freudian theory. There must be some attempt at comparison/evaluation for 5/6 marks. Answers in this band may be mostly descriptive. There may be considerable irrelevance and/or inaccuracy. Answers constituting reasonable relevant information but without proper focus on the question are likely to be in this band.

The student expresses basic ideas clearly but there may be some ambiguity. The student uses key psychological terminology inappropriately on some occasions. The answer may lack structure, although there is some evidence of use of sentences and paragraphs. There are occasional intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling which obscure meaning.

### **1-3 marks Poor answers**

Answer shows very limited knowledge and understanding but must contain some relevant information in relation to the question. There may be substantial confusion, inaccuracy and irrelevance.

The student shows deficiencies in expression of ideas resulting in frequent confusion and/or ambiguity. Answers lack structure, consisting of a series of unconnected ideas. Psychological terminology is used occasionally, although not always appropriately. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling are frequent, intrusive and often obscure meaning.

### **0 marks No relevant content**

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## Section A Approaches

### OPTION B

#### Question 05

**Ben's parents expect him to become a doctor, like his father and grandfather. He has applied to study medicine at university, but he really wants to be an actor. Ben feels that he cannot speak to his parents about becoming an actor because he thinks that they will be disappointed in him, and will not support him financially. Ben is now beginning to feel sad and miserable.**

**With reference to two features of the humanistic approach, explain how Ben's situation could affect his personal growth. [4 marks]**

**AO1 = 2 marks, AO2 = 2 marks**

Two marks each for (recognisable) features of the humanistic approach linked to Ben's situation. Knowledge of relevant concept 1 mark, application to Ben 1 mark. Answers are likely to focus on:  
**Self Actualisation:** the need for personal growth and the innate drive towards self-actualisation is present throughout life but as Ben feels restrained by his parents he cannot fulfil his aspirations to become an actor and may never self-actualise.

**Incongruence:** Ben's ideal self (his desire to be an actor) and actual experience (he feels compelled to become a doctor to please his parents) are incongruent, which is likely to result in him feeling unsatisfied and unfulfilled.

**Conditional Positive Regard:** Because Ben is only praised and approved for behaving in ways that his parents think are correct (ie he is given conditional positive regard) he doesn't feel loved/admired for the person he is. As Ben is not given unconditional positive regard (UPR) he does not feel free to try new things and this will mean he is less likely to thrive.

Other concepts apply eg self-worth, fully functioning person, hierarchy of needs, client-centred therapy (CCT), conditions of worth etc.

**Question 06**

**To explain internal cognitive processes, such as memory, cognitive psychologists often use an information processing model based on the computer analogy. Briefly explain why computer analogies are used to help us understand human cognitive processes. [2 marks]**

**AO2 = 2 marks**

One mark for a brief, relevant point and a second mark for elaboration or example of a similarity between a computer and cognitive processes in humans.

For example:

The computer analogy is helpful because computers and humans process information in similar ways - both humans and computers use coding, have a CPU for manipulating information, and have storage capacity etc.

Answers may make general points about analogies, eg analogies are used to explain something complicated in a simpler way; analogies are useful if the two things being compared are similar in significant ways. Such points should be given credit but for 2 marks answer must refer to computer analogy/human cognitive processing.

**Question 07**

**Cognitive psychologists often use the experimental method in their investigations. Briefly discuss one strength of using experiments to investigate cognitive processes in humans. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

One mark for a relevant strength of the experimental method and a second mark for elaboration linked to cognitive processes. Credit counterargument.

Likely strengths include: Cause and effect; role of inference; control; replication; general laws etc.

For example:

Experiments allow cause and effect to be established. In cognitive processes like memory psychologists can use experiments and make inferences about properties of memory eg capacity.



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**Question 08**

**Discuss the biological approach in psychology. Refer to at least one other approach in your answer. [12 marks]**

**AO1 = 4 marks**

Up to four marks for relevant knowledge and understanding of the biological approach in psychology. This will most likely focus on the key assumptions of the approach: role of genes, neurological processes (brain), hormones, nervous system, and neurochemistry etc. Credit reference to methodology and use of appropriate terminology eg reductionist, determinist etc.

Credit examples of topics in psychology where the biological approach has been valuable.

Credit description of relevant evidence up to one mark.

**AO2 = 8 marks**

Up to eight marks for analysis, comparisons with other approaches, evaluation of the approach including its contributions and application of knowledge.

Discussion may focus on comparison with one other approach though candidates may broaden their discussion to include more than one approach. All approaches are acceptable, but the most likely approach will be behaviourism. Credit references to debates eg nature-nurture, to reductionist explanations and to the implications of a scientific approach to investigating behaviour. Credit use of relevant evidence if used to discuss the biological approach.

**Maximum 8 marks if there is no reference to another approach.**

## Mark bands

### 10-12 marks **Very good answers**

The answer is clearly focused on the question and shows sound knowledge and understanding of the biological approach. Discussion is full and includes thoughtful analysis and use of at least one other approach in psychology. Most evaluative comments are well developed and presented in the context of the discussion as a whole. The answer is well organised and mostly relevant with little, if any, misunderstanding.

The student expresses most ideas clearly and fluently, with effective use of psychological terminology. Arguments are well structured and coherent, with appropriate use of sentences and paragraphs. There are few, if any, minor errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The overall quality of language is such that the meaning is rarely, if ever, obscured.

### 7-9 marks **Good answers**

Answer shows knowledge and understanding of the biological approach. Discussion is evident and the answer is mostly focused on the question although there may be some irrelevance and/or misunderstanding. At the top of the band references to at least one other approach are apparent although these are perhaps not linked so clearly to the discussion as for the top band.

The student expresses most ideas clearly and makes some appropriate use of psychological terminology. The answer is organised using sentences and paragraphs. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling may be present but are mostly minor, such that they obscure meaning only occasionally.

### 4-6 marks **Average to weak answers**

Answer shows some knowledge and understanding of the biological approach. There must be some discussion for 5/6 marks. Answers in this band may be mostly descriptive. There may be considerable irrelevance and/or inaccuracy. Answers constituting reasonable relevant information but without proper focus on the question are likely to be in this band.

The student expresses basic ideas clearly but there may be some ambiguity. The student uses key psychological terminology inappropriately on some occasions. The answer may lack structure, although there is some evidence of use of sentences and paragraphs. There are occasional intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling which obscure meaning.

### 1-3 marks **Poor answers**

Answer shows very limited knowledge and understanding but must contain some relevant information in relation to the question. There may be substantial confusion, inaccuracy and irrelevance.

The student shows deficiencies in expression of ideas resulting in frequent confusion and/or ambiguity. Answers lack structure, consisting of a series of unconnected ideas. Psychological terminology is used occasionally, although not always appropriately. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling are frequent, intrusive and often obscure meaning.

### 0 marks **No relevant content**

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## Section B Debates

### Question 09

**Briefly explain what is meant by a ‘paradigm’ in science. [1 mark]**

**AO3 = 1 marks**

One mark for an explanation of the term ‘paradigm’, eg a paradigm is a unifying and agreed-upon subject matter and/or method within any scientific field. Appropriate alternative answers should be credited.

### Question 10

**Explain one role of hypothesis testing in psychology. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

Two marks to be awarded for the role of hypothesis testing. Identification of the role for 1 mark, 2<sup>nd</sup> mark for expansion.

Likely role is:

The role of the hypothesis is to test a theory. If the predictions are not confirmed when tested (ie the hypothesis is not supported), then the theory is not supported. [If the predictions are confirmed then the theory is supported]. Accept other valid roles of hypothesis testing.

### Question 11

**Explain the role of peer review in validating research. [3 marks]**

**AO3 = 3 marks**

Credit any 3 valid points although reference to the role of peer review is necessary for full marks. Can award 3 marks for 1 point fully elaborated. The role of peer review is:

- To validate the quality and relevance of research. Peer review involves specialists in the relevant field (objective and unknown to the author/researcher) whose role is to read and assess the quality of work, in particular ensuring that the formulation of hypotheses, the methodology chosen and statistical tests used for analysing the data are appropriate and that the conclusions drawn are correct.
- Reviewers may suggest minor revisions of the work and thereby improve the report or they may conclude that it is inappropriate for publication.
- Independent peer evaluation also takes place to decide whether or not to award funding for a proposed research project.

**Question 12**

**The approaches in psychology take different positions on the free will and determinism debate.**

**Briefly explain why behaviourism is considered to be a deterministic approach. [2 marks]**

**AO2 = 2 marks**

One mark for a brief explanation of why behaviourism is considered to be deterministic and a second mark for expansion or further point. Students may refer to specific behaviourists (eg Pavlov/Skinner) or give a more general answer. Expect reference to some of the following concepts:

- Environmental or external determinism.
- All behaviour is caused by the external environment through association, past experience and conditioning
- According to Skinner, behaviour is a product of prior reinforcements (positive and negative) and punishment
- Radical behaviourists believe free will is an illusion

**Question 13**

**Discuss idiographic and nomothetic approaches in psychology. In your answer, refer to at least one topic area that you have studied in psychology. [12 marks]**

**AO1 = 4 marks**

Up to four marks for relevant knowledge and understanding of idiographic and nomothetic approaches in psychology. The idiographic approach involves the assumption that each human is unique, whereas the nomothetic approach involves studying large samples to create general laws that can apply to all. The nomothetic approach uses scientific methods such as experiments and is a quantitative approach, whereas the idiographic approach is qualitative and makes use of non-experimental methods such as case studies and autobiographies.

Credit knowledge of idiographic and nomothetic approaches as applied to topics.

Credit description of relevant evidence up to one mark.

**AO2 = 8 marks**

Up to eight marks for analysis and discussion of the idiographic and nomothetic approaches.

Discussion will probably include strengths and limitations of both idiographic and nomothetic approaches. Discussion of the topic(s) in relation to the idiographic and nomothetic approaches should gain AO2. Topics could include gender, memory, child development, phobias etc. Credit references to psychological approaches and debates where used in the context of the question.

Comparison of nomothetic and idiographic approaches will probably feature as part of the discussion and should be credited. Students may refer to the value of combining both approaches. Credit use of relevant evidence.

**Maximum 8 marks if there is no reference to a topic.**

## Mark bands

### 10-12 marks **Very good answers**

The answer is clearly focused on the question and shows sound knowledge and understanding of idiographic and nomothetic approaches. Discussion is full and includes thoughtful analysis. Most evaluative comments are well developed and presented in the context of the discussion as a whole. The answer is well organised and mostly relevant with little, if any, misunderstanding.

The student expresses most ideas clearly and fluently, with effective use of psychological terminology. Arguments are well structured and coherent, with appropriate use of sentences and paragraphs. There are few, if any, minor errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The overall quality of language is such that the meaning is rarely, if ever, obscured.

### 7-9 marks **Good answers**

Answer shows knowledge and understanding of idiographic and nomothetic approaches. Discussion is evident and the answer is mostly focused on the question although there may be some irrelevance and/or misunderstanding. At the top of the band, reference to at least one topic is apparent although this is perhaps not linked so clearly to the discussion as for the top band.

The student expresses most ideas clearly and makes some appropriate use of psychological terminology. The answer is organised using sentences and paragraphs. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling may be present but are mostly minor, such that they obscure meaning only occasionally.

### 4-6 marks **Average to weak answers**

Answer shows some knowledge and understanding of idiographic and nomothetic approaches. There must be some discussion for 5/6 marks. Answers in this band may be mostly descriptive. There may be considerable irrelevance and/or inaccuracy. Answers constituting reasonable relevant information but without proper focus on the question are likely to be in this band.

The student expresses basic ideas clearly but there may be some ambiguity. The student uses key psychological terminology inappropriately on some occasions. The answer may lack structure, although there is some evidence of use of sentences and paragraphs. There are occasional intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling which obscure meaning.

### 1-3 marks **Poor answers**

Answer shows very limited knowledge and understanding but must contain some relevant information in relation to the question. There may be substantial confusion, inaccuracy and irrelevance.

The student shows deficiencies in expression of ideas resulting in frequent confusion and/or ambiguity. Answers lack structure, consisting of a series of unconnected ideas. Psychological terminology is used occasionally, although not always appropriately. Errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling are frequent, intrusive and often obscure meaning.

### 0 marks **No relevant content**

**Section C Research Methods****Question 14**

**The researchers used random sampling to obtain equal numbers of boys and girls aged 13-14 years from the four schools. Outline how random sampling could have been carried out in this study. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

One mark for reference to selection by male/female **or** separate schools with reference to randomness

Two marks for reference to selection by male/female **and** separate schools with reference to randomness

For example:

For each school, all 13-14 year old girls would be given a number which would be entered onto a computer programme. Ten numbers would then be randomly generated for each of 4 schools to make a sample of 40 girls. This would be repeated for boys.

Credit answers that explain using other methods eg box, hat.

**Question 15**

**Briefly explain how far the results from this study can be generalised. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

One mark for very brief answer eg only to 13/14 year olds **OR** only to Birmingham

Two marks for expansion eg not representative of other age groups **OR** people from other locations.

Can base answer on age/location/use of social networking sites/limited number of schools.

**Question 16**

**Briefly explain why this study is an example of content analysis. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

One mark each for appropriate point **OR** can award maximum marks for one point elaborated.  
Both marks should refer to this study

For example:

This study is an example of content analysis because a systematic analysis of the essays is carried out to identify/code features such as the frequency of use of social networking by boys and girls.

**Question 17**

**Briefly explain one strength of content analysis. [1 mark]**

**AO3 = 1 mark**

Answers might focus on the qualitative nature of content analysis – thematic (this gives more detailed information), OR categorising material to make it quantitative (as in this study) which is a strength as statistical analysis can be carried out.

Strengths also include: ability to analyse a wide range of materials without the necessity for direct contact with participants; fewer ethical/practical problems, validity etc.

**Question 18**

**Outline how the reliability of the analysis of the children's essays could be checked. [3 marks]**

**AO3 = 3 marks**

One mark for knowledge of inter-/intra-rater (observer) reliability (this may be named or implicit in the application)

Plus up to two marks for applying knowledge of how reliability of the category system could be assessed in this study.

If more than one way of checking reliability is presented, can credit two marks for one way and one mark for the other.

For example:

The consistency between the recordings of two researchers would be assessed by asking each researcher to categorise the essays independently into the pre-selected categories. The categories would then be compared and if similar then the analysis is reliable.

**Question 19**

**Identify an appropriate statistical test that the researchers could have used to analyse the data in Table 1. Justify your answer [3 marks]**

**AO3 = 3 marks**

One mark for identifying a test – Chi Square

Two marks for justification – any 2: nominal data, independent design, looking for differences/association.

N.B. If the test is wrongly named but the rationale is correct in relation to this study, 2 marks can be gained.

**Question 20**

**The results of the statistical test were significant at the 5% level. Explain what this means in relation to this study. [2 marks]**

**AO3 = 2 marks**

Award one mark for brief explanation

Second mark for elaboration

There must be a link to the study for full marks

For example:

Because the researchers have found significant results, this means there is only a 5% probability (or less) that any difference between girls and boys is due to chance/can accept the research hypothesis (can credit the following - reject the null hypothesis).

The answer might focus on explaining that the frequencies differ from what would have been expected by chance.

Candidates might refer to the possibility of a Type 1 error.



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**Question 21**

**Explain how the researchers could carry out the interviews. Justify your decisions. In your answer, you should include details of the following:**

- **the type of interview**
- **a sample question**
- **details of the procedure to be followed**
- **ethical considerations, other than consent. [5 marks]**

**AO3 = 5 marks**

Candidates should:

- Refer to a particular type of interview (eg structured/unstructured/semi-structured/formal/informal) with appropriate justification.
- Include at least one sample question (linked to the study).
- Include any detail of the procedure. For example location, how the interview was conducted eg face to face, telephone, in private, individually, quiet room, etc.
- Include ethical considerations.

1-2 marks      At least 1 point addressed with some expansion/detail

3 marks      2 points addressed fully with detail/justification  
**or**  
3 points addressed with some detail/justification

4 marks      4 points addressed, may lack full detail/justification

5 marks      All 4 points addressed with detail/justification (ethics must include **at least two** from confidentiality, protection and debrief that includes the aim/purpose of the study)

### Assessment Objectives

Question	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
1	2	2	0	4
2	0	2	0	2
3	0	0	2	2
4	4	8	0	12
				20
5	2	2	0	4
6	0	2	0	2
7	0	0	2	2
8	4	8	0	12
				20
9	0	0	1	1
10	0	0	2	2
11	0	0	3	3
12	0	2	0	2
13	4	8	0	12
				20
14	0	0	2	2
15	0	0	2	2
16	0	0	2	2
17	0	0	1	1
18	0	0	3	3
19	0	0	3	3
20	0	0	2	2
21	0	0	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>

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