

# Basic Keyboard Skills

**PK-35**

**Focus on Rhythm**

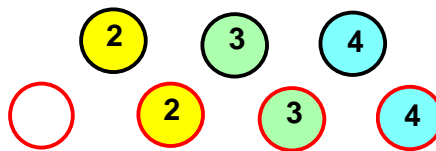
### Colors of Notes in This Unit

Notes that are 1 beat long  
- or multiples of 1 beat: White

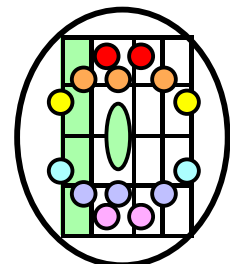


Fractional beat notes (and their multiples) are highlighted with the colors shown below. The numbers in these notes are the denominators of their beat fractions.

Notes with red borders are to be played by the left hand.



**From the Music  
Innovator's Workshop**



### About This Unit

This unit will help you understand how the notation of rhythm works and provide exercises for learning to play the simpler rhythmic patterns.

These exercises will also provide further development of the very important habit of being able to play and remain in 5-finger positions. A starting finger number appears at the beginning of each exercise. The hand should stay in the position started by the finger number for the entire exercise. Finger numbers below Middle C (the C in the green octave group) are for the left hand. Numbers for Middle C and above are for the right hand.

The rhythms covered in this unit have beat lengths of 4, 3, 2, 1, 1/2, 1/3, and 1/4 beats.

Below is a description of the labels for vocalizing rhythm that appear next to some notes. These labels are introduced in this unit to help you think about and vocalize the beats shown by the notes. They are used as visual markers and also for saying them aloud when learning to play the rhythm. You can see examples of these labels in the chart on the next page.

Label for First Beat of a Measure: **BEAT** - (all caps) - Symbol: >

Label for the Other Beats in a Measure: **Beat** - Symbol (same): >

Label: **Stay** - Symbol: **St** This label marks beats that occur while the finger STAYS on the key (holds the key down) while the note is already being sounded. ("**Stay**" IS a beat!

Definition: Pulse - A pulse is a subdivision of a beat. Just as beats subdivide measures; pulses subdivide beats, as in the following labels.

Label: **and** - Symbol: **&** For 2 pulse beats, **&** marks the middle of the beat, indicating the start of the 2nd half of the 2 pulse beat (>**&**). When the underlying pulse is in thirds of a beat, the **&** marks the start of the 2nd pulse of the 3 pulse beat (>**&a**) - pronounced "Beat and uh."

Label: **a** Pronounced "uh" For 3 pulse beats, **a** marks the third pulse of the beat as in >**&a** (see paragraph above). For 4 pulse beats **a** marks the 2nd and 4th pulses (>**a&a**).

**Note that in this Unit, notes for the Left Hand have red borders.**

# Relative Time Values in Traditional Rhythm Notation

Reference Chart With Traditional Rhythm Note Names and Beat Counting Labels  
In 4/4 time with the quarter note as the beat.\*

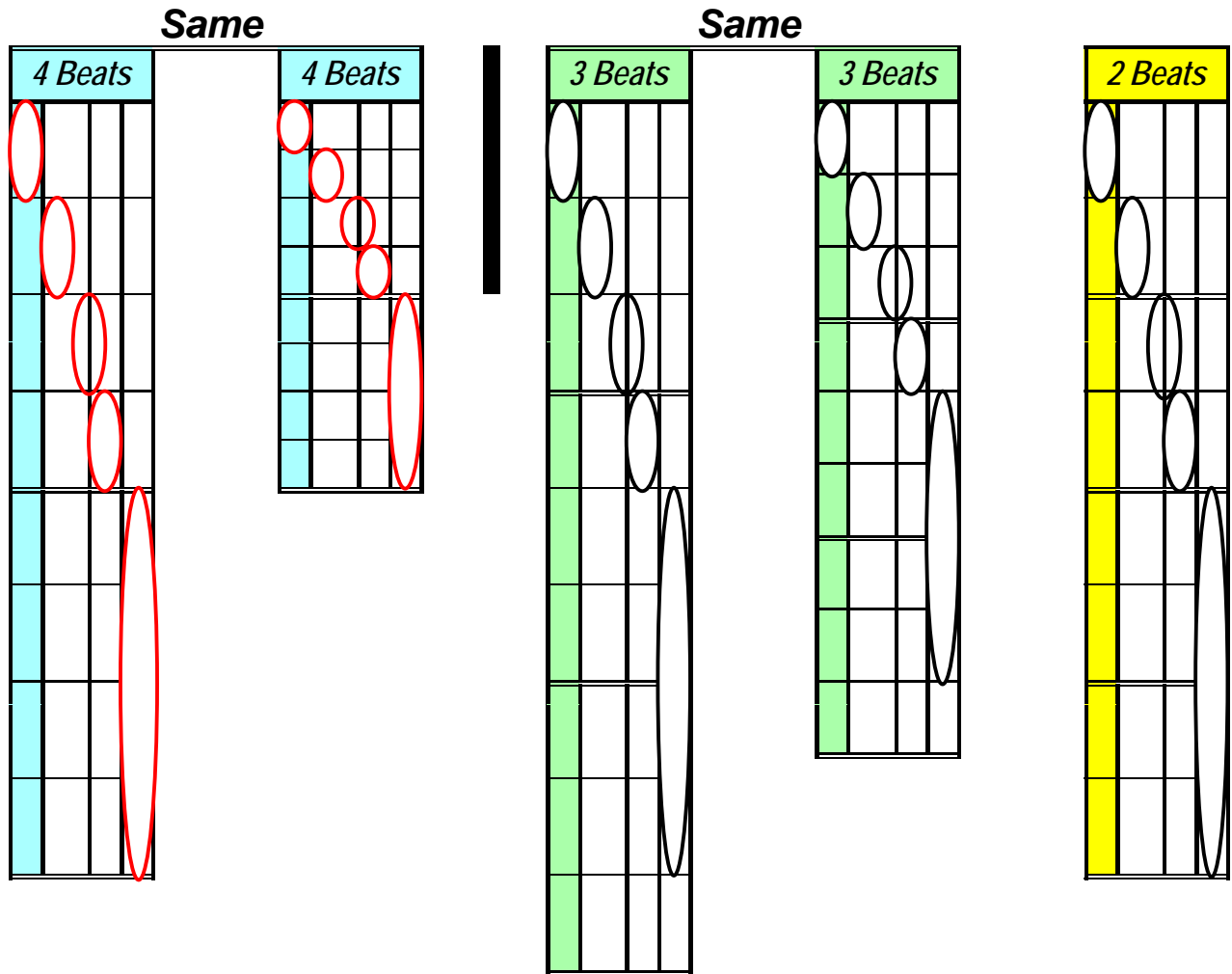
<b>Whole</b>		> St St St
<b>Half</b>		> St St
<b>Quarter</b>		> > > >
<b>Eighth</b>		> & > & > & > &
<b>Sixteenth</b>		> a & a > a & a > a & a > a & a
<i>(The dot after a note extends the note by half its time value.)</i>		
<b>Dotted Half</b>		> St St (in 3/4 time) > St (in 6/8 time)
<b>Dotted Quarter</b>		> > (in 6/8 time)
<b>Eighth</b>		> & a > & a (in 6/8 time)

\*Sometimes the half note is a beat long; other times the eighth note is a beat long. When these changes take place, all of the other note values must be modified on the fly by the performer to maintain the relative beat lengths of the other notes. This provides great flexibility to the rhythm notation, but many people find it very difficult to learn and use.



## Sizes of Measures Compared – Notes Shown

**Note:** The 5-note patterns on these maps show how differently identical sound patterns can look when notated on maps of different sizes and maps with measures of different lengths. The two 4-Beat patterns sound the same and are identical except for the sizes of their notes. They are played identically. The same is true of the two 3-beat patterns. Except for the accents implied by the lengths of the measures, all 5 patterns are played with identical rhythms.



# Exercises Showing Comparative Time Values

<p><b>Whole Notes</b> (4 beats)</p>	<p><b>Three-quarter Notes</b> (3 beats)</p>	<p><b>Half Notes</b> (2 beats)</p>	<p><b>Quarter Notes</b> (1 beat)</p>	<p style="background-color: yellow;"><b>Eighth Notes</b> (1/2 beat)</p>	<p style="background-color: #add8e6;"><b>Sixteenth Notes</b> (1/4 beat)</p>
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**#: 2 Beats: 4**

**Colored Highlights for Notes With Beat Fractions**

- >> Yellow - Notes with 1/2 beat are highlighted with yellow.
- >> Green - Notes with 1/3 beat are highlighted with green (next page).
- >> Blue - Notes with 1/4 beat are highlighted with blue.

### Exercises in the Key of C with 3-beat Measures

#### Beats for Each Note:

3 Beats	1 & 2 Beats	1 Beat	1/2 Beat	1/3 Beat	1/4 Beat

### Exercises in the Key of Db with 3-beat Measures

#### Beats for Each Note:

3 Beats      1 & 2 Beats      1 Beat      1/2 Beat      1/3 Beat      1/4 Beat

The image displays six vertical musical staves, each representing a different note value. Each staff is divided into measures by vertical lines. The first measure of each staff is highlighted with a colored background and contains a circled '3' and a '1' above the first line. The notes are represented by colored circles (yellow, green, blue) and are connected by red ovals. To the right of each staff, there are rhythmic markings: '>' for accents, 'St' for staccato, and '&' for eighth notes. A black vertical bar is positioned between the 3-beat and 1/2-beat staves.



## Exercises With Half-Beat Fractions

**#: 2 (Key of D) Beats: 4**

The exercise consists of six diagrams, each representing a beat. The keys are numbered 1-5. Diagram 1 (pink) shows a descending sequence of notes: 5 (half note), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter). Diagram 2 (purple) shows notes: 5 (half), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter). Diagram 3 (cyan) shows notes: 5 (half), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter). Diagram 4 (green) shows notes: 4 (half), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter). Diagram 5 (yellow) shows notes: 4 (half), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter). Diagram 6 (orange) shows notes: 4 (half), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter). Each diagram includes a vertical bar on the right with rhythmic markings: '>' for downbeats and '&' for upbeats. A black bar is present between diagrams 3 and 4.

# Exercises With "Long-Short" Patterns Compared

The image displays five vertical piano keyboard diagrams, each representing a different interval and ratio. The diagrams are arranged in two groups: three for a 3 to 1 ratio and two for a 2 to 1 ratio. Each diagram shows a sequence of notes with circles of varying sizes indicating duration. The diagrams are color-coded: blue (2), cyan (3), green (4), yellow (5), and orange (6). The first three diagrams are for a 3 to 1 ratio, and the last two are for a 2 to 1 ratio. The diagrams are color-coded: blue (2), cyan (3), green (4), yellow (5), and orange (6). The first three diagrams are for a 3 to 1 ratio, and the last two are for a 2 to 1 ratio.

**3 to 1 Ratio** (Blue header, 2): Shows a sequence of notes with circles of varying sizes, illustrating a 3 to 1 ratio. The circles are red.

**3 to 1 Ratio** (Cyan header, 3): Shows a sequence of notes with circles of varying sizes, illustrating a 3 to 1 ratio. The circles are yellow.

**3 to 1 Ratio** (Green header, 4): Shows a sequence of notes with circles of varying sizes, illustrating a 3 to 1 ratio. The circles are light blue.

**2 to 1 Ratio** (Yellow header, 5): Shows a sequence of notes with circles of varying sizes, illustrating a 2 to 1 ratio. The circles are white.

**2 to 1 Ratio** (Orange header, 6): Shows a sequence of notes with circles of varying sizes, illustrating a 2 to 1 ratio. The circles are green.

# Version Without the Rhythm Colors

The image displays five vertical piano keyboard diagrams, each representing a different ratio and fingering pattern. Each diagram is a 12-key vertical grid with a numbered header and a '5' in the top-left corner.

- 3 to 1 Ratio (Blue):** Header '2'. Shows a sequence of notes on the left side of the keyboard, with red ovals indicating fingerings.
- 3 to 1 Ratio (Cyan):** Header '3'. Shows a sequence of notes on the left side of the keyboard, with red ovals indicating fingerings.
- 3 to 1 Ratio (Green):** Header '4'. Shows a sequence of notes on the left side of the keyboard, with white ovals indicating fingerings.
- 2 to 1 Ratio (Yellow):** Header '5'. Shows a sequence of notes on the left side of the keyboard, with white ovals indicating fingerings.
- 2 to 1 Ratio (Orange):** Header '6'. Shows a sequence of notes on the left side of the keyboard, with white ovals indicating fingerings.

A thick black vertical bar is positioned between the third and fourth diagrams. A double vertical line is positioned between the fourth and fifth diagrams.



# Version Without the Rhythm Colors

#/b: None Beats: 4

Mouret, D Major

The image displays five vertical musical staves, numbered 2 through 6, representing different piano parts. Each staff is a grid with 10 columns and 10 rows. The headers are colored: 2 (blue), 3 (cyan), 4 (green), 5 (yellow), and 6 (orange). A black vertical bar is positioned between staves 3 and 4. Red oval notes are present on staves 2 and 3, while black oval notes are on staves 4, 5, and 6. Staff 5 has a '1' on the left and staff 6 has a '5' on the right.

# Exercises With Quarter Beat Fractions

#: 2 Beats 4

The image displays six vertical musical staves, numbered 1 through 6, each representing a different exercise. Each staff is divided into four measures by vertical lines. The headers are color-coded: 1 (pink), 2 (purple), 3 (cyan), 4 (green), 5 (yellow), and 6 (orange). A thick black vertical bar is positioned between staves 3 and 4. The notes are represented by circles and ovals, with some containing numbers (1-5) to indicate fingerings. The exercises show various rhythmic patterns and fingerings across the staves.

**Version Without the Rhythm Colors**

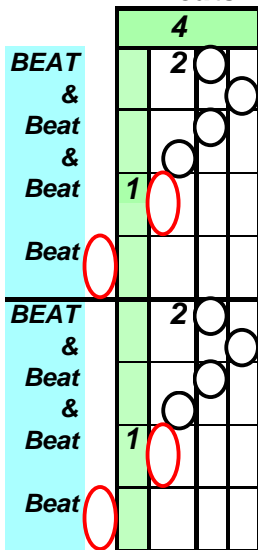
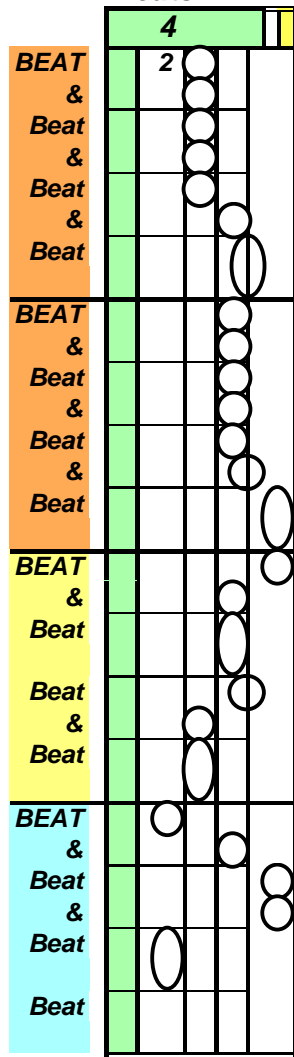
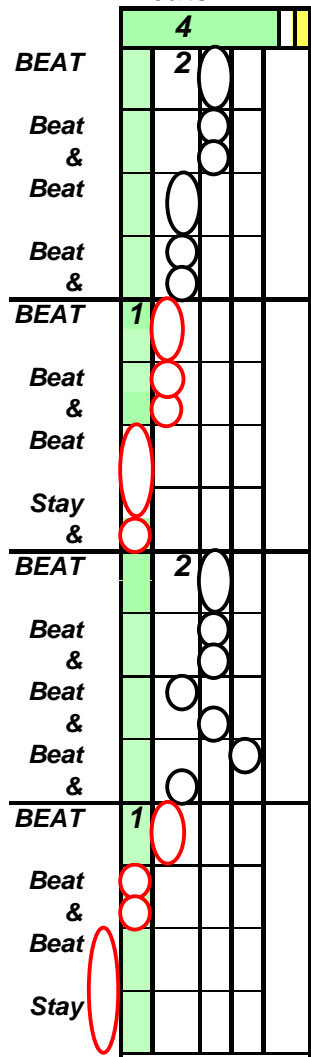
#: 2 Beats 4

The image displays six vertical musical staves, each representing a different rhythmic pattern. Each staff is labeled with a number from 1 to 6 at the top, and the label is enclosed in a colored box. The notes are represented by circles of varying sizes and positions on the staff lines. Staff 1 (pink) starts with a large circle on the fifth line, followed by a descending sequence of smaller circles. Staff 2 (purple) starts with a large circle on the fifth line, followed by a descending sequence of smaller circles. Staff 3 (cyan) starts with a large circle on the fifth line, followed by a descending sequence of smaller circles. Staff 4 (green) starts with a large circle on the first line, followed by a descending sequence of smaller circles. Staff 5 (yellow) starts with a large circle on the first line, followed by a descending sequence of smaller circles. Staff 6 (orange) starts with a large circle on the first line, followed by a descending sequence of smaller circles. A vertical black bar is positioned between staff 3 and staff 4.





# Half-Beat Note Pairs

<p><b>Beats: 4</b></p>  <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat Beat</p>	<p><b>Beats: 4</b></p>  <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p>	<p><b>Beats: 4</b></p>  <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p> <p>BEAT &amp; Beat &amp; Beat &amp; Beat</p>	<p>Morn- ing bells are ring- ing,</p> <p>Morn- ing bells are ring- ing.</p> <p>Lon- don bridge is fal- ling down,</p> <p>fal- ling down,</p> <p>fal- ling down.</p>	<p>Let the winds and wa- ters be</p> <p>Ming- led with our mel- o- dy,</p> <p>Sing and float!</p> <p>sing and float!</p> <p>In our lit- tle boat.</p>	<p>One for my mas- ter and one</p> <p>for my dame,</p> <p>And one</p> <p>for the lit- tle boy who lives</p> <p>down the lane."</p>
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**Keep in mind that the matching colors of the beat labels are meant to show which measures have matching rhythm patterns - even though the pitches of these measures may not match.**

## Three-Pulse-Groups

**Beats: 2**

BEAT & a	3	4	1		<p>"Pus- sy- cat, Pus- sy- cat, where have you been?"</p> <p>"I've been to Lon- don to vis- it the Queen."</p>
BEAT & a					
BEAT & a	2				
BEAT & a					

**Beats: 2**

BEAT & a		4	1		<p>Here we go; roun</p> <p>the mul- ber- ry bush,</p> <p>The mul- ber- ry bush,</p> <p>the mul- ber- ry bush;</p>
a					
BEAT & a					
a					

**Beats: 4**

BEAT		4	1		<p>Rain- drops on ros- es, and whis- kers on kit- tens.</p>
& a					
BEAT					
& a					



# Two-Beat Long-Short Pairs

**Beats: 2**

BEAT	4	Joy
Beat		to
a		the
BEAT		world!
Stay		
&		the
BEAT	1	Lord
Beat		has
BEAT		come:
Stay		
&	2	Let
BEAT		earth
Stay		
&		re-
BEAT		ceive
Stay	4	
&		her
BEAT		King;
Stay		
&		Let...

**Beats: 4**

BEAT	4	1	It's
Stay			
&			the
BEAT		3	a
Beat			small
BEAT			world
BEAT	2		af-
Stay			
&			ter
BEAT			all,
Stay			
BEAT			It's
Stay			
&			a
BEAT			small
Beat			
BEAT		2	world
Stay			
&			af-
BEAT		3	
Stay			
&			ter
BEAT			all,
Stay			

**Beats: 4**

BEAT	3		Do
Beat		1	you
BEAT			know
Stay			
&			the
BEAT			Muf-
Beat		1	fin
BEAT			man,
Stay			
&			the
BEAT			Muf-
Beat		2	in
BEAT			man,
Stay			
&			the
BEAT	1		Muf-
Beat			in
BEAT			man?
Stay			

# Three-Pulse Long-Short Pairs

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<p>The farm- er in the dell,  Stay  The farm- er in the dell,  Stay  Heigh- o, the der- ry- o, The farm- er in the dell.</p>	<p>Een- sy, ween- sy, spi-  der went up the wa- ter spout.  Down came the rain  and washed the spi- der out.</p>	<p>For he's a jol-ly good fel-  low, For he's a jol-ly good fel-  low, For he's a jol-ly good fel-  low, Which no- body can de-ny.</p>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								

# Four-Pulse Long-Short Pairs

**Beats: 3**

**Beats: 4**

**4**

# Half Beat Grouped With Two Quarter Beats

Beats: 4

**Beats: 2**

	<b>4</b>	
BEAT	1	Flies
&		in
a		the
Beat	3	but-
a		ter-
&		milk,
BEAT		shoo,
&		fly,
Beat	2	shoo!
BEAT	2	Skip
&		to
a		my
Beat		Lou,
&		my
BEAT		dar-
Beat		lin'.

**Beats: 2**

	<b>4</b>	
BEAT		Win-
a	1	nie
&		the
Beat		PooH,
BEAT		Win-
a		nie
&		the
Beat		PooH,
BEAT		Chub-
a		by
&		lit-
a	4	tle
Beat		tub-
a		by
&		all
BEAT		stuffed
&	1	with
Beat		fluff...

**William Tell Overture**

	<b>4</b>	
&	3	
a		
BEAT		
&		
a		
Beat		
&		
a		
Beat		1
&		
Beat		
&	3	
a		
BEAT		
&		
a		
Beat		1
&		
a		
Beat		
&	1	
Beat		
&	3	
Beat		

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