

# How the Turtle Got Its Shell

The following story is based on a traditional Aboriginal Dreaming story of how the turtle got its shell.



In the Dreaming, there lived a turtle and an echidna. They lived together near the billabong. The echidna had a baby, too. The two of them would go hunting for food. Any food that they caught they would share with each other.

One day, they ran out of food. The echidna told the turtle to stay where he was and look after her baby. Turtle said, "Yes, please go out hunting for food. I will stay home and look after your baby." After that, the echidna went out to find some food. The turtle stayed home and looked after the echidna's baby.

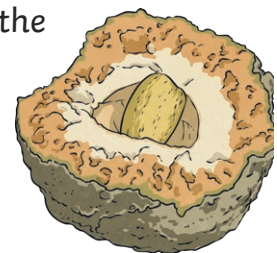
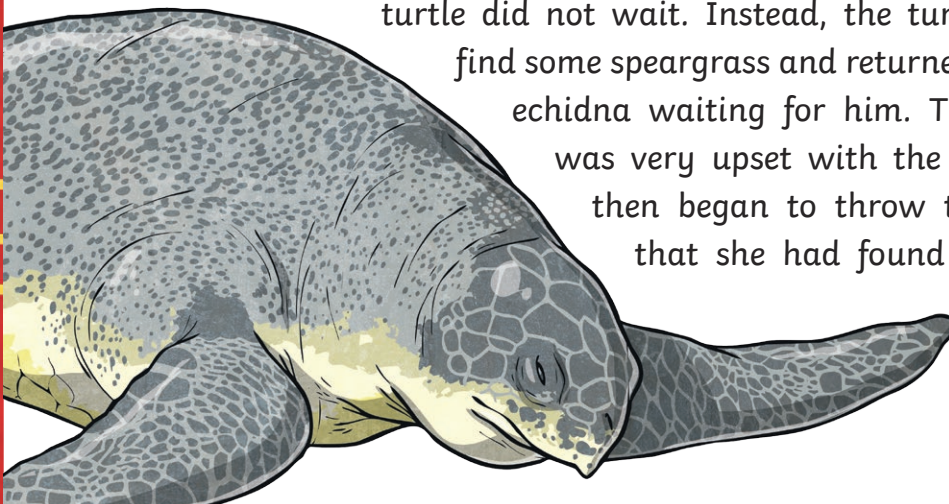


The turtle was wondering what had happened to his friend. He was feeling very hungry. The turtle could not wait any longer for the echidna. He ate the echidna's baby.

Finally, the echidna came home. She gave some of the food to the turtle. "Where's my baby?" asked the echidna.

"I am so sorry," explained the turtle. "I ate your baby because I was so hungry."

"Wait here while I get some stones," the stunned echidna replied. The turtle did not wait. Instead, the turtle went out to find some speargrass and returned to find the echidna waiting for him. The echidna was very upset with the turtle. She then began to throw the stones that she had found at the

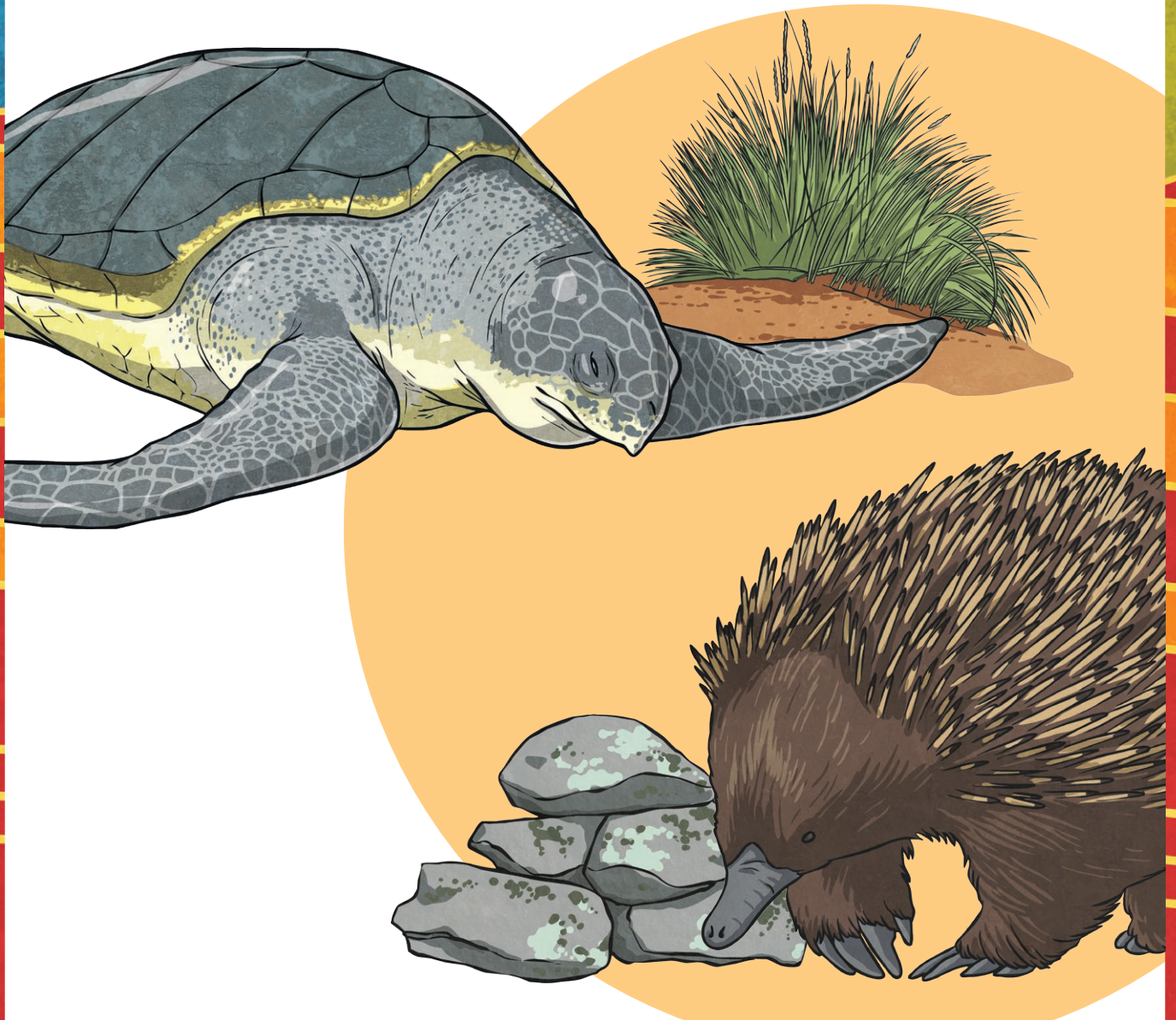


turtle. The stones that she threw became stuck on the back of the turtle. The turtle then threw the speargrass at the echidna. The speargrass became stuck on the back of the echidna. Both the echidna and the turtle fought all day.

They finally stopped fighting. The stones on the back of the turtle turned into a hard shell. The speargrass on the back of the echidna turned into spines. After that, the turtle told the echidna, "I will go and live in the billabong. I will never see you again."

The echidna replied, "I will go and live in the country. I will never see you again." So off they both went. They never saw each other again.

And that's how the turtle got its shell.





# Questions

1. Why did the turtle eat the echidna's baby? Tick one.

- ☐ The echidna was taking too long.
- ☐ He was upset that the echidna left him behind.
- ☐ He was getting very hungry.

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in the story.

	The echidna and the turtle began fighting.
	The turtle stayed at home.
	The echidna threw stones at the turtle.
	The turtle ate the baby echidna.

3. What did the stones do straight after the echidna threw them? Tick one.

- ☐ They turned into a hard shell.
- ☐ The turtle grew a shell.
- ☐ They got stuck to the back of the turtle's back.

4. What word describes how the echidna felt when she found out the turtle ate her baby? Tick one.

- ☐ angry
- ☐ sorry
- ☐ stunned

5. Why did the echidna leave her baby with the turtle?

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6. Find and copy the sentence that shows the turtle was impatient.

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7. At the end of the story, why did the echidna and the turtle decide to live in different places?

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# Answers

1. Why did the turtle eat the echidna's baby? Tick one.

- ☐ The echidna was taking too long.  
☐ He was upset that the echidna left him behind.  
☒ **He was getting very hungry.**

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in the story.

<b>3</b>	The echidna and the turtle began fighting.
<b>1</b>	The turtle stayed at home.
<b>4</b>	The echidna threw stones at the turtle.
<b>2</b>	The turtle ate the baby echidna.

3. What did the stones do straight after the echidna threw them? Tick one.

- ☐ They turned into a hard shell.  
☐ The turtle grew a shell.  
☒ **They got stuck to the back of the turtle's back.**

4. What word describes how the echidna felt when she found out the turtle ate her baby? Tick one.

- ☐ angry  
☐ sorry  
☒ **stunned**

5. Why did the echidna leave her baby with the turtle?

**The echidna left her baby with the turtle because they had no food left. She had to go out to hunt and she didn't want her baby to come because it could have been dangerous.**

6. Find and copy the sentence that shows the turtle was impatient.

**Accept "I could not wait any longer," only.**

7. At the end of the story, why did the echidna and the turtle decide to live in different places?

**Children's own responses, such as: The two animals went to live separately because of the fighting that had occurred. The echidna didn't want to live near the turtle because the turtle ate her baby. They didn't trust each other, and they thought it would be best to live in different areas.**

# How the Turtle Got Its Shell

The following story is based on a traditional Aboriginal Dreaming story of how the turtle got its shell.

Long ago in the Dreaming, there lived a turtle and an echidna, who were the very best of friends. The echidna had a baby. These creatures lived happily together near the billabong. To survive, they had to hunt for food. So, every so often, when their supplies were getting low, they would go out hunting. They would share any food they caught between them.



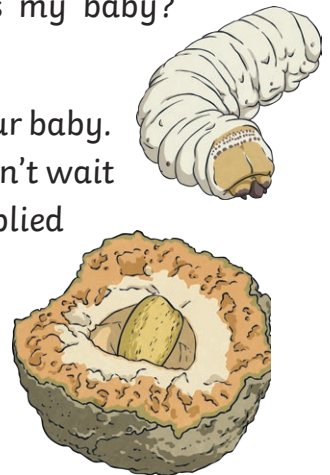
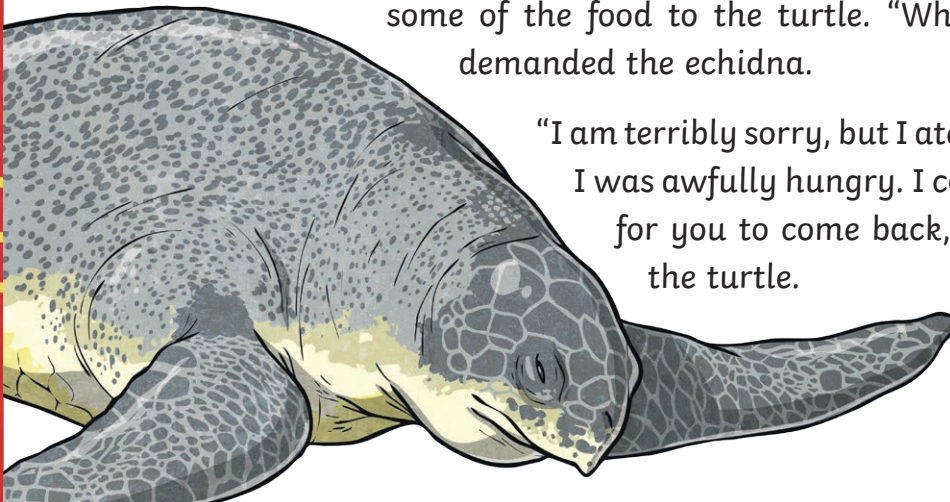
One day, the echidna realised that they had hardly any food left. The echidna told the turtle to remain where he was and to look after her baby while she went out hunting for food. The turtle said, "Yes, no problem at all. Please go out hunting for food so that our supply can be full again. I'll stay here and look after your baby." Moments later, the echidna went out to search for food.



After what felt like a long time, the turtle began wondering what could have happened to the echidna. He worried about whether she would return with enough food. He was beginning to get hungrier and hungrier. He realised that he could not wait any longer for the echidna to come home so he decided to eat her baby.

At long last, the echidna arrived back home. She immediately gave some of the food to the turtle. "Where's my baby?" demanded the echidna.

"I am terribly sorry, but I ate your baby. I was awfully hungry. I couldn't wait for you to come back," replied the turtle.





The echidna said to the turtle, "Wait here while I gather some stones."

But the turtle didn't wait. Instead, the turtle went out to find some speargrass and came back to find the echidna lying in wait. The echidna was so extremely upset with the turtle that she began throwing the stones that she had found at him. The stones that she threw became stuck on the turtle's back. The turtle, who was trying to defend himself, began hurling the speargrass at the echidna, which then became stuck on her back. The two animals did not stop fighting all day.

After a while, the fighting finally ceased. The stones on the back of the turtle became a hard shell and the speargrass on the back of the echidna turned into spines.

After that, the turtle told the echidna, "I will go and live in the billabong, where I will never see you again."

The echidna then replied, "I will go and live in the country, and I will never see you again either." So, they both wandered off in separate directions and they never saw each other again.

And that's how the turtle got its shell.



# Questions

1. Why did the echidna leave her baby and the turtle? Tick one.

- ☐ She thought it would be too dangerous for them to go hunting.
- ☐ She had to go hunting for food.
- ☐ She didn't like them very much.

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in the story.

	The echidna went to search for stones.
	The baby echidna was eaten.
	The echidna left her baby.
	The echidna went to hunt for food.

3. What did the stones on the turtle's back turn into? Tick one.

- ☐ a hard shell
- ☐ spikes
- ☐ speargrass

4. Replace the word 'awfully' with a word that means the same. Tick one.

- ☐ enjoyably
- ☐ pleasantly
- ☐ terribly

5. Fill in the missing words to complete this sentence.

After that, the \_\_\_\_\_ told the \_\_\_\_\_, "I will go and live in the \_\_\_\_\_ where I will never see you \_\_\_\_\_."

6. Find and copy one word that shows the turtle was thinking before he made the decision to eat the baby echidna.

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7. At the end of the story, why did the echidna and the turtle decide to live in different places?

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8. How are the two animals portrayed in this story?

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# Answers

1. Why did the echidna leave her baby and the turtle? Tick one.

- ☐ She thought it would be too dangerous for them to go hunting.  
☒ **She had to go hunting for food.**  
☐ She didn't like them very much.

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in the story.

4	The echidna went to search for stones.
3	The baby echidna was eaten.
1	The echidna left her baby.
2	The echidna went to hunt for food.

3. What did the stones on the turtle's back turn into? Tick one.

- ☒ **a hard shell**  
☐ spikes  
☐ speargrass

4. Replace the word 'awfully' with a word that means the same. Tick one.

- ☐ enjoyably  
☐ pleasantly  
☒ **terribly**

5. Fill in the missing words to complete this sentence.

After that, the **turtle** told the **echidna**, "I will go and live in the **billabong** where I will never see you **again**."

6. Find and copy one word that shows the turtle was thinking before he made the decision to eat the baby echidna.

**Accept 'wondering' only.**

7. At the end of the story, why did the echidna and the turtle decide to live in different places?

**Children's own responses, such as: The two animals went to live separately because of the fighting that had occurred. The echidna didn't want to live near the turtle because the turtle ate her baby. They didn't trust each other, and they thought it would be best to live in different areas.**

8. How are the two animals portrayed in this story?

**Children's own responses, such as: The echidna is portrayed as a leader because she goes out into the billabong to hunt for food for both the turtle and her baby. The turtle can be seen as selfish because he ate the echidna's baby. Both the turtle and the echidna would have been hungry. However, he was the one who did the wrong thing.**

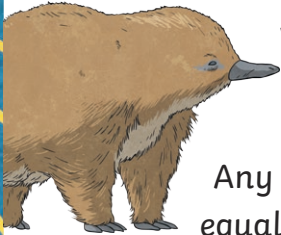


# How the Turtle Got Its Shell

The following story is based on a traditional Aboriginal Dreaming story of how the turtle got its shell.

Long, long ago in the Dreaming, down by the billabong, a turtle, an echidna and her baby lived together peacefully.

These creatures were best friends and they were always very affectionate towards each other. Whenever their provisions were low, they would hunt together. Any food they caught would be divided equally between them.

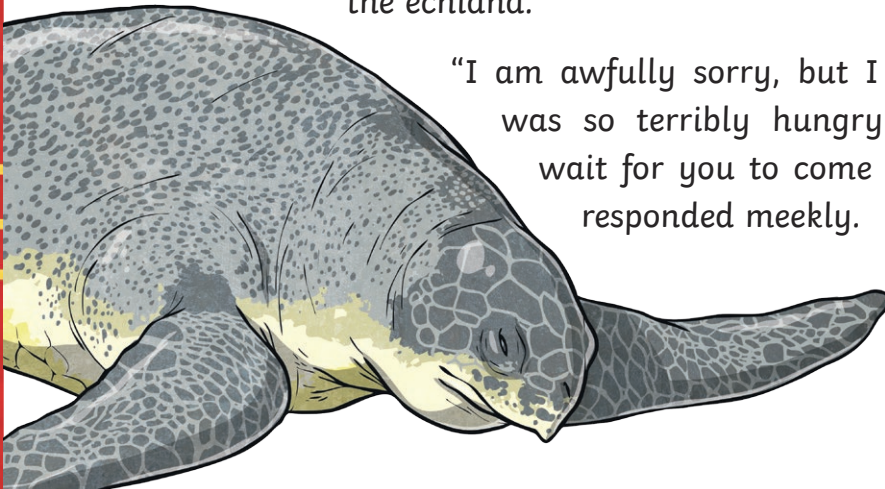


One day, the echidna noticed that they did not have enough food. She was always very conscientious and would do anything to support her baby and her friend the turtle. Being decisive, she told the turtle to stay home and look after her baby while she went out hunting for food. The turtle responded, "Yes, that's no problem at all. You can go out hunting for food and I'll remain here and care for your baby."

Once they had made this agreement, the echidna went to scavenge for food.

The turtle waited for the echidna for what felt like an eternity to him. He began to imagine what could have happened to the echidna. The turtle started to ponder whether she was going to return with enough food. He became so ravenous that he began to behave in a strange manner. In desperation, he devoured her baby. Finally, the echidna returned home and shared some of the food she found with the turtle. "Excuse me, but where's my baby?" questioned the echidna.

"I am awfully sorry, but I ate your baby. I was so terribly hungry and I couldn't wait for you to come back," the turtle responded meekly.



The echidna instructed the turtle to remain where he was while she gathered some stones. However, the turtle sensed what was about to happen and he realised that he needed to act rapidly.

Without the echidna noticing, the turtle went to gather some sharp blades of speargrass. The two animals faced one another. The turtle had enraged the echidna and she began throwing the stones at him. The stones that she threw became fixed on the turtle's back. In retaliation, the turtle then launched the speargrass at the echidna. Each blade of grass became lodged on her back. The two animals fought continuously throughout the day.

After a long period of conflict, the two creatures finally ended their dispute. The stones on the back of the turtle formed a hard shell; spines emerged on the echidna's back where the blades of speargrass had once been.

After that, the turtle angrily told the echidna, "I will live in the billabong, where I will never see you again."

The echidna then replied confidently, "I will go and live in the country, and I will never see you again either."

So off they both wandered into the distance in opposite directions and they never saw each other again.

And that's how the turtle got its shell.



# Questions

1. Why did the echidna leave her baby and the turtle? Tick one.

- ☐ She thought it would be too dangerous for them to go hunting.
- ☐ She had to go hunting for food.
- ☐ She didn't like them very much.

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in the story.

	The echidna went to search for stones.
	The baby echidna was eaten.
	The echidna left her baby.
	The echidna went to hunt for food.

3. Fill in the missing words to complete this sentence.

After a long \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, the two creatures finally ended their \_\_\_\_\_.

4. 'He became so ravenous that he began to behave in a strange manner...'

In this sentence, what does the word **ravenous** mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Find and copy a verb in the fourth paragraph which means **to think**.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. At the end of the story, why did the echidna and the turtle separate from one another?

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7. How are the two animals portrayed in this story?

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8. In your opinion, why did the turtle 'sense that he would need to act rapidly'?

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9. What is the moral of this Dreaming story?

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# Answers

1. Why did the echidna leave her baby and the turtle? Tick one.

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2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in the story.

<b>4</b>	The echidna went to search for stones.
<b>3</b>	The baby echidna was eaten.
<b>1</b>	The echidna left her baby.
<b>2</b>	The echidna went to hunt for food.

3. Fill in the missing words to complete this sentence.

After a long **period** of **conflict**, the two creatures finally ended their **dispute**.

4. 'He became so ravenous that he began to behave in a strange manner...'

In this sentence, what does the word **ravenous** mean?

**Accept an answer that describes 'ravenous' as hungry.**

5. Find and copy a verb in the fourth paragraph which means **to think**.

**Accept 'to ponder' only.**

6. At the end of the story, why did the echidna and the turtle separate from one another?

**Children's own responses, such as: The two animals went to live separately because of the fighting that had occurred. The echidna didn't want to live near the turtle because the turtle ate her baby. They didn't trust each other, and they thought it would be best to live in different areas.**

7. How are the two animals portrayed in this story?

**Children's own responses, such as: The echidna is a leader because she takes on the responsibility to go out into the billabong to hunt for food for both the turtle and her baby. The turtle, because he ate the echidna's baby can be seen as selfish. Both the turtle and the echidna would have been hungry; however, he was the one who did the wrong thing.**

8. In your opinion, why did the turtle 'sense that he would need to act rapidly'?

**Children's own responses: The turtle had just told the echidna that he had eaten her baby. As she was going to gather some stones, he probably sensed that she was going to take her revenge. He would need to act rapidly to defend himself.**

9. What is the moral of this Dreaming story?

**Children's own responses, such as: There are always going to be reactions to any action that you choose to do. There will always be consequences for your actions. Even though you apologise for something that you have done wrong, this doesn't mean that you will be forgiven.**