

LEARN TO BOX

With SID TERRIS

Contender For Benny Leonard's Title. and "The Fastest Boy in Twenty Years," Will Tell You How It's Done.

By
Sid Terris

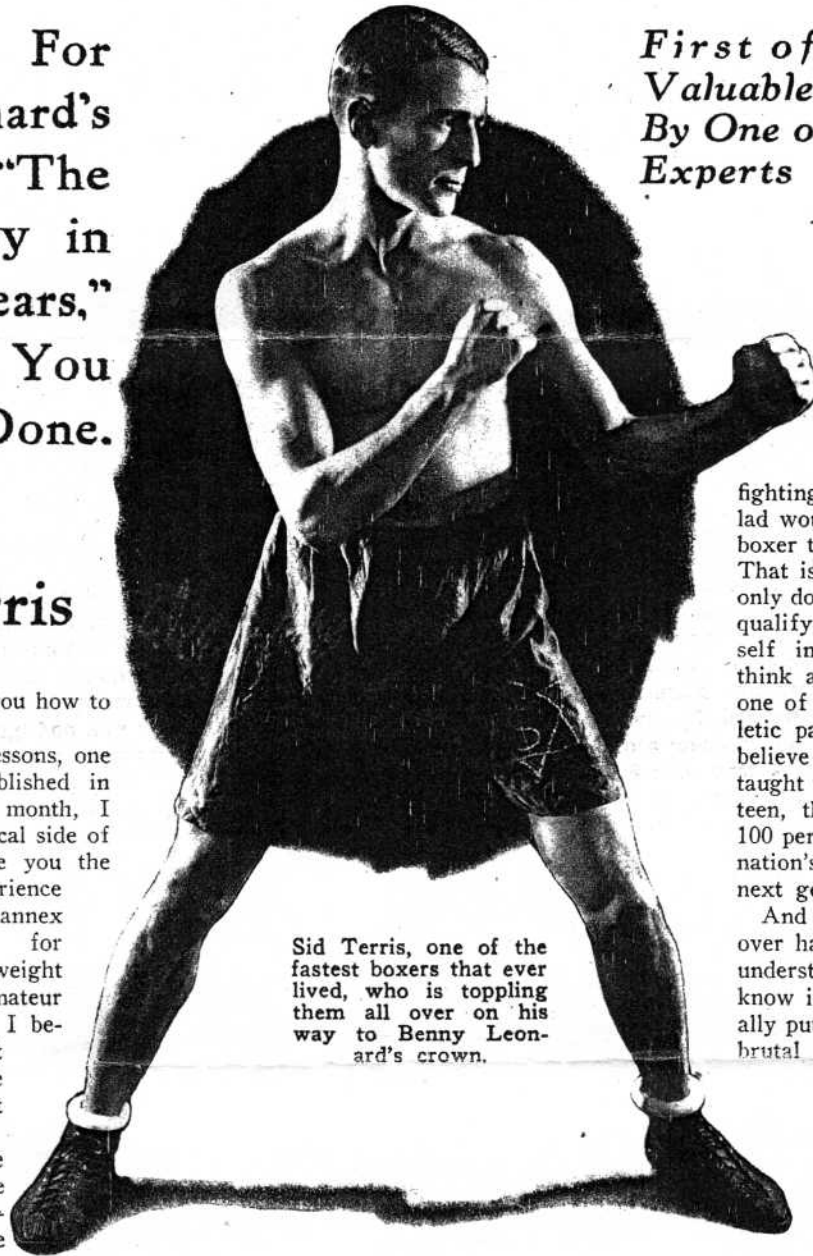
I AM going to tell you how to become a boxer.

In a series of lessons, one of which will be published in Muscle Builder each month, I shall explain the technical side of the boxing game, give you the benefit of the experience which enabled me to annex every championship for which a man of my weight could compete in the amateur ranks and which will, I believe, in the not distant future, win for me the title of lightweight champion.

Whether, through the lessons, you become a clever and successful knight of the mitts, is distinctly up to you. I shall explain the various blows, offensive and defensive tactics, speed and footwork, and the most approved methods of exercising and training. If you follow instructions, work persistently and live cleanly, you will accomplish real results. If you don't, you will simply add one more to the large army of boxing misfits and "never-wases."

Perhaps you already know something of the boxing game. If so, that is to your advantage. But, for the purpose of these articles, I am going to take it for granted that a majority of my readers are novices and require schooling from the ground up.

No one can acquire too much knowledge of any line to which he intends to devote a considerable portion of his time, so even those who have traveled a short distance into the realm of Fistiana will find much of value, much which is new and informative in my suggestions



Sid Terris, one of the fastest boxers that ever lived, who is toppling them all over on his way to Benny Leonard's crown.

First of a Series of Valuable Instructions, By One of the Greatest Experts Boxing Ever Knew.

From what I know of boys, and it wasn't so long ago that I was a youngster myself, running in the streets, playing ball and doing my share of school fighting, I am certain that every lad would rather become a good boxer than almost anything else. That is as it should be, for not only does a knowledge of boxing qualify a person to defend himself in an emergency and to think and act quickly, but it is one of the healthiest of all athletic pastimes. For my part, I believe that if every boy was taught to box before he was sixteen, there would be almost a 100 per cent improvement in the nation's physical make-up in the next generation.

And yet, no sport the world over has been so generally misunderstood as boxing; those who know it not at all or only casually putting it down as immoral, brutal and dangerous.

However, in the comparatively recent past, a great light is beginning to break generally concerning this sport, even the prejudiced being forced to admit grudgingly that it must have

some good points, since it has become a part of the regular athletic training in the colleges and in most organizations for boys and young men, such as the Y. M. C. A., etc.

Boxing is no more immoral than any other sport. There is no earthly reason why persons possessing the ability to defend themselves should not also be gentlemen. There have been dissolute persons connected with the fighting game, but so have there been with other branches of sport and with all the professions and with every line of business. And get this fact—it is a physical impossibility for any man to achieve and hold high rank among ringmen who drinks intoxicants, smokes and leads a "fast" life. The plain truth is that the modern boxer is in a class by himself when it comes to clean and physically correct living, and practically all of them are "home lovers," either married men with families, or living with immediate relatives.

And boxing is not brutal. Nor is it anywhere near as rough as football, hockey, polo and many other sports. There are some brutal fighters, but so are there some brutal policemen. And it is only at rare intervals that a professional boxer gets into trouble through engaging in brawls. Boxing teaches them tolerance and patience with those less skilled at fisticuffs, and their training enables them to remain cool and keep their tempers at practically all times.

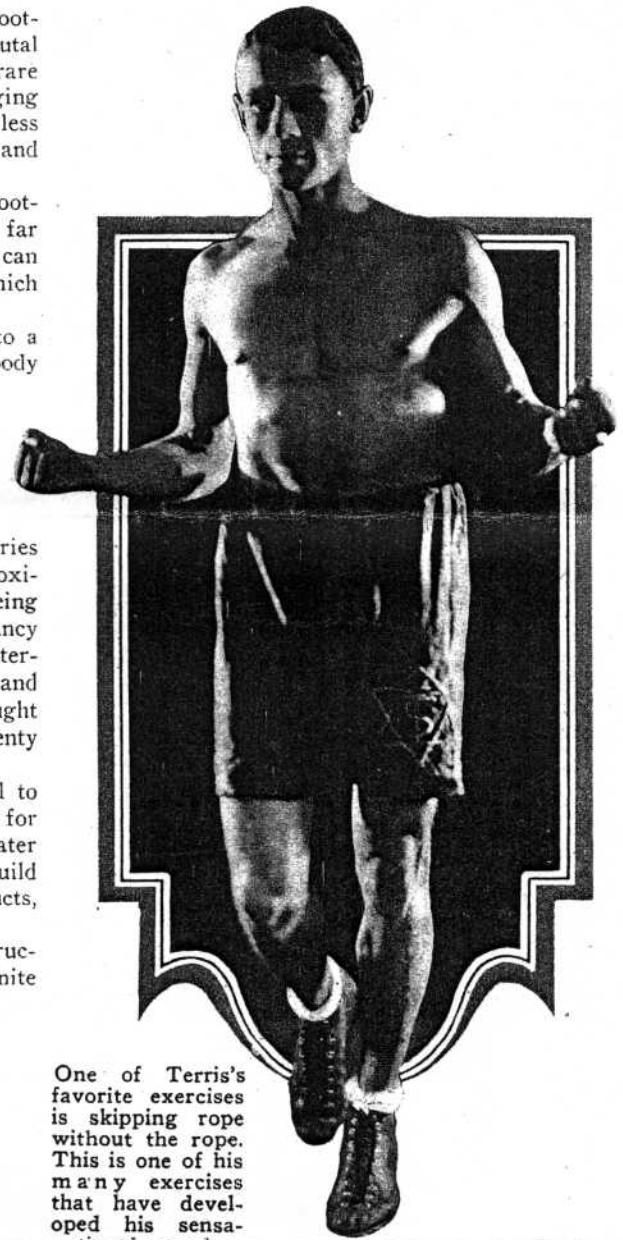
Casualties in the ring are comparatively few; far less than in football, for instance. To the uninitiated, the sport appears to be far rougher than it is, for the boxers, with their well-trained bodies, can take innumerable blows with little or no ill effects, any one of which would put the average office worker in the hospital.

In taking up the boxing game, it is essential that you get away to a correct start. By that I mean you should begin by putting your body in first-class physical condition. Some of you may have been following athletics, so that you already possess excellent wind and a splendid muscular set-up, but the majority will require some good training suggestions. However, unless you are a weakling, there is no reason why you shouldn't learn to box and build up your body at the same time.

As a sort of guide for you, permit me to state briefly the preliminaries I went through before I took up boxing seriously. I never drank intoxicants nor smoked, seldom used coffee and, thanks to a far-seeing mother, was brought up on plain and nourishing foods. From infancy I was kept in the open air as much as possible, and early took an interest in athletics, becoming a first-class runner, jumper and baseball and basketball player. After that I joined a gymnasium, where I was taught to exercise properly. I always have made it a practice to obtain plenty of rest and sleep, going to bed early whenever possible.

Here is my advice to you. Don't smoke, for tobacco is harmful to your wind. Don't drink, for alcohol is poison to an athlete, except for rubbing purposes. Don't use tea and coffee; substitute plenty of water and milk. Make your meals principally of the things which will build muscle—vegetables, fruits, cereals, coarse grain breads, dairy products, fish and fowl.

If you can join a gym, do so. The instruction you will receive there will be of infinite



One of Terris's favorite exercises is skipping rope without the rope. This is one of his many exercises that have developed his sensational speed.

Two illustrations which show how Terris delivers his punch. At the beginning of the blow he holds his fist with the palm at right angles to the floor. As the arm goes out, he swings his fist downward so that by the time the wallop lands the palm is nearly parallel to the floor. It is a sort of corkscrew twist which Terris believes gives added



benefit to you. But, whether you do or not, learn a number of exercises which will bring all the muscles of your body into play, and go through them night and morning. Sleep with your windows open, take deep breathing exercises out of doors or before an open window as soon as you get out of bed and accustom yourself to a cold shower and brisk rub-down after your general exercises. Among these latter you should include shadow boxing, bag punching and rope skipping, for all will help you in your work with the gloves.

Before going into details concerning boxing, there are certain fundamentals which I would like to impress upon you.

The first of these, and an absolute
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Learn to Box With Sid Terris

(Continued from page 10)

essential, is gameness. If you do not possess that qualification pretty close to 100 per cent, cultivate it. For no one can become better than a second-rate boxer without unlimited nerve and stick-to-it-iveness.

Speed also is of paramount importance, and from the very outset you must work incessantly to acquire it—with your head, hands and feet.

Do your utmost to avoid becoming a "one-handed fighter." Never cultivate the habit of using one hand principally for defense and the other for hitting. Train and practice until you pack a winning wallop in both hands.

Learn to conserve your strength. Don't do a lot of useless things just to prove to the spectators how clever you are. Make each blow mean something. By keeping a firm grip upon yourself at all times and always having plenty of "stuff" in reserve, you will be able to turn loose with a driving force which is irresistible the moment your opponent begins to give ground, shows signs of weakening, or blunders.

Cultivate coolness. It is the battler who keeps his temper, who thinks clearly and reasons logically who will win a great majority of times. By that I do not mean that you should become a defensive fighter. You can be one hundred per cent aggressive and still remain steady and use judgment.

As times goes on, you will learn your best points and how to apply them in attack. But—do not fail to discover your weaknesses. Every fighter has them, and the really clever ones invent ways of keeping knowledge of them from their opponents and how best to protect their vulnerable spots from assault.

To obtain the best results from the instruction offered in these lessons, two persons should practice together.

However, in choosing your boxing partner, go slowly and use judgment, for almost as much depends upon the other fellow as upon yourself. First: pick out a lad as nearly as possible of your own build—about the same in weight, height and reach. Second: try to select one who is a hard and persistent worker, one who will stick right through with you until the lessons are concluded, one who has a good, even disposition and will not become disgruntled if you display the greater proficiency or will not take undue advantage of you if he develops the superior skill.

You should do some work every day, and certainly as often as every other day, for regular practice is bound not only to keep your muscles fit, but to bring about fully seventy-five per cent better results than irregular, hit-or-miss efforts. Take a one day lay-off from the gloves out of every seven, preferably Sunday. The rest will do you good, and will sharpen your zest for the sport when Monday rolls round. But go through your morning and evening exercises every day.

A word of caution now before you and your boxing partner pull on the gloves to go through the first lesson. Resolve firmly, the two of you, to be good natured with

each other from start to finish. Remember, at all times, that you are not fighting, not contesting for points, but are trying to learn to box. And you can make genuine progress only by keeping your heads, helping and encouraging one another until you have laid a fine foundation.

However, by the foregoing, I do not mean that you are not to hit straight and hard and put all the skill you possess behind your blows. On the contrary, do your best, for you are striving to master the "manly art of self defence," and you must learn to give and take so-called "punishment" that you may become accustomed to the tactics of the ring and be able to hold your own later on against all comers.

But don't slug and spend time roughing it with no attention to system. That is a waste of effort and energy, a silly lapse into bad temper which will get you no place in the boxing game. If you accidentally hurt your partner or land when his guard is down, apologize and wait for him to get set again before you resume boxing. Again, I repeat, never forget you are not fighting, but are trying to learn something.

The boxer's position, the attitude of his hands and feet, the poise of his body, is the initial consideration and a vitally important one. But, while it is important and will be adequately discussed, I wish to voice a warning that there is such a thing as being too set in one's adherence to the rules for position.

It is a great deal like piano playing, story writing and other lines demanding much preliminary study. The best plan is to learn all the rules thoroughly, grasp all the technical advantages of good poise and practice until a creditable position becomes instinctive with you. Then experiment until you have learned how to combine what you have learned with what you know about yourself—your speed, reach, punching powers, etc., and certain natural inclinations—and you gradually will develop the position best suited to you, and yet one founded upon sound principles.

The boxer or fencer who thinks most of position will become merely a pretty poser, and will receive a fine "trimming" the first time he faces a skilled adversary. While he is striving to stand just so and impress the spectators, the other fellow will take his measure and land on him.

Even among the world's best boxers there are no hard and fast rules for position. Note them in action—or study their pictures if you can do no better—and you will note that while they may follow certain fundamental, each has worked out a favorite attitude, a style which is particularly his own.

This is especially true in the way in which the various fighters hold their hands, whether the left arms are more or less extended, whether they stand erect, lean slightly forward, favor the crouch, etc.

In fact the position of the boxer when he first enters the ring in competition is almost certain to be changed. Experience will teach him many things, changes which would be advisable, and gradually he will adopt the fighting pose best suited to his

speed, build and style of attack and defense. Accompanying illustrations will show the fighting position I have adopted after years of ring experience. You might adopt it at the outset of your boxing work, for it is particularly adapted for speed; then change it to suit your needs as you progress as a boxer and become more familiar with the ring game.

Still, while it would be too arbitrary to declare there is but one way to stand, there is—in a general sense—a right and a wrong way; and there are certain fundamentals which I will detail which it would be well for beginners to observe.

One of the questions most frequently asked by those just beginning to box is why a right-handed person should lead with the left hand. This is not difficult to explain. The position, with the left hand extended and the left foot shoved forward, gives additional power to a right hand blow, because it enables the boxer to throw into it the weight of his body. The same principle applies to pitching in baseball. Experiment by trying both the left and right hand leads and your experiences will clear away any doubts you may entertain concerning my assertion.

However, all boxers and instructors do not agree with the foregoing and that you may learn the other side of the argument, I quote the following from a well known writer on sports:

"It is a mistake to have the best hand, in boxing, held in reserve for the finishing punch. The boxer who can fight with his best hand extended has a great advantage, because a dozen blows are struck with the extended hand to one with the other and the prevailing method compels the best hand to travel two feet further to land."

But, the natural impulse is against that reasoning. Yes, the weight of argument is on my side because ninety-nine men out of a hundred—those without training—will naturally hold back the stronger hand and arm for the heavier blows. And a study of the great fighters will bear me out.

James J. Corbett and Kid McCoy (Norman Selby) are only two of innumerable boxers whose left hand was speedier than the right, while the latter carried the heavier wallop. Further, the fact that nearly all boxers who lead naturally with the right are left-handed men is undeniable.

Here is another thing which is undeniable with reference to the hand's position. If a man is leading with his knock-out arm, assuming he carries his punch only in one hand, and is opposed by a skillful fellow who is clever at working his way in close, he is in danger of finding his opponent "inside" most of the time—that is, too close for a punch from the leading hand. For example, if a man steps inside a left hook, you can strike him with your right hand and drive him back, if it has the necessary power for short-arm work. But if your pose is reversed and your left arm is weak, you are in danger of a "one two" rip to your stomach.

To obtain a good position for your left arm, advance the left foot, side, and shoulder, hold your left elbow against your

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left hip, then advance it five or six inches. The left forearm will be nearly parallel with the floor, the fist a little higher than the elbow. Let the right elbow settle near the body where it naturally comes when you place your right fist on or near your left pectoral (chest) muscle.

Do not extend the left arm too far, as doing so makes it too easy for your opponent to brush it aside. Besides, it makes you slower in striking a blow with it.

I favor the position of the fist which holds the palm at right angle to the floor before and at the beginning of a blow. But, as the arm goes out, swing the first downward so that by the time the wallop lands the palm is nearly parallel with the floor.

It is a sort of corkscrew twist and, I believe, gives added force to the blow. A few of the old time champions made the corkscrew shift just as the first reached the body, turning it in the flesh. But, personally, I can see no advantage in such a blow, especially among boxers of the lighter weights.

The blow I favor also serves another purpose; it gives most of the shock of impact to the back of the knuckles, and they are better able to stand it than the middle knuckles of the fingers. Also, the elbow joint is in less danger of a strain than when the fist lands in any other manner.

It may appear surprising to the novice, but the position of the feet and the ability to handle them is more important than the matter of the hands. No amount of speed and cleverness with the fists can compensate for slow, clumsy feet. Without a lot of help from your legs you cannot be even fair on the defense, for the man who is genuinely fast on his feet is the one who can get out of the way of a major share of the punishment sent in his direction. Even in offensive work the ability to handle your legs with speed has a vital effect upon the quickness and strength of your blows. So train for fast footwork, no matter how much time and effort is required to produce satisfactory results, for without it you never will become better than a duffer.

Just how far the left foot should be ahead of the right is a matter to be decided by each boxer for himself. Many writers on the subject give a definite number of inches, but in reality it depends upon the boxer's height, his length of leg and his natural springiness.

The two big points to remember are: first, if you keep your feet too close together you will lack solidity, will be too easily toppled over by a blow or sudden rush by your opponent; and, second, too much distance between your feet makes you slow to take advantage of any opening and takes away from your height and reach. Experiment on this matter over a considerable period, for no one can settle it as satisfactorily as yourself. Practice until you are sure just what spread of legs gives you the best combination of speed and solidity.

Naturally, the left foot is pointed toward your adversary, but the right foot is turned out at an angle of forty-five degrees, which adds to the stability of your position. Never settle completely upon your heels, but carry most of your weight upon the balls of your feet so as to be ready for quick action any second.

Boxers differ as to the distribution of weight upon the legs. The tendency is for the aggressive fellow to lean forward, supporting the greater portion of his weight upon the left leg. On the contrary, the man who depends principally upon his boxing skill and science, especially if he has a long reach, seems instinctively to want distance between his face and the other fellow's hands, and leans back upon his right leg.

Neither extreme is advisable. Learning back, I believe, is a particularly bad habit, for you are too likely to be downed by a

sudden onslaught, and you are in no position to do more than tap your lead hand. And the right hand has to travel so far that it is easily forestalled.

My advice is to keep your weight divided about equally—perhaps a trifle more on the lead leg. Keep the knees, especially the left, just slightly bent.

And—this is most important—avoid rigidity in your body, arms and legs.

In the May issue of Muscle Builder I will tell you about leading and other important points.

Wrestling Will Make Your Muscles Bulge

(Continued from page 24)

the coming fray. Then we waited—and waited—and waited. Not one of the yellow men appeared—and I began to think they ran true to color. Finally we went away disgusted only to return that night for an explanation of the occurrence. They informed us that it had entirely slipped their minds, and that as they had to go out and eat between shows and there was no rice in the neighborhood they had to leave early. This may not have been the exact excuse—but whatever it was it was just as bad.

"They agreed to go through with the affair that evening after the show and again we waited with the stage all set. Not one of them put in an appearance but this time they were good enough to send word that they were attending an important social function and could not arrange it. I was disgusted and was hoping that Edgren would see the fallacy of their claims, but Bob's faith was not so easily shaken. He had witnessed a little Jap in Chicago overpower the then famous Ralph Rose, world's champion shot putter, a giant who stood some six foot six inches in height weighing almost 300 pounds. It all happened in Chicago in the Illinois Athletic Club gymnasium, and Rose had been in bed for several days thereafter.

"We let the matter drop for a while and I went to Princeton to give some lessons in wrestling to the college boys. There, to my surprise, they had engaged a Jap by the name of Higashi who was instructing my pupils in jiu jitsu. The rivalry between us was very keen and the boys unwittingly helped a great deal to fan the flame of animosity. One of my pupils at that time was young Kohler Huyler, the candy manufacturer, and it was really some of his remarks that made me decide that it was up to me to bring this Higashi off his high horse. I had been teaching Huyler certain tricks of wrestling and the next day the Jap would tell him all the tricks that I had shown him were no good, and that he would like to see me work them on him—on the other hand he showed Huyler a lot of impossible holds involving the garments which I considered rather impractical inasmuch as not one of them would work if your adversary wore a sweater, which was the habit of thugs in those days.

"I went to my friend Edgren, and he took up the challenge in the newspapers. Higashi was well known to be one of the leading exponents of the oriental lore of the day and it was not long before a huge

affair was arranged—a battle to a finish to be held at the Grand Central Palace.

"We were to wrestle best three out of five falls—in other words the man who won three falls first—if he was able to continue after the first fall—would be declared the victor.

"Higashi was not a big man, he scaled at about 135 pounds, just my weight, and with big hands and strong wrists. His skin was saffron and clear; his eyes cold and his lips were extremely thin and cruel. His whole expression was extremely cruel and heartless.

Higashi was a clever bargainer and made a big fuss over the terms of the match. First of all we were to wear jackets—this took me entirely by surprise as in wrestling all the holds are taken on the bare body, not on the clothing, so you might say it was an entirely new game for me. It was agreed that he would provide the jackets inasmuch as I had none and in fact they were not being stocked by any sporting goods stores at that time.

"Not until I faced him in the ring for the first fall did I realize the despicable trick he played upon me—the first one I mean—for lo! and behold I found myself attired in a heavy canvas jacket extremely loose fitting and with long sleeves, extending well below the elbows, whereas my opponent blossomed forth in a flimsy silk affair with abbreviated sleeves barely covering his arm pits, that afforded no grip whatsoever. It was worse than wrestling a greased opponent. However it was too late to protest now, so, rather than incur the animosity of the crowd, I offered no objections. My manager at that time, Charlie Harvey, had arranged for the victory in each fall to be awarded on the distress signal from either one of us. We were to shout if we could, or tap twice upon the carpet with our free hand—if we had one free. If we couldn't shout or tap I have often wondered since then, what would have become of us. On the other hand, should either of us win by a fall as in wrestling, he would be forced to hold his opponent's shoulder to the mat for the unprecedented period of ten seconds. You can easily see how this would work to my disadvantage for winning by a pin fall was the remotest thing from Higashi's mind.

"The battle was on. I stood still allowing my opponent to take the aggressive. As I look back now I realize this was a

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