

Introduction to derivatives and risk management solutions Study Guide

Introduction to derivatives and risk management solutions

In the complex world of finance, managing risk is as crucial as generating profits. Derivatives play a pivotal role in this domain, offering sophisticated tools that help businesses, investors, and financial institutions hedge against potential losses and navigate market volatility effectively. This article provides a comprehensive overview of derivatives and risk management solutions, highlighting their types, functions, and significance in modern finance.

Understanding Derivatives: An Overview

What Are Derivatives?

Derivatives are financial contracts whose value is derived from the performance of an underlying asset, such as stocks, bonds, commodities, interest rates, or currencies. These instruments are used for hedging risks, speculation, or arbitrage opportunities. Essentially, derivatives allow market participants to transfer risk without the need to buy or sell the underlying asset directly.

Types of Derivatives

Derivatives come in various forms, each suited to different risk management needs:

- **Futures Contracts:** Standardized agreements to buy or sell an asset at a predetermined price at a specified future date. They are traded on exchanges and are used primarily for hedging and speculation.
- **Options:** Contracts granting the right, but not the obligation, to buy (call option) or sell (put option) an asset at a specified price before or at expiration. Options provide flexibility and are widely used for hedging and income generation.
- **Swaps:** Private agreements to exchange cash flows or assets, such as interest rate swaps or currency swaps. Swaps are often used by institutions to manage exposure to fluctuations in interest rates or currency values.
- **Forwards:** Customized agreements between two parties to buy or sell an asset at a specified price on a future date. Unlike futures, forwards are over-the-counter (OTC) instruments and can be tailored to specific needs.

The Role of Derivatives in Risk Management

Why Use Derivatives for Risk Management?

Derivatives serve as vital tools for mitigating various financial risks, including market risk, credit risk, liquidity risk, and operational risk. By using these instruments, organizations can:

- Hedge against adverse price movements in underlying assets
- Lock in prices or rates to facilitate planning and budgeting
- Reduce exposure to currency fluctuations in international transactions
- Manage interest rate risks in debt portfolios
- Protect profit margins from volatile commodity prices

Key Benefits of Derivatives in Risk Management

Implementing derivatives strategies offers several advantages:

- **Cost-effective Hedging:** Derivatives can be more economical than direct transactions in the underlying assets.
- **Flexibility:** Customized contracts like forwards and swaps tailor risk management to specific needs.
- **Leverage:** Derivatives often require lower upfront capital, enabling larger exposure control with less initial investment.
- **Market Access:** Derivatives facilitate participation in markets that might otherwise be inaccessible.

Key Players in Derivatives Markets

Participants Involved

The derivatives market comprises various participants, each with distinct roles:

- **Hedgers:** Entities seeking to reduce or eliminate their risk exposure, such as corporations or commodity producers.
- **Speculators:** Traders aiming to profit from predicted market movements, accepting higher risk for potential gains.
- **Arbitrageurs:** Participants exploiting price discrepancies across markets to generate riskless profits.

- **Intermediaries:** Financial institutions, including investment banks and brokerage firms, facilitate trading and provide liquidity.

Risk Management Strategies Using Derivatives

Hedging Techniques

Effective risk management often involves strategic use of derivatives:

- **Forward Contracts:** Lock in prices for future transactions, minimizing price volatility risk.
- **Options Strategies:** Use of call and put options to protect against unfavorable price movements while maintaining upside potential.
- **Interest Rate Swaps:** Manage fluctuations in interest rates by exchanging fixed-rate payments for floating-rate obligations.
- **Currency Swaps:** Hedge against exchange rate risks in international trade.

Risk Management Process

Implementing an effective derivatives-based risk management plan involves:

- **Risk Identification:** Recognize exposure areas and assess potential impacts.
- **Strategy Development:** Choose appropriate derivatives instruments to hedge identified risks.
- **Implementation:** Execute trades and establish positions in derivatives markets.
- **Monitoring and Adjustment:** Continuously track market conditions and adjust strategies as needed.

Regulatory and Ethical Considerations

Regulatory Environment

The derivatives market is subject to regulation to ensure transparency and stability. Regulatory bodies like the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) in the U.S. and the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) in Europe oversee derivatives trading, enforce reporting requirements, and set standards to prevent systemic risks.

Ethical Use of Derivatives

While derivatives are powerful risk management tools, misuse can lead to excessive speculation, market manipulation, or systemic crises. Ethical practices include transparent reporting, prudent risk

assessment, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

The Future of Derivatives and Risk Management

Innovations and Trends

Advancements in technology, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence, are transforming derivatives markets:

- **Digital Platforms:** Enhance transparency and efficiency in trading and clearing.
- **Smart Contracts:** Automate execution and settlement processes.
- **Data Analytics:** Improve risk assessment and predictive modeling.

Challenges and Opportunities

The evolving landscape presents opportunities for enhanced risk mitigation but also challenges related to cyber security, regulatory compliance, and market volatility. Staying informed and adopting innovative solutions is essential for effective risk management.

Conclusion

Derivatives are indispensable tools in modern financial markets for managing risk efficiently and effectively. By understanding their types, functions, and strategic applications, organizations can protect themselves against market uncertainties, optimize financial performance, and foster stability. As technology advances and markets evolve, the role of derivatives in risk management will continue to grow, making it crucial for market participants to stay informed and adopt best practices in their use.

Keywords: derivatives, risk management, hedging, futures, options, swaps, financial risk, market volatility, derivatives trading, risk mitigation strategies

Introduction to Derivatives and Risk Management Solutions

In today's complex financial landscape, organizations and investors alike face a multitude of risks—from price fluctuations in commodities and currencies to interest rate changes and credit exposure. Navigating these uncertainties requires sophisticated tools and strategies that can hedge against potential losses and stabilize financial outcomes. This is where derivatives and risk management solutions come into play. They serve as vital instruments in the arsenal of financial professionals aiming to optimize returns while mitigating exposure to adverse market movements. This article offers a comprehensive yet accessible overview of derivatives and the innovative risk

management solutions they facilitate, highlighting their significance, types, mechanisms, and practical applications.

Understanding Derivatives: The Foundations

What Are Derivatives?

Derivatives are financial contracts whose value is derived from the performance of an underlying asset, index, or rate. Unlike traditional investments that directly involve owning a security, derivatives are contractual agreements that derive their worth from the underlying's price or rate fluctuations. They serve as tools for hedging, speculation, or arbitrage, providing market participants with ways to manage exposure to various risks.

Common underlying assets include:

- Commodities (oil, gold, agricultural products)
- Financial instruments (stocks, bonds)
- Currencies
- Interest rates
- Market indices

By leveraging derivatives, entities can gain exposure or protection without necessarily owning the underlying asset itself.

Types of Derivatives

Derivatives come in various forms, each suited to different risk management or speculative objectives:

- Forwards
 - Customized, over-the-counter (OTC) agreements
 - Obligates the buyer to purchase, and the seller to sell, an asset at a predetermined price on a future date
 - Used mainly for hedging specific exposures
- Futures

- Standardized contracts traded on exchanges
- Similar to forwards but with more liquidity and regulatory oversight
- Often used by traders and institutions for hedging or speculation

- Options

- Contracts granting the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an asset at a specified price before a certain date

- Types include call options (buy rights) and put options (sell rights)
- Used for hedging, income generation, or speculation

- Swaps

- Over-the-counter agreements to exchange cash flows or assets
- Common types:
 - Interest rate swaps
 - Currency swaps
 - Commodity swaps
- Facilitate long-term risk management and strategic financial planning

The Role of Derivatives in Financial Markets

Derivatives enhance market efficiency by allowing for:

- Price discovery
- Liquidity provision
- Risk transfer
- Arbitrage opportunities

Despite their complexity, derivatives are integral to modern finance, enabling participants to manage risks that could otherwise threaten their financial stability.

Risk Management Solutions Enabled by Derivatives

Why Is Risk Management Crucial?

In an unpredictable environment, firms, investors, and governments must protect themselves from potential losses arising from adverse movements in market factors. Effective risk management enables:

- Preservation of capital
- Stabilization of cash flows
- Strategic planning
- Competitive advantage

Derivatives are central to these efforts, offering tailored solutions to specific exposures.

Common Risk Management Strategies Using Derivatives

- Hedging Price Risks
 - Protect against fluctuations in commodity prices, foreign exchange rates, or interest rates
 - Example: An airline hedges jet fuel costs using futures contracts
- Interest Rate Risk Management
 - Use of interest rate swaps or options to lock in borrowing costs or future receipts
 - Example: A corporation swaps variable-rate debt for fixed-rate payments
- Currency Risk Hedging
 - Employing currency forwards and options to mitigate exchange rate volatility
 - Example: An exporter agrees to a forward contract to sell foreign currency at a fixed rate
- Credit Risk Mitigation
 - Credit derivatives like credit default swaps (CDS) transfer credit exposure
 - Used by lenders and investors to protect against borrower defaults

- Portfolio Diversification and Arbitrage
- Using derivatives to hedge specific segments of a portfolio or exploit mispricings

Benefits of Using Derivatives for Risk Management

- Cost Effectiveness: Derivatives often require less capital than physical hedging or holding the underlying assets
- Flexibility: Customizable contracts to fit specific risk profiles
- Leverage: Ability to control large exposures with a smaller initial investment
- Liquidity: Exchange-traded derivatives offer transparent and efficient markets
- Market Efficiency: Facilitate price discovery and arbitrage opportunities

However, they also carry risks such as counterparty risk, liquidity risk, and basis risk, which require careful management.

Implementing Derivative-Based Risk Management: Practical Considerations

Risk Assessment and Strategy Design

Before deploying derivatives, organizations should:

- Identify and quantify the specific risks they face
- Determine risk appetite and strategic objectives
- Analyze cost-benefit trade-offs
- Develop comprehensive risk management policies

Choosing the Right Derivatives

Selecting appropriate instruments depends on:

- Nature of the underlying risk
- Time horizon
- Market conditions
- Regulatory environment
- Counterparty reliability

Monitoring and Adjusting Positions

Continuous oversight is essential to:

- Ensure effectiveness of hedges
- Adjust strategies in response to market changes
- Comply with regulatory requirements
- Avoid over-hedging or under-hedging

Regulatory and Ethical Considerations

Regulators scrutinize derivatives trading to prevent systemic risk and market manipulation. Transparency, proper documentation, and adherence to accounting standards are vital. Ethical considerations include avoiding speculation that might distort markets or lead to excessive risk-taking.

Emerging Trends and Future Outlook

The landscape of derivatives and risk management is evolving with technological advancements and regulatory reforms:

- Digital Platforms and Automation: Increased use of electronic trading platforms and algorithmic strategies enhances efficiency and accessibility.
- Climate and ESG Risks: Growing focus on derivatives related to carbon credits, renewable energy, and environmental risks.
- Regulatory Developments: Post-2008 financial crisis reforms aim for greater transparency and stability.
- Integration of Data Analytics: Advanced analytics enable better risk modeling and predictive capabilities.

As markets grow more interconnected, the importance and complexity of derivatives in risk management will continue to rise, demanding ongoing innovation and vigilance from market participants.

Conclusion

Derivatives and risk management solutions form a cornerstone of modern financial strategy, enabling entities to navigate uncertainty with greater confidence. These instruments provide flexible, cost-effective, and targeted means to hedge against a wide array of risks, from volatile commodity

prices to fluctuating interest rates and foreign exchange rates. While they offer significant benefits, effective deployment requires thorough understanding, diligent monitoring, and adherence to regulatory standards. As financial markets evolve amidst technological innovations and emerging risks, derivatives will remain indispensable tools, empowering organizations to protect their assets, optimize performance, and sustain growth in an unpredictable world.

Question What are derivatives and how are they used in risk management? Derivatives are financial instruments whose value is derived from an underlying asset, such as stocks, commodities, or currencies. They are used in risk management to hedge against price fluctuations, manage exposure, and optimize financial outcomes by locking in prices or creating strategic positions. **What are the main types of derivatives commonly used in risk management?** The primary types of derivatives include futures contracts, options, forwards, and swaps. Each serves different purposes in risk mitigation, allowing businesses and investors to hedge against market volatility, interest rate changes, or currency fluctuations. **How do derivatives help companies manage currency and interest rate risks?** Derivatives like currency forwards and interest rate swaps enable companies to lock in exchange rates or interest costs, thereby reducing uncertainty and protecting profit margins from adverse market movements. **What are some common challenges associated with using derivatives for risk management?** Challenges include complex valuation, counterparty risk, regulatory compliance, and potential for mispricing or over-hedging. Proper risk assessment and management are essential to effectively leverage derivatives. **How has the role of derivatives evolved in recent financial markets?** Derivatives have become more sophisticated and integrated into risk management strategies, with increased use of electronic trading and regulatory oversight. They now play a crucial role in financial stability and corporate risk mitigation. **What should organizations consider before implementing a derivatives-based risk management strategy?** Organizations should evaluate their risk exposure, understand the specific derivatives instruments, assess potential costs and benefits, ensure compliance with regulations, and have robust risk management policies in place to monitor and control derivative positions.

Related keywords: derivatives, risk management, financial instruments, hedging strategies, options, futures, swaps, financial engineering, portfolio risk, risk mitigation

Introduction To A Career Essay

Introduction to a Career Essay

When embarking on the journey of academic or professional writing, one of the most significant and foundational essays students and professionals often encounter is the career essay. An introduction to a career essay serves as the gateway to presenting your aspirations, motivations, and

understanding of a specific profession. It sets the tone for the entire essay and provides readers with a clear idea of what to expect. Crafting a compelling introduction is crucial because it captures the reader's interest and establishes the purpose and scope of your writing.

In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the essential components of an effective introduction to a career essay, including its purpose, structure, and tips for writing an engaging opening. Whether you are a student preparing for a school assignment or a professional crafting a career statement, understanding how to write a strong introduction can significantly enhance your overall essay.

Understanding the Purpose of an Introduction in a Career Essay

The introduction of a career essay is more than just an opening paragraph; it is a strategic tool to engage the reader and lay the foundation for your narrative. Its core purposes include:

- **Capturing Attention:** Drawing the reader into your story or argument.
- **Providing Context:** Offering background information about your chosen career or field.
- **Stating Your Purpose:** Clarifying why you are interested in this career and what you hope to communicate.
- **Setting the Tone:** Establishing whether the essay is formal, personal, or analytical.

By effectively fulfilling these purposes, your introduction will motivate the reader to continue exploring your insights and experiences.

Key Elements of an Effective Introduction to a Career Essay

An impactful introduction should encompass several critical elements that collectively provide clarity and engagement. These include:

1. Hook or Attention-Grabber

Begin with an interesting fact, question, quote, or anecdote related to your chosen career. This element draws the reader's attention immediately and encourages them to read further.

Examples of hooks:

- A compelling statistic about the profession.
- A personal story or moment that sparked your interest.
- A thought-provoking question about the field.

2. Background and Context

Briefly introduce the profession or field you are discussing. This might include:

- The nature of the work involved.
- Its importance in society.
- Current trends or challenges in the industry.

3. Statement of Purpose

Clearly articulate your reasons for choosing this career. This helps to personalize your essay and provide insight into your motivations.

4. Thesis Statement or Main Idea

Present the central idea or argument of your essay. For example, if your essay is about how you plan to pursue your career, state your goals or the key points you will discuss.

Structure of an Introduction to a Career Essay

A well-structured introduction typically follows a logical flow, guiding the reader smoothly into the main body of the essay. Here is a suggested structure:

- Hook/Attention-Grabber
- Brief Background on the Profession
- Personal Motivation and Reasons for Choosing the Career
- Outline of Main Points or Objectives
- Thesis Statement or Central Focus

This structure ensures that your introduction is comprehensive yet concise, setting a clear direction for your essay.

Tips for Writing an Engaging and Effective Introduction

Crafting an introduction that captivates and informs requires attention to detail and thoughtful planning. Here are some practical tips:

- **Start with a compelling hook:** Engage your reader from the first sentence.

- **Be concise:** Avoid lengthy or overly detailed background information in the introduction.
- **Personalize your writing:** Share your unique perspective or experiences related to the career.
- **Use clear and precise language:** Make your purpose and thesis easy to understand.
- **Align with the overall tone of the essay:** Whether formal, personal, or analytical, ensure consistency.
- **Revise and edit:** Refine your introduction to eliminate errors and improve clarity.

Examples of Introductions to a Career Essay

To better understand how to craft your introduction, here are sample openings for different careers:

Example 1: Aspiring Teacher

"Since childhood, I have been enchanted by the transformative power of education. Watching my teachers inspire confidence and curiosity in their students sparked my desire to pursue a career in teaching. I believe that education has the ability to shape lives, and I am committed to becoming a dedicated educator who fosters growth and learning in every student."

Example 2: Future Engineer

"The thrill of solving complex problems and creating innovative solutions has always fascinated me, leading me to pursue a career in engineering. With advancements in technology shaping our world, I am eager to contribute to sustainable development and technological progress as a future engineer dedicated to making a difference."

Conclusion: The Importance of a Strong Introduction

An introduction to a career essay is more than just an opening paragraph; it is the first impression you make on your reader. A well-crafted introduction not only captures attention but also establishes the context and purpose of your essay, guiding the reader through your personal journey or professional insights. By including engaging hooks, clear background information, and a strong thesis statement, you set the stage for a compelling and cohesive essay.

Remember, investing time and effort into writing an effective introduction can significantly enhance the overall quality of your career essay. It serves as a vital tool to communicate your passion, goals, and understanding of your chosen profession. Whether you are exploring future aspirations or reflecting on your current path, a thoughtful introduction paves the way for a meaningful and impactful narrative.

Meta description: Discover how to write an effective introduction to a career essay. Learn key elements, structure, tips, and examples to craft an engaging opening that sets the tone for your

career writing.

Introduction to a Career Essay: A Critical Gateway to Personal and Professional Development

In the realm of personal growth and professional aspiration, the introduction to a career essay serves as the foundational stepping stone that sets the tone, context, and direction of the entire narrative. It is more than a mere opening paragraph; it is an essential component that captures the reader's attention, provides clarity about the essay's purpose, and offers insight into the writer's motivations and aspirations. A well-crafted introduction not only engages but also establishes credibility, paving the way for a compelling exploration of career paths, experiences, and future goals. In this article, we delve into the nuances of crafting an effective career essay introduction, examining its purpose, structure, and key elements through a detailed, analytical lens.

Understanding the Purpose of the Introduction in a Career Essay

Establishing Context and Setting the Tone

The introduction functions as the gateway to the essay, providing readers with essential background information and framing the narrative. It helps set the tone—whether formal, reflective, aspirational, or analytical—and prepares the reader for the content that follows. For example, an introduction that begins with a personal anecdote can evoke emotional engagement, while a factual statement can establish authority and credibility.

Capturing the Reader's Attention

In a competitive landscape of academic and professional writing, capturing the reader's interest is crucial. An engaging introduction can pique curiosity, pose intriguing questions, or offer compelling insights that motivate the reader to continue. Effective techniques include posing a thought-provoking question, citing a surprising statistic, or sharing an impactful personal story related to career development.

Stating the Purpose and Thesis

Central to any introduction is the clear articulation of the essay's purpose. This typically involves presenting a thesis statement—a concise summary of the main argument or focus of the essay. In a career essay, this could encompass the writer's chosen field, motivations, career goals, or the significance of their journey. The thesis serves as a roadmap, guiding both the writer and the reader through the subsequent discussion.

Structuring the Introduction of a Career Essay

Opening with a Hook

A compelling opening is vital for drawing readers in. Common strategies include:

- Personal Anecdotes: Sharing a brief story that highlights an initial interest or pivotal moment.
- Interesting Facts or Statistics: Presenting data that underscores the importance or relevance of the chosen career.
- Provocative Questions: Posing a question that stimulates curiosity about the career path.

Providing Background and Context

Once the hook captures attention, the introduction should offer background information. This might involve:

- Briefly describing the field or industry.
- Explaining the writer's initial exposure or experiences.
- Highlighting relevant influences or inspirations.

Presenting the Thesis Statement

The final part of the introduction should clearly state the main focus of the essay. For example:

- "This essay explores my journey toward a career in environmental engineering, driven by a passion for sustainable development and a desire to combat climate change."
- "Through reflecting on my academic pursuits and internships, I aim to demonstrate my commitment to pursuing a career in digital marketing."

A strong thesis provides clarity and sets expectations for the reader.

Key Elements of an Effective Career Essay Introduction

Clarity and Precision

The language used should be clear, concise, and focused. Avoid vague statements and ensure that the purpose of the essay is explicitly stated. Precision helps the reader understand exactly what to expect.

Personalization and Authenticity

Authenticity resonates with readers. Sharing genuine motivations, experiences, or challenges creates a compelling narrative. Personalization makes the essay unique and memorable.

Relevance and Focus

Every sentence in the introduction should contribute to establishing the context and purpose. Avoid unnecessary details or tangential information that might dilute the focus.

Engagement and Interest

Use engaging language and storytelling techniques to captivate the reader. An evocative opening can make the difference between a forgettable essay and one that leaves a lasting impression.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid in the Introduction

- Vagueness: Statements like "I want to have a good career" are too broad. Instead, specify what "good career" means to you.
- Overloading with Details: The introduction should set the scene, not provide exhaustive background?save details for the main body.
- Lack of Focus: Avoid diverging into unrelated topics or personal philosophies unrelated to career goals.
- Generic Openings: Avoid clichés or generic statements that fail to distinguish your story.

Examples of Effective Career Essay Introductions

Example 1: Personal Anecdote Approach

"From the moment I helped my grandfather fix his broken bicycle at age ten, I discovered a passion for problem-solving and mechanics. This early experience ignited a lifelong interest in engineering, ultimately guiding me toward my goal of becoming a mechanical engineer dedicated to innovative design solutions."

Analysis: This introduction uses a personal story to establish motivation, clearly states the career goal, and sets an engaging tone.

Example 2: Fact-Based Opening

"With over 3.5 billion people relying on digital platforms daily, the field of digital marketing stands at the forefront of global communication. Inspired by this dynamic environment, I am committed to developing innovative strategies that connect brands with their audiences."

Analysis: It captures interest with relevant statistics, provides context, and states the writer's focus.

Conclusion: Crafting a Strong Introduction to Set the Stage for Success

An introduction in a career essay is more than an opening—it is a strategic tool that lays the groundwork for a compelling narrative. By thoughtfully establishing context, capturing interest, and clearly articulating purpose, writers can effectively engage their audience and provide a strong foundation for the story they wish to tell. A well-crafted introduction not only reflects the writer's personality, motivations, and aspirations but also demonstrates their ability to communicate clearly and persuasively. As such, investing time and effort into this initial section can significantly enhance the overall impact of the essay, inspiring readers to understand and support the writer's career journey.

In summary, the introduction to a career essay is a critical component that combines storytelling, clarity, and purpose. Its strategic construction involves engaging hooks, contextual background, and a precise thesis statement. When executed effectively, it sets a compelling narrative that invites readers into the writer's world, paving the way for an insightful exploration of career ambitions, experiences, and future goals.

Question What is the purpose of an introduction in a career essay? The introduction sets the stage for the essay by presenting the career topic, capturing the reader's interest, and providing a thesis statement that outlines the main focus of the essay. **Answer** How do I make my introduction engaging in a career essay? You can start with a compelling anecdote, a surprising fact, or a relevant quote to grab the reader's attention and make them interested in your career topic. What key elements should be included in the introduction of a career essay? The introduction should include a hook to attract interest, background information on the career, and a clear thesis statement outlining your main point or purpose. How long should the introduction be in a career essay? Typically, the introduction should be concise, roughly 10-15% of the total essay length, providing enough context without overwhelming the reader. What examples can I use in my introduction to make it relevant? You can include recent industry trends, personal motivation for choosing the career, or notable achievements related to the field to make the introduction relevant and engaging. Should I mention my personal goals in the introduction of a career essay? Yes, including your personal goals can provide a clear direction for the essay and help the reader understand your motivation and aspirations within the career. How can I effectively connect the introduction to the main body of my career essay? End the introduction with a thesis statement or a guiding question that the body of the essay will address, creating a seamless transition. What common mistakes should I avoid in writing an introduction to a career essay? Avoid vague statements, excessive background information, or a lack of a clear thesis. Also, steer clear of clichés and ensure the introduction is focused and relevant. How can I tailor my career essay introduction for different audiences? Adjust your language, level of detail, and focus based on whether your

audience is academic, professional, or general readers to make your introduction more impactful.

Related keywords: career overview, professional goals, career path, personal motivation, skill development, industry insights, educational background, career challenges, future aspirations, relevant experiences

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