



AUSTRALIA



Irish Film Institute

Estimated date of first Aboriginal immigration to Australia

Aboriginal engravings in South Australia

First Dingo sighted

Captain James Cooke lands on East Coast

1851

1868

1873

70000 BC

42000 BC

2000 BC

1770 AD

Gold Rush begins New South Wales

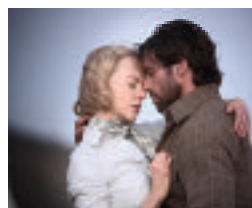
Last convicts transported to Australia

Ayers Rock first sighted by Europeans

Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*

1. Pre-viewing

- (a) Baz Luhrmann's film *Australia* is set in the 1940's. Look at the pictures on the right. What do you think are the main themes of the film? Refer to the timeline above.



- (b) What do you know about Australia? Brainstorm your ideas and share with the class.
- (c) Study the sequence of events on the timeline. Select what you think are the most important events in Australian history and discuss your choice.
- (d) Can you think of any other Australian films?

2. Post-viewing

Synopsis

Set in Northern Australia before World War II, Lady Sarah Ashley (Nicole Kidman) is an English aristocrat who inherits a vast cattle station, Faraway Downs. Under threat from other cattle barons, she is helped by an Australian, known as Drover (Hugh Jackman), with whom she falls in love. Together they drive herds of cattle across the harsh landscape of the Northern Territory but get caught up in the bombing of Darwin.

- (a) Recalling what you can from the film, look at the map and pick out the places that Lady Sarah Ashley and Drover went to on their journey.
- (b) What kind of journey was this for them? Write a diary entry from the point of view of Lady Sarah Ashley or Drover describing a day on the journey. Think about the words below before you start:



- (c) Do you think this journey might be different today? Explain why.

3. Focus on Characters

- (a) Both Lady Sarah Ashley and Drover change a lot during the course of their journey. In pairs, look at the pictures A, B, C and think of adjectives to describe Lady Sarah Ashley at different stages on her journey. Compare with your partner.



- (b) What do you think is the biggest change in her character? How and why does this happen?
- (c) In pairs, choose one of the other characters from the film. Imagine you are that person and describe how you feel about Lady Sarah Ashley.
- (d) How does Lady Sarah feel about these characters?



Neil Fletcher – The Station Manager



Drover



Nullah

1901

Commonwealth of Australia established

1914 – 1918

Australian troops fight WWI

1927

First Federal Parliament is held in Canberra

1932

Sydney Harbour Bridge opens

1939 – 1945

Australian troops fight WWII

1942

February: Japanese bomb Darwin during WWII

1956

Melbourne hosts Olympics

A Love Story

1. Love is one of the main themes in *Australia*.

Baz Luhrmann has described *Australia* as a love epic. Love epics are romantic films done on a large scale, usually in a historical setting.

Other love epics: *Michael Collins* (1996), *Titanic* (1997), *Atonement* (2007), *Australia* (2008).

(a) Match the following plot descriptions to the above film titles.

Liam Neeson plays a historical Irish political figure. Following the War of Independence and negotiation of the Treaty with the British government, he comes under attack from his colleagues led by Eamon De Valera.

Starring Keira Knightley, this film is about a 13-year-old writer Briony Tallis, who forever changes the course of several lives when she accuses her older sister's lover of a crime he did not commit.

Kidman and Jackman meet, hate each other and drive cattle across The Outback, only to fall in love and get caught up in the Japanese bombing of Darwin.

This fictional romantic film, which stars Leonardo DiCaprio, tells the tale of a rich girl and poor boy who meet on the doomed voyage of the 'unsinkable' ship.

(b) What elements do these films have in common?

(d) Can you think of any more elements of a love epic?

(c) In groups, discuss how these elements appear in *Australia*.

(e) Do you think *Australia* is a good example of a love epic? Why?

2. Group project

(a) You are a film production team. You have been asked by 20th Century Fox Film Co. Ltd. to present an idea for your own love epic. Choose a storyboard, film poster or short script to present your idea.



Develop your idea using the following guidelines:

Story	Characters	Location
Fact or fiction? Is it based on a historical event? Past, present or future? Whose story is it?	Who are the main characters? Actors? Are they famous or are they your classmates? What kind of costumes will they wear?	What period is it set in? Where?

(b) In groups, create and present your final idea to the class.

Extension task

As a class, vote on your favourite story. Act it out or make a short film!

1971

Neville Bonner – first Aboriginal Member of Parliament

1973

Sydney Opera House opens

2000

Sydney hosts the Olympics

2008

Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, makes formal apology to Indigenous Australians

A War Story

1. The bombing of Darwin is a main sequence in Australia.

- (a) When was Darwin bombed by Japanese forces? Refer to timeline and find out why this happened.
- (b) Can you identify the wars that these films are based on: *Pearl Harbour*, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Rescue Dawn*?



2. Role Play

Create a television news report on the bombing of Darwin.

In pairs choose one of the following roles each:

Person A: News reporter **Person B:** Soldier, Civilian, Child, Japanese Bomber

A Interviews B about their experience.

Present your news report to the class. Swap roles if there's time!

3. Australian history focus

- (a) The bombing of Darwin has been removed from school history curricula in Australia. What do you think is the reason for this?
- (b) Is there any period in Irish history that might be removed from our history curricula? Explain your answer.

(c)

Research Task: Darwin

To understand more about this historical event work in groups to research and answer the following questions:

- Who governed the Northern Territory at this time?
- What were the reasons behind the military build up in the Northern Territory?
- Why did the Japanese bomb Darwin?
- What was similar about the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the bombing of Darwin?

Useful web link:
www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au

Anzac Day

Anzac Day is commemorated by Australia and New Zealand on April 25th every year to honour members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) who fought at Gallipoli in Turkey during World War I.



4. Anglo-Celtic Australians

In the film *Lady Sarah* Ashley leaves England for Australia because she is determined to force her husband to sell their property, Faraway Downs.

Following Captain Cooke's arrival on the East Coast of Australia in 1770 (see timeline) people began emigrating to Australia in search of new opportunities.

Anglo-Celtic Australians make up the largest ethnic group in Australia. Irish Australians are the third largest group. Around 40,000 Irish convicts were transported to Australia between 1791 and 1867. The most famous Irish convict is Ned Kelly.

- (a) Read the passage on the right about Ned Kelly and fill in the police record!
- (b) Why do you think Ned Kelly has become a folk hero?

POLICE RECORD	
Surname:	_____
Name:	_____
Nationality:	_____
Birth Place:	_____
Family:	_____
Occupation(s):	_____
Wanted for:	_____
Died:	_____



WANTED!

Ned Kelly (June 3rd 1854 – Nov 11th 1880) was an Australian bushranger, and, to some, a folk hero for his rebelliousness against colonial authorities. He was born in Victoria to an Irish convict father, and as a young man he didn't get on with the police. At the age of 14 he was arrested for assaulting a Chinese pig farmer. Ned Kelly became a wanted man after killing three policemen. He was hanged for murder at Old Melbourne Gaol in 1880. His daring reputation made him a famous figure in Australian history, folklore, literature, art and film.

“Our indigenous culture is truly unique and ancient, and for me learning so much about it was incredible.” Baz Luhrmann

Indigenous Australians 1

1. 'Aboriginal'

Aboriginal people are central to the story of *Australia*. The term 'Aboriginal' refers to 'first or earliest known, indigenous' and was used to describe Australia's native mainland population. The term Indigenous Australians is also used.

- Can you name two Indigenous Australian characters in the film?
- What is their relationship to each other?
- What do you know about Indigenous Australians?

The Australian mainland has been inhabited for more than 42,000 years by Indigenous Australians.

2.6% of Australia's population is indigenous



2. King George

In *Australia* King George is the Indigenous tribal leader.

- Describe King George under the following headings:
 - Appearance
 - Character
 - Role
- In pairs, discuss any Indigenous Australian traditions that you can remember from the film. What do these traditions tell you about their way of life?

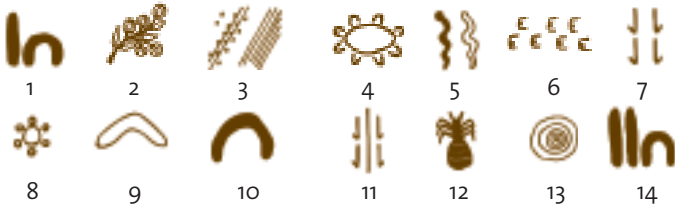
Other films about Indigenous Australians



Did you know that King George (David Gulpilil) has starred in all of these films?!

3. Symbols

- Here are some symbols that reflect the culture and traditions of Indigenous Australians. Can you match the words below with the symbols?



Woman, man, person, boomerang, people sitting, star, kangaroo track, moving kangaroo track, snake, campsite, honey ant, animal tracks, rain, bush berry
See page 10 for answers.

- Invent your own symbols for these words:
spear, land, crocodile, fire, horse tracks.

4. Dreamtime Stories

Storytelling is an important element of the film. 'Dreamtime stories' are a feature of Indigenous Australian mythology. They refer to stories about the creation of sacred places, land, people, animals and plants.

- What stories can you remember from the film?
- Can you tell the story of the film in your own words?



5. Codes of Conduct

Indigenous Australians have their own code of conduct. Here are some examples from the code:

- There are no words for "please" or "thank you".
- Aboriginal people tolerate silence in communication.
- They use hand signals and gestures mostly to communicate. This originates from having to communicate with each other across long distances.
- Direct contact is considered inappropriate between men and women who know each other.
- There are no greetings like "hello". They address each other using a relationship name such as "mother's brother".

- What do you think of these?
- Which do you think is the most unusual? Why?
- Do you think you could live by this code of conduct? Why/not?
- In groups, invent and draw up your own code of conduct. Give your group a name. Think about what is important to you and use these ideas to help you: *religion, greetings, land, social conduct, traditions.* Present your decisions to the class and explain your choices. Vote on the best code of conduct.
- Discuss an important tradition in your culture.
- Can you name any other indigenous cultures?

“By choosing to set the film between the two World Wars, I was able to bind the historical romance to what really is the greatest scar in the history of the country: the Stolen Generation.” Baz Luhrmann

Indigenous Australians 2

1. The Stolen Generation

From the earliest years of European settlement in Australia (see timeline), there is evidence of Aboriginal children being taken from their families as the authorities believed it was for their own good. During the first half of the 20th century, it was official policy in most states to remove so-called ‘half or quarter caste’ Aboriginal children. The practice continued until the early 1970s, and was only fully brought to public attention with the release of the ‘Bringing Them Home’ report in 1997. (See www.humanrights.gov.au for more information). In February 2008 the new Prime Minister, Labour’s Kevin Rudd, made a formal apology to the Indigenous Australians.

In *Australia* one of the central characters in the film is Nullah, a young boy who has an Indigenous Australian mother and a white father.

- What happens to Nullah when he decides to go on walkabout for the first time?
- How does Lady Sarah Ashley help him?
- How does Nullah help her?
- Describe their relationship.



2. Indigenous Australian Poetry


- Read the poem by Grandfather Koori

Never Blood So Red

Never blood
so red so red
never blood so red
as blood of the poet
the Kokatha poet
who lay in the pool
so dead.

Never blood
so red so red
in Fremantle gaol so red
it glistens on batons
walls and feet
red drops on the warden’s head
never blood
so red so red
never blood so red
as blood of the poet
the Kokatha poet
whose cries for justice
bled
whose cries for justice
bled.

Grandfather Koori
Australian - Aboriginal - Wiradjuri
Activist, writer, poet (1933-1993)



- What do you think the poem is about?
- Describe how you think the poet feels.
- What do you notice about the poet’s style? Comment on the language and imagery.
- In groups, discuss what it tells you about the history of the Aboriginal people.

Extension task

- Look for a photograph in a magazine, or draw a picture that you think could be used to illustrate the poem.
- Think about a time when you felt strongly about a situation. Write a poem about this.

3. Aboriginal words

- Can you match the Aboriginal words to the correct meanings?

• Billabong	• A song and dance ceremony
• Bongalin Bongalin	• Senior lawman or elder
• Corroboree	• A coffin made from bark
• Dilly Bag	• A dead creek
• Jungayi	• Traditional hunting tool or weapon
• Lorrkon	• The name of a dance which represents animals
• Womera	• Small hand-woven string bag decorated with feathers

See page 10 for answers.

“As an Australian filmmaker, I am using my country as a canvas. It is an exotic place at the end of the world where you can be transformed by experience and ultimately by love.” Baz Luhrmann

Australia Today 1

1. Australia

- (a) Australia is the world's smallest continent.
- (b) Where is it?
- (c) What oceans does it lie between?

Put these in order of size: South America, Europe, Australia.

2. The Outback

The 'Outback', 'bush', 'never never' and 'big backyard' are all names which refer to remote dry areas of Australia.

- (a) Why do you think one of the names for the Outback is 'never never'?
- (b) What kind of landscape is this?
- (c) In the Outback you can find animals such as: kangaroos, dingoes, koalas, possums, flying foxes and stingless bees.

It is also home to some of the most poisonous and dangerous creatures in the world: snakes, spiders, vicious insects and crocodiles.

Pick two outback animals/creatures and find out about them. What animals/creatures are native to your country?

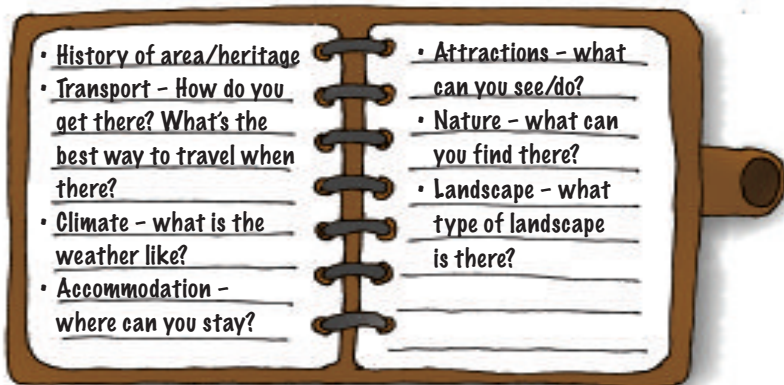


3. Travel Australia

In the film, Lady Sarah Ashley and Drover travel through outback territory. Now it's your turn! You have been asked by Tourism Australia to draw up a brochure promoting a location in the Outback:

- Find out where the Outback is and decide on a location for your brochure.
- Use maps and illustrations
- Include the following information:

Useful information can be found on: www.australia.com



Extension Task

- (a) Write a postcard home describing the location.
- (b) Draw a picture of something you can see in the Outback.

“It is one of the last places in the world that still conjures mystery, excitement and romance in people’s minds.” Baz Luhrmann

Australia Today 2



Read the quote above. In your mind does Australia conjure up mystery, excitement and romance? Explain your answer.

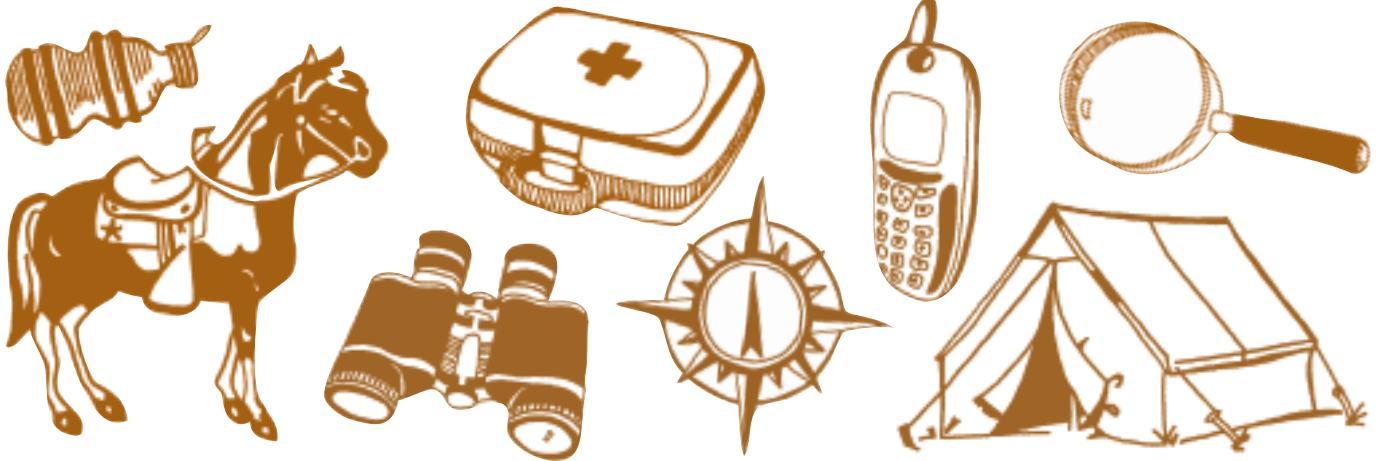
1. Survival Challenge

Like the popular television series ‘I’m A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here’, you and your group are faced with a survival challenge!

You have been sent to the middle of the Outback. You must survive for three nights. You are only allowed to bring three of the following items to help you and your team survive. Choose from the following:

Mobile phone, spear, tent, first-aid kit, water flask, matches, horse, binoculars, sun lotion, knife, diary, compass, magnifying glass, insect repellent.

- (a) Discuss in your group and explain your choices to the class.
- (b) What type of person do you think would survive in the Outback?
- (c) What characteristics do you think are necessary to survive?
- (d) Would you like to visit the Outback? Discuss why.



2. Save the Dingo!

The Dingo is Australia’s native dog. It is a wild dog found in the Outback. ‘Watu’ is the Indigenous Australian word for Dingo.

There is fear that the Dingo is becoming extinct. Design a poster as part of an environmental campaign to ‘Save the Dingo’.

FAST FACTS

Type: Mammal

Diet: Carnivore - rabbits, birds, lizards

Size: Head and body, 3.5 - 4 ft.

Tail, 12 - 13 inches

Weight: 22 - 33lbs



“Australia is a metaphor for the far away: to surrender, to experience and to be reborn through a relationship.” Baz Luhrmann

Film Studies 1



Luhrmann



1. Baz Luhrmann

Baz Luhrmann was born in Sydney, Australia. His father owned a movie theatre and this is where he became interested in film and storytelling. He first became known for the romantic comedy *Strictly Ballroom* (1992). He followed this with an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* (1996) and then *Moulin Rouge!* (2001). These three films make up the 'Red Curtain Trilogy'. In 2004 he directed the world's most expensive advertisement for Chanel No. 5, starring Nicole Kidman. He is married to production designer Catherine Martin who worked on all his films, including *Australia* (2008). Baz Luhrmann was determined to set an historical epic in the country of his birth.

Read the quote above from the director, Baz Luhrmann. What do you think he means by this?



2. The Stars of *Australia*

In most films we can easily pick out the star. Look at the pictures on the right.

In groups discuss who you think is the real star of the film and describe under the following headings:

- Appearance • Character • Role



Drover



Lady Sarah Ashley



Nullah



3. Film Storytelling

As with a novel, the story of a film is told by a narrator. A narrator exists within the world of the story and may tell the story from his/her own point of view or from the point of view of one of the characters.

- Who is *Australia's* narrator?
- Why do you think the story is narrated by this character?
- How would the story be different if it was told from the point of view of Neil Fletcher or Drover?



King George



The Landscape



4. *The Wizard of Oz*

The Wizard of Oz (1939)

- American musical-fantasy film, directed by Victor Fleming.
- Based on the 1900 children's novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum.
- Film stars Judy Garland as Dorothy Gale.

In the film Lady Sarah Ashley tells Nullah the story of *The Wizard of Oz* to comfort him when his mother dies. He later sees the film at an open air cinema.

- In groups, discuss the story of *The Wizard of Oz*. Do you think it is a 'Dreamtime' story? Why/not? (see page 4, Indigenous Australians I)
- What song does Lady Sarah Ashley sing to Nullah?
- When does the song appear again in the film?
- What do you think is the significance of this?



Extension Task

In pairs, think of other songs that Nullah could sing or write your own.

“Every single costume is totally anchored in historical research and realism.”

Catherine Martin: Production Designer

Film Studies 2



1. Costume Design

Throughout the film Nicole Kidman has many different costume changes. Each look is essential to the development of her character, Lady Sarah Ashley.

- (a) Referring back to Q3, page 1 ‘Characters’, choose a scene and design a brand new look for her character. Use the sketches from *Australia*’s production designer, Catherine Martin, to help you with some ideas.

Here are a few things to think about:
 What scene is she appearing in?
 Where is she?
 Is it day or night?
 Is she wearing accessories?
 What fabric will you use?
 What is the function of this look?



- (b) In your opinion, what does this new look say about her character?
- (c) Drover needs a new hat for when he is in the Outback.

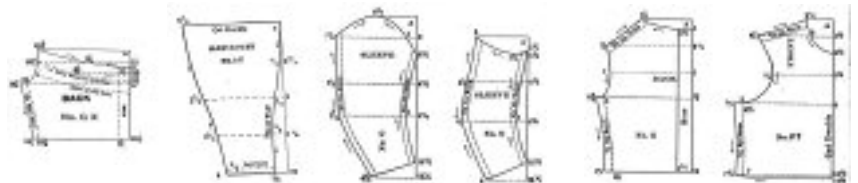
Invent a hat that will help him survive when he is on his journey. Refer to the section *Australia Today 2* for ideas. Use illustrations to present your invention.



Extension Task

In *Australia* Lady Sarah Ashley and Drover attend a ball.

Design an outfit for Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman to attend the Oscars in style!



“The film truly is about the landscape and how the outdoor experience can have an effect on your soul.” Baz Luhrmann

Film Studies 3



1. Poster Design

In groups, look at the film poster designed to promote the film *Australia*.

- What does it tell you about the film?
- Do you think it's an effective design? Why/not?
- Which element in particular might influence audiences?
- Design your own film poster to promote this film, considering the following:
 - The type of message you are trying to communicate.
 - The images, symbols and lettering you will use.
 - The places where you will display the poster.



2. Set Design

Australia was filmed in various locations across the country. Catherine Martin and her team constructed a huge exterior set to look like 1930's Darwin. They also built 'Faraway Downs', the cattle ranch and house which belonged to Lady Sarah Ashley and her husband.

- Choose an exterior or interior set from the film eg. house, pub, cattle ranch, outback.
- Design and construct a miniature version of your set using materials such as cardboard, glue, paint, wire, fabric, straw etc.



3. Landscape as Location

For exteriors, Luhrmann relied on the beauty of the Australian landscape as a backdrop for his epic tale.

- Do you think the use of these stunning landscapes would attract people to Australia? Why/not?
- What locations in Ireland do you think have attracted filmmakers? Can you think of any of these film titles?
- If you were to produce your own love epic would you choose Australia or Ireland for your location? Give reasons for your answer.



Answers

Page 4:

3. Symbols

1 – woman; 2 – bush berry; 3 – rain; 4 – people sitting; 5 – snake; 6 – animal track; 7 – kangaroo tracks; 8 – star; 9 – boomerang; 10; person; 11 – moving kangaroo tracks; 12 – honey ant; 13 – campsite; 14 – man;

Page 5:

3. Aboriginal words

Billabong – A dead creek; Bongalin – The name of a dance which represents animals;
Corroboree – A song and dance ceremony; Dilly Bag – Small hand-woven string bag decorated with feathers;
Jungayi – Senior lawman or elder; Lorrkon – A coffin made from bark; Womera – Traditional hunting tool or weapon;

Australia

This study guide has been written to accompany the film *Australia*, directed by Baz Luhrmann.

An epic romance starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman, *Australia* was released in cinemas in Ireland on December 26th, 2008. Filmed on location throughout Australia, the film combines history with adventure and love. It is the story of English aristocrat, Lady Sarah Ashley, who finds herself driving herds of cattle through the Outback in the company of the mysterious Drover and guided by Indigenous Australian, King George.

The study guide focusses on several key themes from the film: Love, War, Australia Today, Indigenous Australians. Themes and tasks have been devised to support English, Geography, History, SPHE, CSPE and Art at Junior Cert. level or Transition Year. They combine group, pair and individual work and facilitate development of oral, written and visual literacy skills.

Australia is an exciting and moving film that offers many possibilities for classroom work.

Australia directed by Baz Luhrmann, Australia/USA 2008.

Running time 165 mins.

Website: www.Australiamovie.com

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Available for download from www.irishfilm.ie

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