[**Red Cat Jenny**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3475-red-cat-jenny/)

* Truly one of a Kind
* 
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* Member
* 7,468 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:New York but pining for the open sea
* Interests:Pirates, history, anthing nautical, salt water fish tanks, the Caribbean and South Pacific, a good barbecue and a cold Sam Adams, travel, airplanes, rockabilly, Grand Mariner on the rocks, fabulous sunsets accompanied by a warm breeze and good friends.
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([IP: 24.47.40.229](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.47.40.229)) ·

[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227001) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227001)

Sloop, Barque, ENGLISH Galleon, schooner, man o war, Frigate,Brigantine

-------------------------------------------------------------------------

Which was fastest, which was the best choice?

I am assuming the sloop and schooner for speed and manueverability and the Brigantine for sheer firepower..

Thoughts? Facts? 

**Edited October 24, 2006 by Red Cat Jenny**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=edit)

[**HarborMaster**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/970-harbormaster/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,446 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Centralia Wa and Cebu Philippines
* Interests:Scuba Diving ., Shooting ., Drinking ., Cannons ., Motorcycling . I hope I didn't , leave out anything important.

([IP: 67.160.25.108](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=67.160.25.108)) · · 

[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227003) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227003)

I would say yes to the sloop and schooner for speed and manueverability .., However the Man O' War for Firepower.

If you want to accomplish both however during the age of sail...., Then you must look to the Americans with their new "Super Frigate" The American Super Frigates may very well have been the ultimate sailing fighter., and the topic is easily arguable and hotly debated amongst people ., some of whom talk about wars that never happened.

For example., The Philipe ., The Con., the Santismo and of course Nelsons Victory......, What a mangled mess of fallen mast rope and rigging., these firey 4 would have made of each other.

Very Fast and Very Powerful. Never beaten !!! The U.S.S. Constitution...., "The Con" and her sister ships (USS United States ..,USS Constellation ..,USS Chesapeake ..,USS Congress ...,USS President

., played a key role in this nations ability to trade and grow . Our Navy may have been small at first......, but not to be reckoned with.

**Edited October 24, 2006 by HarborMaster**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227003)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227003_menu)

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[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227004) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227004)

I read about the Super Frigates, but they seemed to come in post GoAP

Thanks for the info.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227004)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227004_menu)

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[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227012) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227012)

They did come later., but they were sailing vessles..., you didnt state GAoP ships., unless maybe I read that wrong., in which case I still say., Sloop ., Schooner manuevering,., and the power of a Man O wars guns.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227012)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227012_menu)

[**Patrick Hand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)

* The sailor's sailor
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 6,100 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:TH' Mountains of Central California
* Interests:I like wierdness... Klingon, Pyrate..... and even..... gasp.... Renn Faires...... (Baseball and tractor pulls I'd have to think about.... could be wierd or Not,,,,)

([IP: 209.78.171.157](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=209.78.171.157)) · · 

[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227017) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227017)

Just a funny bit.....

But the Bad guys in the movie "Master and Comander,The far side of the world".... were not French...(in the book) but American........

Realy to late for period.... but we made some fast ships..... hey you gotta have a fast ship for the slave trade....... (dang.......I'm going to get in sooo much trouble for that...... )

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227017)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227017_menu)

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([IP: 24.47.40.229](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.47.40.229)) · · 

[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227021) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227021)

Sorry I should have specified :period: its just sort of a given here on th pub.. but still as interested in ships an sailing as I be, I appreciate th info again.. 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227021)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227021_menu)

[**blackjohn**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1144-blackjohn/)

* Iron Age Hero Lost at Sea
* 
* 
* Member
* 3,745 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbia, Md
* Interests:Stuff... and junk.

([IP: 68.33.123.42](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=68.33.123.42)) · · 

[Posted October 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227228) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227228)

If you are interested in ships, think about purchasing a couple of good books on the subject. The Naval Institute Press has a wide range of interesting books. I'm particularly fond of *Arming and Fitting of English Ships of War 1600-1815* by Lavery, *The Global Schooner* by Marquardt and the classic *Seamanship in the Age of Sail* by Harland.

If someone dropped a ship in my lap, I'd be perfectly happer with the likes of the schooner Sultana. She's small and unassuming, yet perfectly capable of getting the job done. <http://www.sultanaprojects.org/>

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227228)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227228_menu)

[**Desert Pyrate**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1016-desert-pyrate/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 377 posts

([IP: 172.24.99.231](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=172.24.99.231)) · · 

[Posted October 26, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227515) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227515)

The idea of an absolute fastest ship is not really a fair question. There are ships that have a higher top speed than others, but that's a hull question, not so much a rig question. Moreover, each rig is quick on a particular point of sail.

Anything with a preponderance of square sails will be fastest with the wind on a quarter. Schooners and the like are fastest when on a reach.

Here's a real world example, seen with my own two eyes.

It starts, like all sea stories do, with the immortal phrase "So there we were".

So there we were on the Columbia River, upriver from Portland/Vancouver. The river was running strong (4/5 kts), and the wind was blowing straight out of the west. In other words, the wind was blowing up river (not uncommon on coastal rivers - the Sacramento also does this a lot). Brig Lady Washington and Schooner Lynx were tied up before a sail. When we went out, we decided to leave the engine off the whole time, even getting off the dock. The Lady (bluff bowed and square rigged) slipped out into the current, and was just managing headway against the river (so slowly that after an hour, we were just a boatlength forward of the dock). Lynx on the other hand, despite being a brand new state-of-the-art Baltimore Clipper (frequently cited as some of the fastest tall ships ever) made significant sternway. She launched her tops'l, course, and stuns'ls, and still fell behind.

This should make intuitive sense: the more sail that can directly face the wind, the better off you'll be.

As for "best choice", it all depends on your mission. Sorry to keep being so vague.

If your mission is to get a bunch of ships together and pound the crap out of another bunch of ships, buy yourself a whole line filled with first raters.

If your goal isn't to pound the crap out of anything (probably because you're poor and sinking ships is a costly endeavour - this is where pirates fit in), get yourself something small that can be crewed with relatively few men. Again, it depends on the waters to be sailed. For long passages, either for running contraband/cargo, I'd probably take a smallish brig - but I've got a square fetish. I've never met a brigantine that I love, so scratch that. For short runs or effective beating to windward, I'd have to go with a schooner or tops'l ketch. Brigs can't go to weather for beans - again, it's all that square canvas.

Another part of your question that you didn't ask was about hull type. The by-now-familiar answer applies: depends on the mission. Bluff bows take a lot of power to push through the water, but there's no lateral resistance to turning. Sharp bows (like on the Baltimore Clippers) move forward easily, but have lots of resistance to turning. You can see this putting your hand out of the window in a car. It's a lot easier to control the movement of your hand if you're making a fist instead of having it flat.

Hope this helps. Feel free to ask for clarification on any of this.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227515)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227515_menu)

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([IP: 63.70.89.4](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=63.70.89.4)) · · 

[Posted October 27, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227597) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227597)

Well thankee for th info!

Especially on manuverability.

I suppose considering that many Pirates stripped down ships, removing extra wood on deck and partitions below to allow for lighter weight. I was wondering what combination of modified ship and sail might have worked well for speed in coming upon and leaving chases.

Were there any infamously fast ships?

I know a heavier ship with a deeper hull would probably be be needed for deeper Ocean or areas such as around the horn and a shallow draft for closer Caribbean or coastal operations.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227597)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227597_menu)

[**Desert Pyrate**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1016-desert-pyrate/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 377 posts

([IP: 172.24.99.231](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=172.24.99.231)) · · 

[Posted October 29, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227747) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227747)

Ships don't really have anything there to strip!

The hold was already clear of partitions, and there's nothing superfluous in the rig or on deck. Weight is an issue: Drake dumped his guns to take more loot.

The time of "infamously fast" was really the early to mid 19th century with the Baltimore Clippers and the tea ships: of course there were still pirates, but it's well out of the GAoP.

Like I said before: a combination of ship and sail does not necessarily produce speed. Lots of weather and seamanship factors also come into play. The more canvas, the faster (generally), although this raises the ship's CG and changes the righting curve so that she's more willing to fall over and not self-right in a squall or microburst condition.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227747)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227747_menu)

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[Posted October 29, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227758) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227758)

Hmm,

I had read in at least 2 places that extra decoration and raised protions were stripped deckside ( I think it might have even been on the History Channels "Pirate Tech" show) in order to lessen weight and drag. Also that interior partitions not necessary for the framework of the ship were removed to create a larger hold and lessen weight as well. Do you have any references for where I could read more? Theres a plethora of it online, but I'd like a good solid reference. 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227758)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227758_menu)

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* Member
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[Posted October 30, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227837) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227837)

I haven't read that anywhere... but that doesn't mean anything! What were your sources (and I'm not really interested in the History Channel as a source having first-hand seen their dedication to accuracy)?

I've never seen ships with a whole lot of extra ornamentation. The most ornamented ship I've ever seen is the Kalmar Nyckel, and the decoration isn't additional stuff added to the ship so much as carvings into the wood that's already there. As for removing raised portions, deckhouses weren't really popular at the time, and forecastles/sterncastles aren't easily removable.

Below decks: on warships, most partitions were temporary and movable anyway. On merchant ships, there just weren't partitions: it was all open below decks. More room for cargo that way. There was probably one little partition into an aft cabin - not worth removing. \*If\* there was a foc's'le, there might have been another little partition: also not worth removing.

The thing to remember is that the ships being taken were themselves very practical. There's not room for a lot of superfluous crap.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227837)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227837_menu)

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[Posted October 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=227993) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=227993)

Sounds like she's talking about "razees."

Need a def... this works:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Razee>

Given time I could probably come up with an example.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=227993)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_227993_menu)

[**MorganTyre**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2806-morgantyre/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 291 posts
* Location:South Texas
* Interests:Sailing, rigging, snorkeling, spearfishing, diving

([IP: 192.168.62.15](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=192.168.62.15)) · · 

[Posted October 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=228000) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=228000)

I've also read some about some examples of stripping taken prized of the castles and ornamentation - both to lighten and quicken the ship and to conceal it's original identity. Will look to me references to come up with an example.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=228000)
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[Posted October 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=228011) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=228011)

Ahh THANKEE ALL!

~~ I look foreward to more 'o' this information. 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=editComment&comment=228011)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/#elControls_228011_menu)

[**Coastie04**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/27-coastie04/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,008 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Juneau, AK
* Interests:Nautical history, sailing (especially tall ships and my own 'Sanctioned Mistress'), shooting (of all eras and calibers), and homebrewing.

([IP: 66.58.246.44](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=66.58.246.44)) · · 

[Posted November 9, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=230042) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=230042)

I'll echo Desert Pyrat's view on this. Although there are cases of ornamented ships, it's just not all that economical for a business. And on a ship of, say 200 tons (referring to the cargo capacity of what I would consider an average coastal merchant, or 'pirate size vessel'), saving a few pounds here and there doesn't make a huge difference. In fact, sometimes the extra weight, properly stowed, could increase their speed. The obvious example is putting extra weight low in the hull. This is done on all modern mono-hull sailboats of any considerable size in the form of a keel: weight below the hull. This would keep the vessel more upright in heavier winds, allowing more sail area to be used in a given wind condition. The upright hull also decreases slipage to leeward.

Trim is another important factor in speed. Trim is a factor of the fore-and-aft position of the CG. In other words, is the bow deeper or shallower than the stern? Generally it was accepted that vessels on an "even keel", or the same draft fore and aft, was the proper way to load a vessel. Some vessels are designed differently, but that's a good general rule. You don't want to drive the ship into the water, and you don't want to drag your stern.

All hulls have a draft that they operate best at. Hull speed is a factor of waterline length, draft, and beam (assuming that materials are not a factor for this). For many boats, if you lighten them too much, the ratio of length-draft-beam is not favorable.

Lastly, for those that might think maneuverability is improved with a lighter weight, you'd be right half the time. A lighter weight allows quicker acceleration, but waves and maneuvering would also slow you down more. A heavier boat will be able to keep the momentum going through say a tack. The top speed of both might be the same, just the acceleration different. A good example of this is the Hawaiian Chieftain and Lady Washington. I wish I could find the finely written version I've seen before that compares these two common adversaries, alas I cannot and must summarize for you. The Chieftain is quicker to maneuver, but slows down a lot, especially in heavier seas. The Lady has the momentum to bring her around and keep going with less speed loss. Also, the Lady can sail backwards easier due to the two square rigged masts (Lady Washington is a brig, Hawaiian Chieftain is a square rigged ketch). Yes, sailing backwards, sideways, etc. can be an advantage for battle maneuvering, I've done it. The Chieftain sails faster downwind, but looses a lot of leeway when close hauled. The Lady's deeper draft keeps her going strait, but slows her top speed a bit. So, the operating characteristics of a ship depends is something best left up to the preference of the captain. If he needs a shallow draft to skip over shoals or hide in shallow bays, he needs to know how that will affect his ship. If he needs top speed, he needs to know his maneuvering limitations, etc.

I'm with Desert Pirate in prefering a brig. Partly, that's because the Lady Washington was the most fun to sail and I did things in that boat that I haven't heard other sailing vessels even attempting. I value maneuverability and versatility over speed. Speed is only good if you're being chased by something big or trying to catch something running away. And, if the situation demands it, the Lady would fly downwind with Royals, Stuns'ls, and a Ringtail. Better, however, to act as a vessel in distress and have the prey come to you, or have courses that "coincidentally" meet at some point in the dark of the night.

Coastie 

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[**Red Cat Jenny**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3475-red-cat-jenny/)

* Truly one of a Kind
* 
* 
* Member
* 7,468 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:New York but pining for the open sea
* Interests:Pirates, history, anthing nautical, salt water fish tanks, the Caribbean and South Pacific, a good barbecue and a cold Sam Adams, travel, airplanes, rockabilly, Grand Mariner on the rocks, fabulous sunsets accompanied by a warm breeze and good friends.
Diverse enough?
I's love to learn to sail and also surf. I grew up around the waters of LI. Cept for 2 yrs land lubbin in AZ. The pirate thing? When I was 6, I stole my brother's halloween tricorn pirate hat and proceeded to wear it for three months till it ripped and the string fell off. Needless to say the rest is history!

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[Posted November 10, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=findComment&comment=230078) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/8879-fastest-ship/&do=reportComment&comment=230078)

Thanks for a fabulous wealth of information! I have read about The Lady Washington. Lucky you for sailing her! You answered a lot of questions, I hadn't thought as much about the variable drag of the ocean which doesn't really apply when you think of other vehicles like cars or planes. At sea you have wind, water depth, current and waves which could vastly and variably affect performance.

This thread started out when I read about ships being pared down for piracy, and was thinking "getaway"

**Edited November 10, 2006 by Red Cat Jenny**