

Understanding the EOS-1DX

Especially written for **Canon EOS** users



A fast track guide to understanding how to use the EOS-1DX's key controls and functions

Contents include:

- Exposure modes
- Camera layout
- Menu options in-depth
- Key camera overrides
- Live View

Written by Nina Bailey

About this book

The EOS-1DX is Canon's flagship model, aimed at the professional market who will appreciate the fast shooting speed of 12 frames per second and excellent autofocus performance. The camera has a sensor that affords great quality performance at high ISO settings giving a great ability to shoot in very low light thanks to its 18 Mp sensor which has much larger pixels than other models within the range.

The camera is built to withstand extreme usage and has better robustness and water resistance than any other models within the range. It's also designed for very good handling when used with the larger L series lenses, of course that does all go towards making this a much larger and heavier body than any of the other models within the range.

This book is ideal for those who are upgrading from an earlier or more basic EOS model and will give a good grounding in the operation of the camera. Although I normally do either a Getting started or beginners guide volume that precedes this level of book that looks at the more basic easier to use options on the camera, there is not one for this camera. There is a simple reason for this, the EOS-1DX is targeted at professional users who should fully understand all aspects of photography and the settings and how they are used, and so this model does not have any simple options to make its operation easier. The reality is with this model, you need to understand photography in depth and be prepared to become familiar with the camera and how it operates to be able to use it competently. So this is definitely not a model that is suitable for a novice to use.

I have also written the Mastering the EOS-1DX which is designed to follow on from this and looks at the focusing system in depth, the advanced image processing options and how to customise the EOS-1DX to make it operate at its very best for you and your photography. For those that are upgrading from models such as the EOS 7D Mark II, 5D Mark III or a 5DS/DSR, this can be used as a standalone book to get up to speed quickly with the camera's key new features and its unique layout.

Written, designed and images by

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Mastering the EOS-1DX

Especially written for Canon EOS-1DX users

A simple, modern approach to mastering the advanced features on your Canon EOS-1DX camera which allows you to take more control, customise your camera and take even better images



Written by Nina Bailey



Nina started her career in the photographic industry and joined Canon UK where she had nine years looking after training, sales and marketing both in the UK and within Europe. This gave Nina an unrivalled knowledge of not only the Canon EOS system, but also how to develop and enhance the skills of photographers of all ability levels.

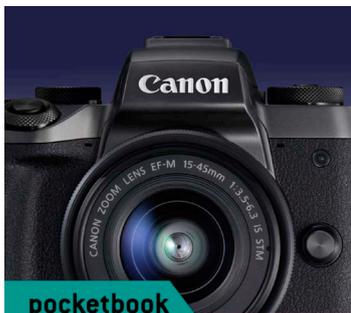
Nina started her own business in 1999, concentrating on training for amateur photographers. As well as training photographers for the EOS Training Academy, Nina is a prolific professional photographer producing images not only for the EOS Training Academy but for a variety of outside organisations. In 2014 Nina started producing her own range of ebooks to bring photography training to an ever wider audience.

Nina is also technical editor for EOS Magazine and writes and illustrates numerous articles for the magazine.

Nina started taking images when she was very young and is still a very keen photographer both professionally and personally. Nina loves travel, landscape and wildlife photography and now shoots exclusively to illustrate her growing range of books and magazine articles.

In 2017 Nina launched a new series of pocketbooks, designed as small compact books to take with you to help you remember and set all the key options on your specific EOS camera, There are already 20 in the range including one specifically on the EOS-1DX, with some specific technique based ones that will be appearing over the next few months. These are available from the EOS magazine shop.

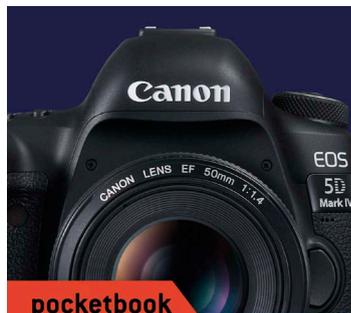
www.eos-magazine-shop.com to view the currently available range.



pocketbook

for the **EOS M5**
by Nina Bailey

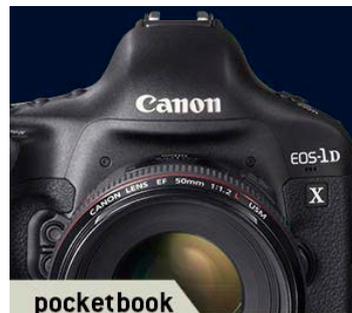
Your essential camera field guide



pocketbook

for the **EOS 5D Mark IV**
by Nina Bailey

Your essential camera field guide



pocketbook

for the **EOS-1D X**
by Nina Bailey

Your essential camera field guide

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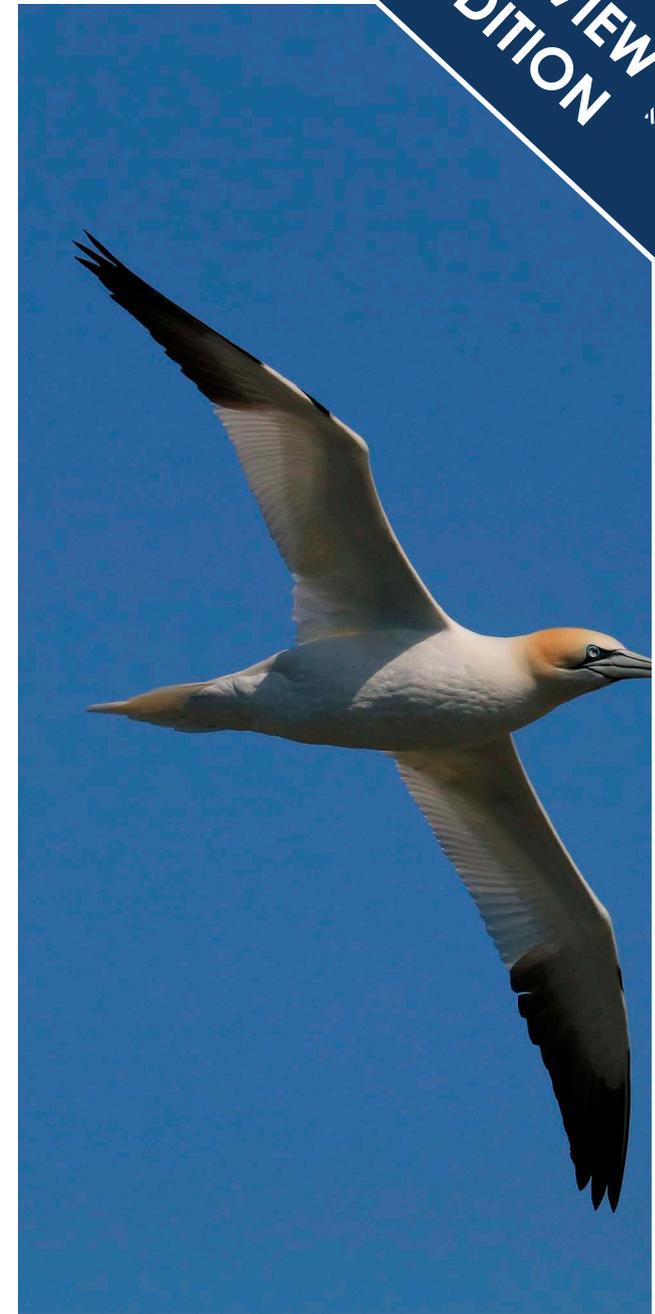
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About The EOS-1DX

About the EOS-1DX

The EOS-1DX is the most advanced model within the Canon EOS range. This model was designed around the needs of professional photographers, and so the layout and operation are much more traditional than we see on the other models in the range. Professional photographers get to know their equipment very well and for that reason can be reluctant to embrace changes even if they do make the camera faster and easier to use.

Therefore this model relies quite heavily on the button layout that has been used on the EOS models for many years and the features will be set for many using the LCD screen on the top of the camera.

However, the camera can also be set up to use the Q button and Q screen controls on the rear of the camera and these are worth setting up if you have used other recent models that come from further down the range as this will make the operation of the 1DX much more familiar for you.

Most of the models in the range are designed to be versatile enough to cope with the needs of the novice as well as the more experienced photographer, and even models such as the 5D mark IV and 7D Mark II have some simple to use options on them. This model deviates from that and only offers creative shooting mode where the full range of camera overrides will always be accessible and will stay altered once you have changed them from their default settings.

Therefore this is a camera that needs a good level of photographic knowledge and a good familiarity to use successfully.



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Basic Camera Layout

Camera navigation - Top

The EOS-1DX does not have a mode dial. Instead the setting of the mode is done using the mode button. The function buttons and top LCD screen are used much more for setting options on this model than on any other EOS model. I will look in more depth at all of these features as we go through the book.

MODE BUTTON Press and hold down and then turn main dial or quick control dial to scroll through modes. Modes can be seen on top LCD or rear Q screen display if set to display all the time.

DRIVE-AF BUTTON Press and hold down and then turn main dial to set the AF mode or quick control dial to set the drive mode. Options are seen on top LCD or rear Q screen display if set to display all the time.

MODE + DRIVE-AF BUTTON if both these are held down then AEB can be set on top LCD or rear Q screen display if set to display all the time.

FLASH COMPENSATION - METERING Holding this button down and turning the main dial on the top of the camera will set the metering whilst the Quick control dial on the rear allows flash compensation to be set.

All these can be set with main dial or Quick control dial either on top LCD or rear Q screen if active.

WB BUTTON This allows direct access to the white balance options.

EXPOSURE COMPENSATION BUTTON This allows direct access to the exposure compensation.

ISO BUTTON This allows direct access to the ISO settings.



SHUTTER BUTTON activates focusing. Also half pressure will activate playback mode and from the menu.

M-FN BUTTON Can be used to change the focusing points once the AF point selection button has been pressed. It also is used to activate flash exposure lock if a flash unit is being used.

MAIN DIAL Turn to adjust shutter speed or aperture within relevant shooting mode. Can also change settings on Q screen.

LIGHT BUTTON Lights up top and rear LCD screens to allowing viewing in dark conditions.

AF POINT SELECTION BUTTON Press to change the focusing points or areas through the viewfinder.

AE LOCK BUTTON Press to lock the exposure. In evaluative metering with One shot AF the exposure locks automatically on half pressure of shutter button. This can separate out their operation.

AF-ON BUTTON When pressed this activates the focusing and metering (like the shutter button). The use of this for focusing when shooting in AI Servo AF is often referred to as back button focusing.

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Camera navigation - Rear

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INFO BUTTON Toggles between display options when the camera is active, and press to get more information when within the menu system.
MENU BUTTON Press to access the camera's menu system where many options are set.



QUALITY BUTTON press to change image quality options using LCD screen on rear. Main dial changes card selection and Quick control dial changes quality options.

PLAYBACK BUTTON Will show the last taken image; use the Quick Control Dial to scroll.

MAGNIFY BUTTON Use to zoom in on just part of the image – to change the magnification turn the Main Dial.

ERASE BUTTON Deletes image in playback.

PROTECT BUTTON Applies a protect marker when pressed to an image. If held in for 2 seconds starts voice recording memo option.



LIVE VIEW BUTTON Displays the camera's viewfinder on the LCD screen. Also activates movie screen in playback mode. Press to shoot movies.

MULTI CONTROLLER Works as a joystick – moveable in eight directions. Used for navigation in menus and Q screen.

Q BUTTON Pressing this will activate the Q screen where the main settings are made.

SET BUTTON This is used within the menu system to apply settings. Within the Q screen it allows you to see a more detailed screen.

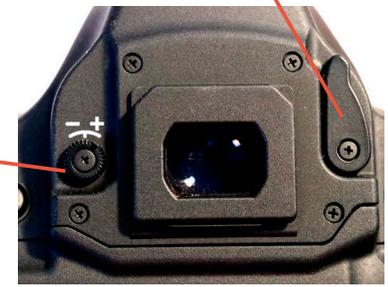
QUICK CONTROL DIAL Use within the menu system and Q screen for navigation.

VERTICAL HOLDING CONTROLS Duplicate the controls at the top right of the camera for use when shooting vertically.

ON/OFF SWITCH Can be left on during a shoot as the camera goes onto standby after one minute (wake up with the shutter button). Lock position locks the quick control dial to prevent accidental changing of options.

DIOPTRIC ADJUSTMENT Turn to adjust viewfinder to your eyesight (minor correction). Eyecup needs removing to access this.

EYEPIECE BLIND flick switch to right to close eyepiece blind if shooting on a tripod to prevent exposure errors through extraneous light entering through viewfinder.



Active status on camera

EOS cameras are controlled by a part pressure on the shutter button. Pressing the shutter button halfway turns the systems on, activates the focusing and metering and makes the camera “active”. If you let go of the shutter button the camera remains in the active state for metering and displays for normally 6 seconds though this can be increased within the custom function settings. After this 6 seconds the camera reverts to its non active status but will continue to show the basic information on the top of the camera as a default for 1 minute, though again the auto power off time can be increased.

The images to the right show the camera displaying its settings but not active. The images far right show the camera in its active state with the exposure information showing which is the main indication that the camera is active. The viewfinder is more obvious as if not active it does not show any display.

Why is this important? For some functions to work the camera needs to be in its active state for the function to work, if it does not try pressing the shutter button halfway.

The use of AF-ON button (back button focusing) to activate the camera will work the same as the shutter button if the camera is set up to its default operation. However, some of the customisations that can be applied to the AF-ON and Shutter buttons can make using the option a lot more confusing for all but the most experienced photographers.

This book assumes that you will be using the shutter button as the main way of activating the focusing and metering on the camera. I will look at what back



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button focusing is and when it is mostly used and the options offered in the *Mastering your EOS-1DX* book as I consider it to be an advanced feature that is only appropriate for those who fully understand its operation and why it is used. In 2017 it became a

“fashionable” feature and caused as many problems as it solved through lack of understanding by the photographers that were using it. It’s a typical feature that works best for specific applications.

Top LCD screen explained

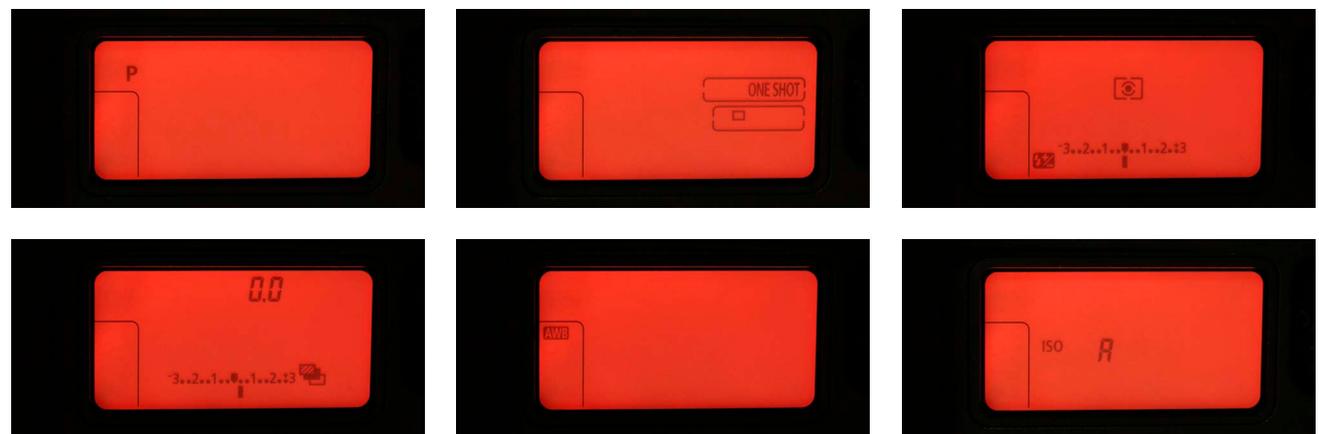
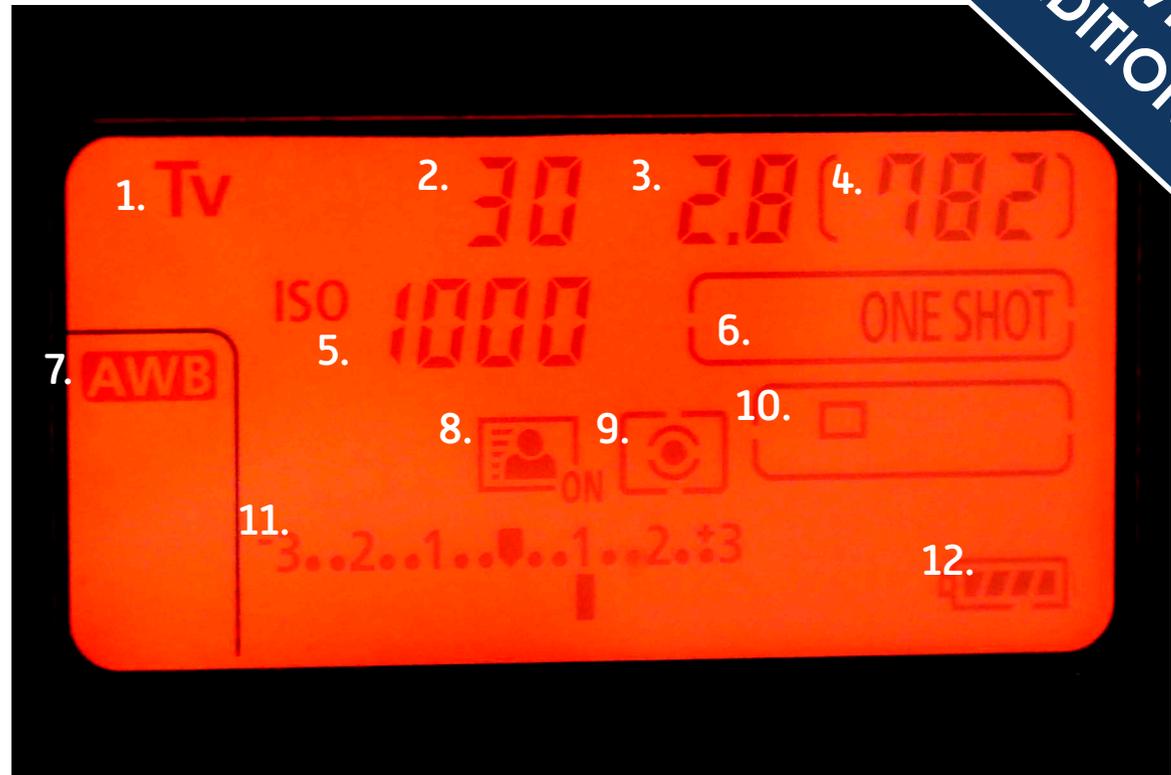
As I have mentioned the top screen on this model tends to be used a lot more than any of the other models within the range due to the placement of the buttons on the camera. That said all of this information is available to set on the Q screen on the rear of the camera which I will look at shortly.

The image to the right was taken with the panel illuminated as it shows up the settings better than on its normal grey background, hence the orange colour. The button to light the panel up is found in front of the top left hand corner of this panel.

The settings are as follows:

1. Exposure mode
2. Shutter speed
3. Aperture
4. Shots remaining on card
5. ISO setting
6. Focusing mode
7. White balance setting
8. Auto lighting optimizer status
9. Metering setting
10. Drive mode setting
11. Exposure compensation and AEB settings
12. Battery status.

This is how the display looks when the shutter button has been part depressed and the camera is in its active state. If you press any of the setting buttons on the top of the camera the display will change and only display the option(s) about to be set. The illustrations at the bottom show the various setting screens.



Top row: Left to right - Mode setting, AF mode and Drive options, Metering and flash compensation
Bottom row: Left to right - Auto exposure bracketing, but no bracketing set, White balance setting and ISO setting.

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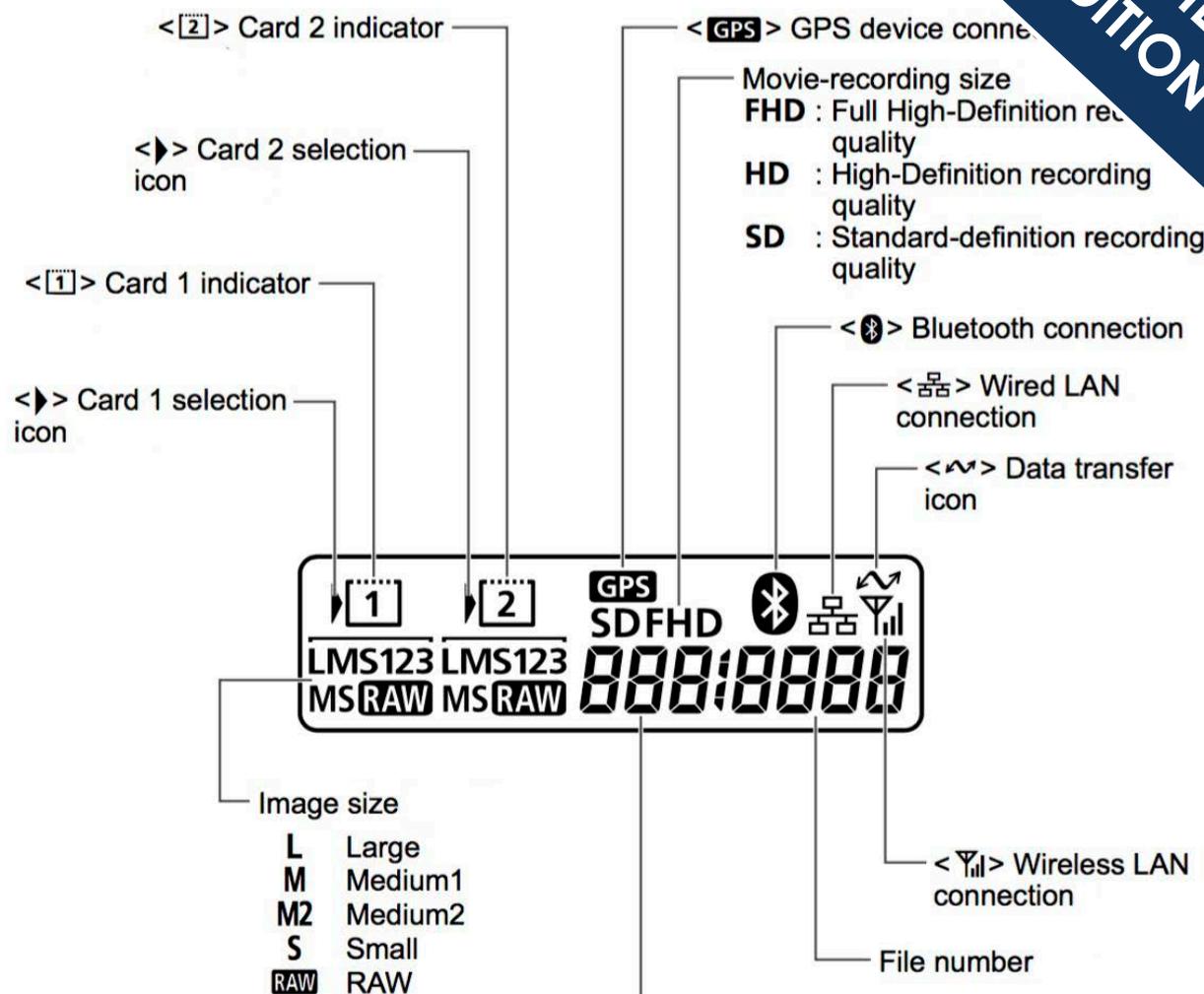
Rear LCD screen explained

There is also a LCD screen on the rear of the camera that displays a number of other options. The main function of this screen is to display the Image Quality settings on the camera, which are all shown on the left side of the display. There are options for all the JPEG and RAW sizes and these can be set up individually for the two compact flash cards that the camera takes. There are also additional quality options within the Shoot 1 menu which I will look at later in the book.

To set the size and type of the file you simply press the card/image size selection button to the left of the panel. It is possible to transfer the display for the file size and type to display on the large rear LCD monitor where the Q screen displays instead of the smaller screen if you prefer. Doing this makes the setting much more similar to all other recent EOS models. This is found within the C.Fn 4 menu where it is the last item in the menu. This will display on the larger rear monitor regardless of where it is set to display when the camera is on or not.

The rear display can also show the GPS status if a device is attached, turned on and receiving, as well as the wired LAN status if the camera is connected to the internet via a access point or wired LAN connection. These are all shown at the top right of the screen.

At the bottom right is the folder number that is currently in use, and the file number, these options are set up within the Set Up 1 menu that I will look at in the menu chapter. The bottom left image shows how the screen looks with a single card fitted whilst the bottom right image shows the image size and type options being set.



INFO button display

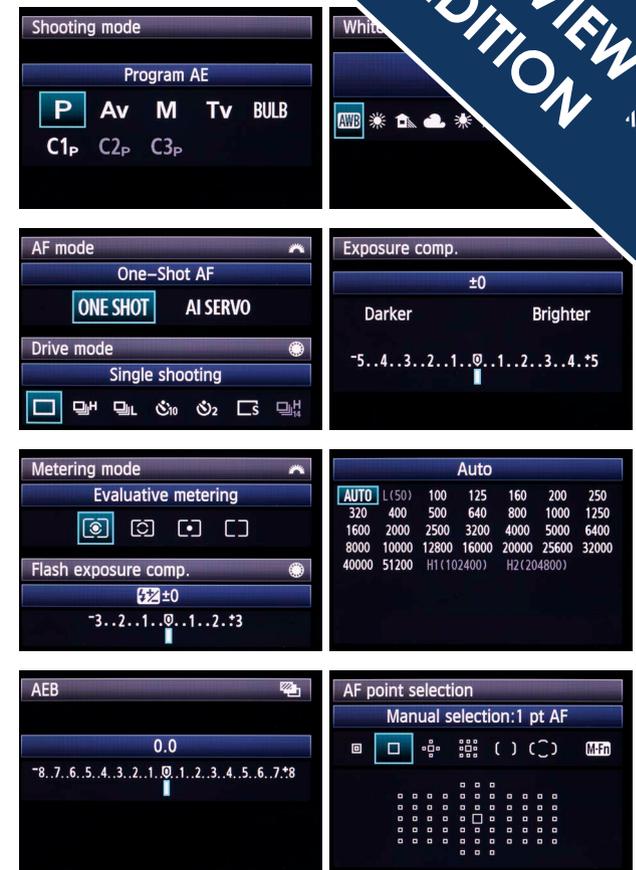
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As the camera comes out of the box the rear LCD panel on the camera has no information on it. If you have been used to one of the more basic EOS models you may have been used to seeing a summary of settings displayed when the Q button is pressed, but of course the Q display disappears after only a few seconds. When the camera is switched on it is possible to bring up a variety of displays by simply pressing the INFO button on the rear of the camera.

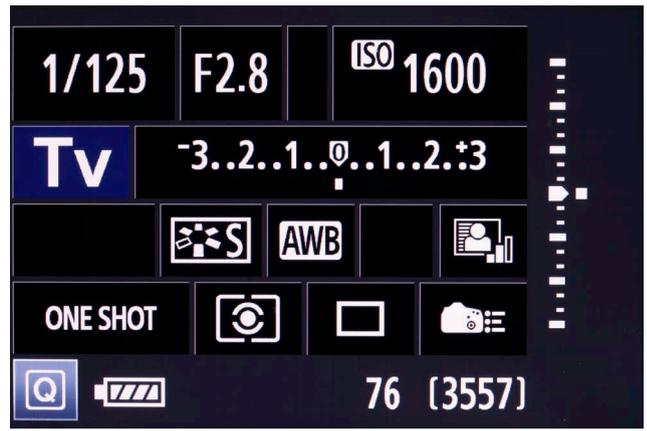
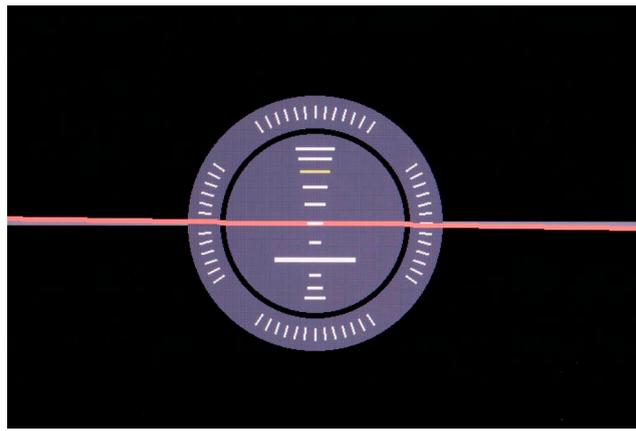
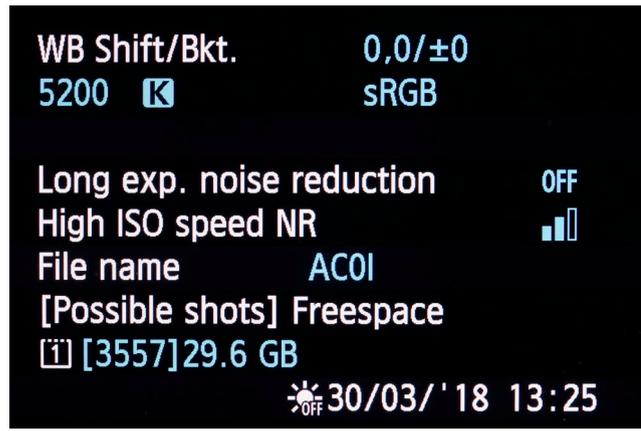
This allows a general information screen (bottom left), an electronic level (bottom centre) and the INFO screen (bottom right). When the INFO screen is being displayed pressing any of the buttons on the top of the camera or the focusing point selection button on the rear will bring up the displays as shown to the far right.

One advantage of this is that the rear screen is far easier to read for those with less than perfect eyesight. It does consume a small amount of extra power but it makes a negligible difference with the higher capacity battery used on this model.

Having this screen active all the time makes sense,



especially as you are always shooting in the creative modes where you need to understand and check the current settings that are set up on the camera.



Understanding the Q screen display

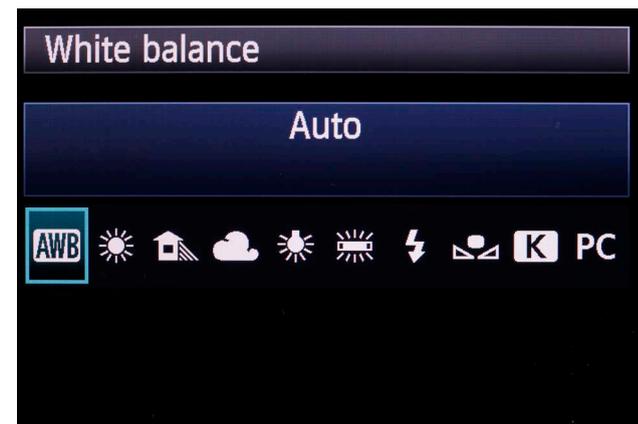
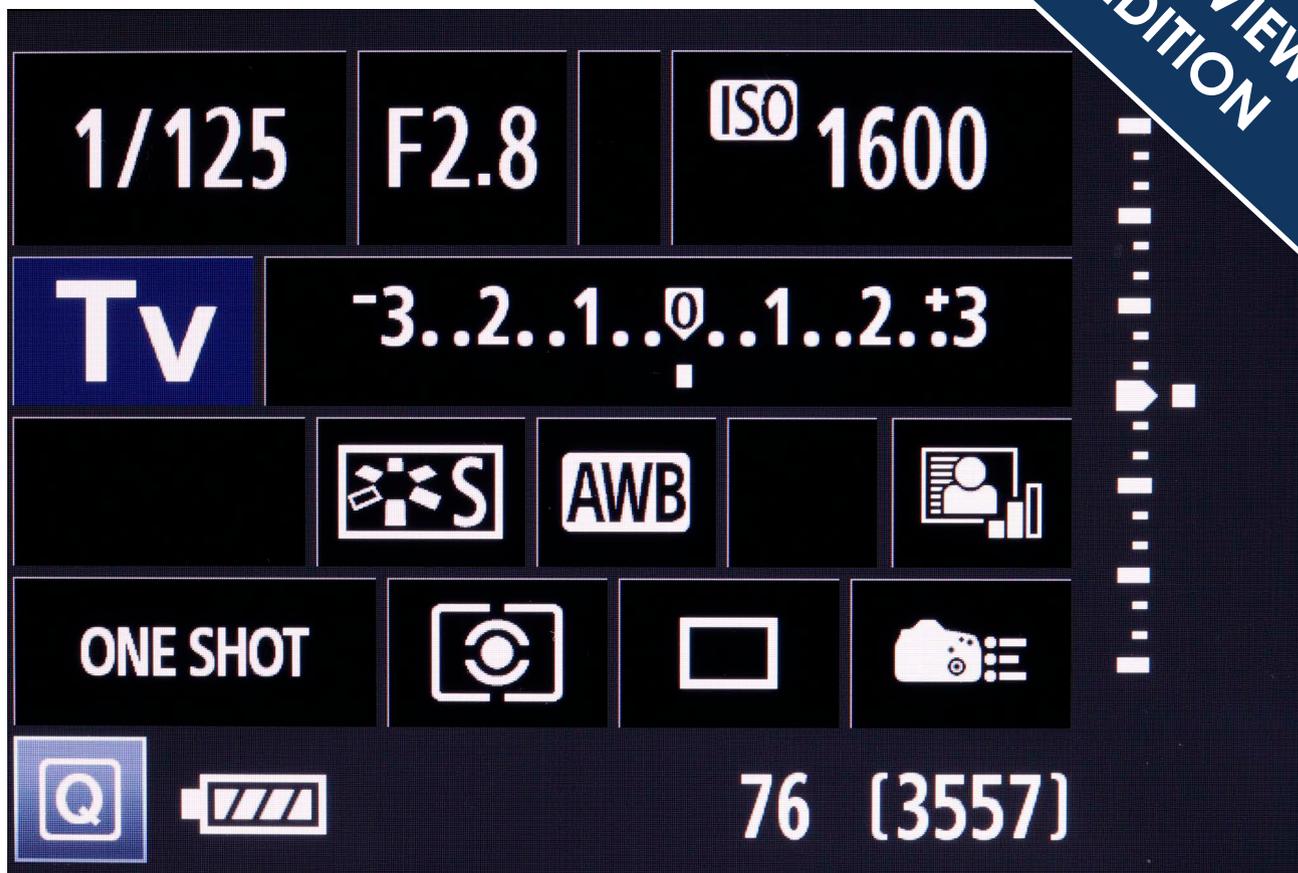
The Q screen on the rear of the camera is accessed in one of two ways. It can be turned on using the INFO button on the rear of the camera and allowed to stay on all the time the camera is awake as I have just looked at and then the Q button pressed to allow items to be highlighted if you want to set something. Alternatively if you prefer to have nothing showing on the rear screen it can be brought up by simply pressing the Q button. This way it is immediately available to set items and will have one of the boxes highlighted in blue. The box is moved around with the multi controller.

When the item is highlighted it can be set by simply turning the main dial or in most instances the quick control dial will change the options as well. If the set button is pressed it will take you into a more detailed menu with all the options available displayed. You then either navigate to the one you want with the main dial or quick control dial.

Today this is the main way of setting all the models within the EOS range, however this model still retains the older button set options for professionals who are very used to that way of working. For me the Q screen works better as it provides a quick way of checking settings and is much easier to see than the top LCD panel.

The top image shows the screen as up all the time and the shutter button having been part depressed to make the camera active, the bottom images shows the Q button pressed and going into a specific setting.

It is important that you check the camera settings



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Understanding the Q screen display

when you pick up camera the first time as on this model as there are no automatic resets. This model only has limited touch controls in Live View and so the Q at the bottom left is there simply to remind you that pressing the Q button activates the setting options. The normal settings for the items highlighted are shown below. I will look in more depth at most of these options later in this chapter.

1. Shutter speed

This is where the shutter speed is displayed when the camera is active. If set to TV or M it will be displayed here within the Q functions and can be set from here.

2. Aperture

This is where the aperture is displayed when the camera is active. In AV, M and B modes you can set the aperture from here on the Q settings.

3. ISO setting

The auto ISO works well for those that are very new to photography. The ISO will change automatically depending on the light level that you are shooting in. As soon as the shutter button is touched it will change from showing the word AUTO to the actual ISO that is going to be used.

4. Mode

This is the only option that cannot be changed from the Q screen itself, it is simply there to remind you what the exposure mode dial is set to, however pressing the mode button on the top of the camera will bring up a screen where the mode can be selected on the rear screen.



5. Exposure compensation

The exposure compensation function allows you to make the image lighter or darker. Moving the slider to the right towards plus will make the image lighter and the other way towards minus will make the image darker. This is the most commonly used override on the camera, but it is also the most frequently mis-set item on the screen and it is essential to check it is in the zero position before shooting.

6. Flash compensation

This is where flash compensation is set. This is only applicable if using flash and has no effect on ambient light. It will only work with a compatible Canon flash unit that communicates with the camera. The 580EX II, 600EX RT, 600EX RT II, 430 EX RT, 430 EX II, 470EX AI, 320EX and 270 EX II are the main units that can be used.

7. Picture style

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Understanding the Q screen display

The Picture style is automatically optimising the image to give it the correct contrast, saturation, and sharpening for the type of image that you are shooting. For the newcomer to photography this is best left on its automatic setting indicated by the A, where the camera does a very good job of setting this option for you. I will look in more depth at what the Picture styles do later in the book.

8. White Balance

White balance is the function on the camera that gets the colours right in the pictures when you're shooting. For the newcomer this is best left on its default AWB setting as it is never too far out from what is correct. I will look at using the AWB options in more depth later in the chapter.

9. White Balance shift/bracket

This allows a feature called white balance shift which allows white balance to be biased for individual preferences or a white balance bracket to be set but it's only relevant for specialist photographers that need very precise colour accuracy and so I am not looking at it in depth in this book.

10. Auto Lighting Optimizer

This is part of the camera's image processing system and should be left on the standard setting most of the time. The symbol as shown is the standard setting. If only one of the bars in the graph were shaded it would be on low and if all three bars were shaded it would be on high option. This can be left on its default option when starting out in photography. It is mainly used in connection with fill in flash and if shooting backlit portraits. I will look at its operation



later in the chapter.

11. Focusing mode

The focusing mode allows you to change how the camera's focusing is working. The default normally set is one shot AF. This means that the camera will focus as soon as the shutter button is part depressed, allowing the focusing to be locked and the image reframed if required. This is the best option if photographing static subjects. If you're photographing a subject that is moving then this

needs to be changed to AI Servo AF. I will take a look the basic focusing controls to get you started later in this chapter. I look at the advanced controls and focusing customisations in the Mastering the EOS-1DX book.

12. Metering mode

This allows the camera's metering system to be changed to measure light in different ways. Most of the time I leave this set to its default evaluative metering pattern which works incredibly well and

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Understanding the Q screen display

is the option as illustrated above. The other options are for experienced photographers who understand the implications of setting them. I will look at the metering modes and the basics of how to use them later in this chapter.

13. Drive mode

The name of this feature can at times seem misleading, as it originally referred to how the film was driven through the camera by the motor mechanism. Today it refers to how quickly the camera can take pictures.

The normal default is the symbol that is shown. This allows you to take a single picture and then the camera stops until your finger is fully off the shutter button. There will also be an option for normal and high speed continuous frame advanced along, with some silent options plus self timer settings. I will look in more depth at what the options are later in this chapter.

14. Custom controls

This option allows you to customise up to 11 of the buttons on the camera and change the function or feature that they operate. These generally only work for professionals and specialist photographers who shoot the same subject type all the time and allows them to customise the camera to be more ergonomic or work better for the type of photography that they do. For the enthusiast they often cause more problems than they solve and so I will not be looking at them in this book. However I do look at them in depth in the Mastering the EOS-1DX.

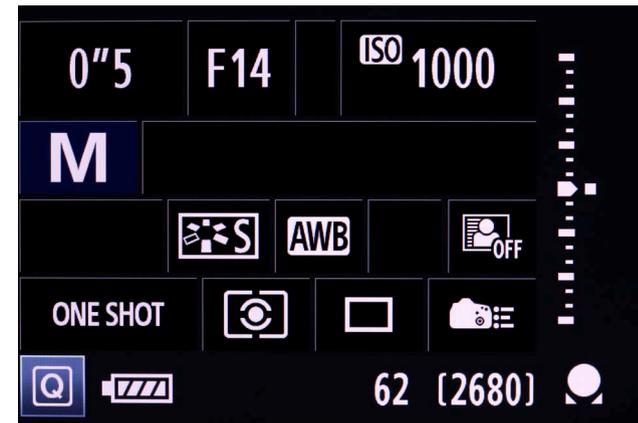
Other displays

If not in the Q settings then along the bottom of



the display appears a battery information symbol, the burst available and number of shots left on the card in use. The circle with two triangles on the far right shows that the camera is focusing and in this instance the focusing is locked.

The scale on the right hand side appears in all modes when the camera is active and indicates the actual exposure set with the white marker. I will explain this scale in more detail later in the chapter.



INFO display on menu screens

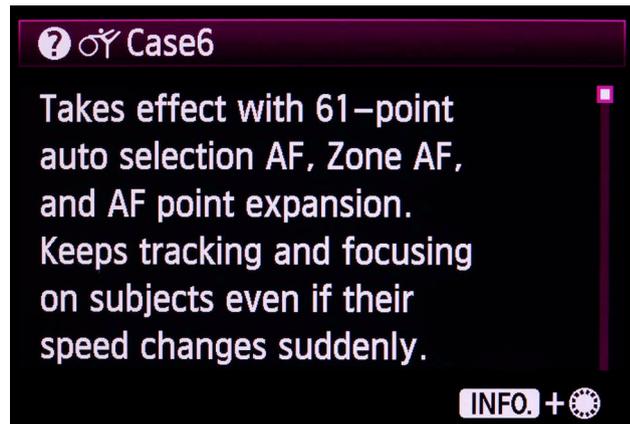
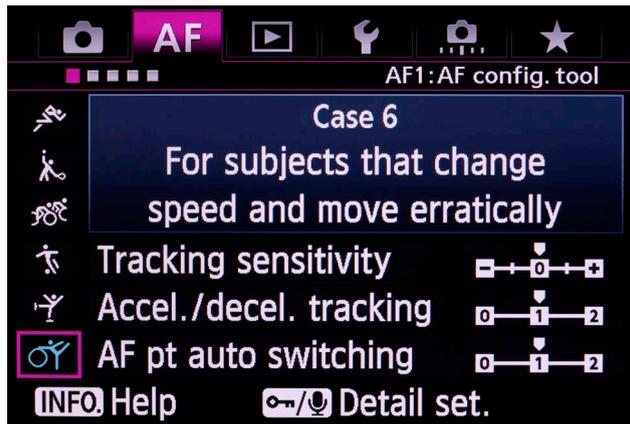
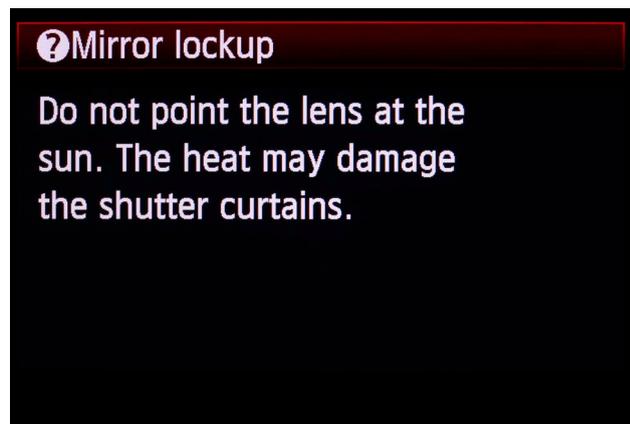
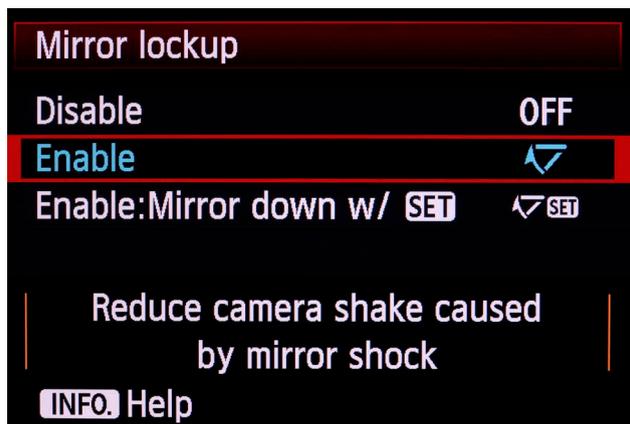
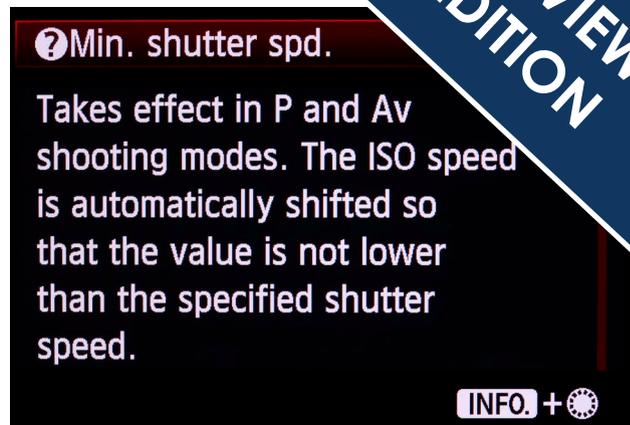
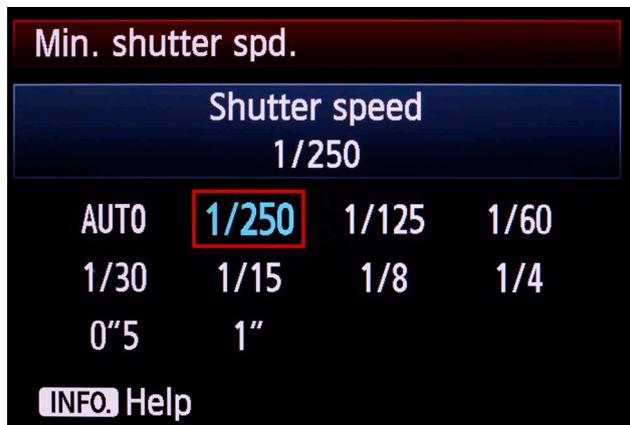
As time goes by the cameras are becoming increasingly complex. On all the basic models, this is been overcome to a degree by something called a feature guide. Although in principle a good idea, it is something that for most experienced photographers, quickly becomes irritating and therefore gets turned off. Therefore in the professional models there is a slightly more sophisticated system that has been introduced.

On many of the features that set within the menus, there is now a display at the bottom that says INFO and then the word help by it. When this is showing, pressing and holding down the info button on the camera will bring up a detailed description of what the function does and how it is used. This has now been on a few models, though I have found that many photographers have missed that it is there.

Some of the descriptions are quite long and therefore once in this setting you often see the word INFO plus an image of the quick control dial. When this is showing, whilst still holding down the info button, turning the quick controlled on the rear of the camera will allow you to scroll down the description.

This works well, as now the information is only shown when you want it to come up and therefore does not get in the way and can be left on at all times.

If items are greyed out try pressing the set button whilst they are selected as this may well bring up the probable cause for not being able to set them.



PREVIEW EDITION

Viewfinder information

The camera gives comprehensive information in the viewfinder about the settings that are pertinent to shooting.

The first items shown are the metering and exposure modes followed by the shutter speed and aperture.

The next item is the number of shots available on the card at the current quality.

If you are using auto ISO, then it will show you here what the camera has selected. If you are working on manual ISO then it will show the ISO you have selected.

The burst available shows how many shots can be taken in rapid succession if the camera is set to shoot continuously all the time the shutter button is held down. On this model it varies according to how the camera is set up. The number shown is the number of shots you have available if shooting at the camera's maximum frames per second rate. This number is much higher if shooting JPEG than if shooting RAW images and shows a maximum of 99 shots even though the number available could be higher than this.

There is also an AF status indicator that shows you if the AF is locked and if AF is active. The scale on the right hand side shows a number of different bits of information.



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