CULTURAL CAPITAL - CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP

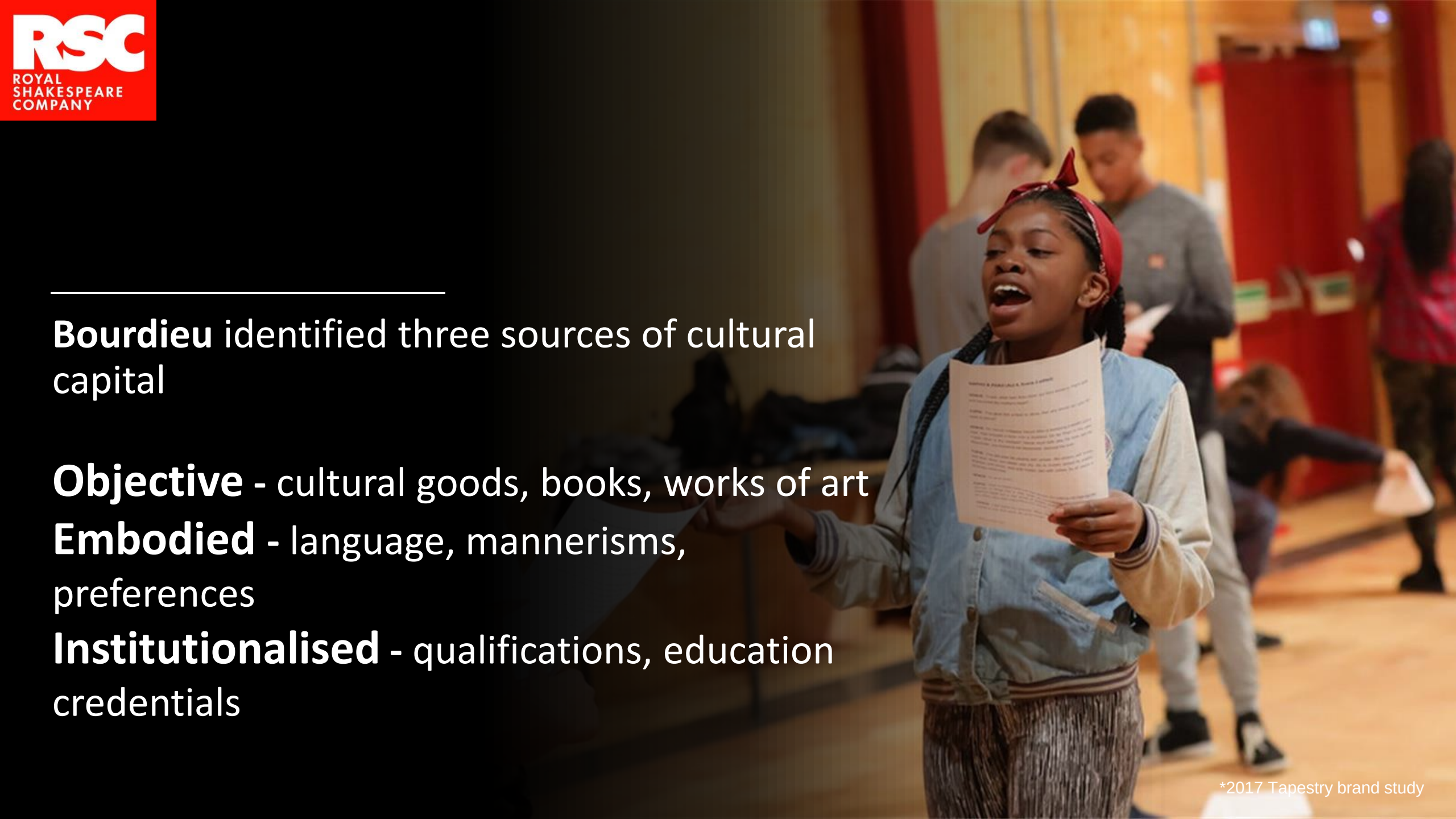
DEFINITIONS

Pierre Bourdieu - French sociologist

Defined cultural capital as ‘…familiarity with the legitimate culture within a society’.

Bourdieu identified three sources of cultural capital

Objective - cultural goods, books, works of art
Embodied - language, mannerisms, preferences
Institutionalised - qualifications, education credentials



*2017 Tapestry brand study

WHAT OFSTED SAYS

‘A curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged …the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.’

BENFITS AND CHALLENGES

Evidence suggests that the cultural capital passed on through families helps children do better in school.

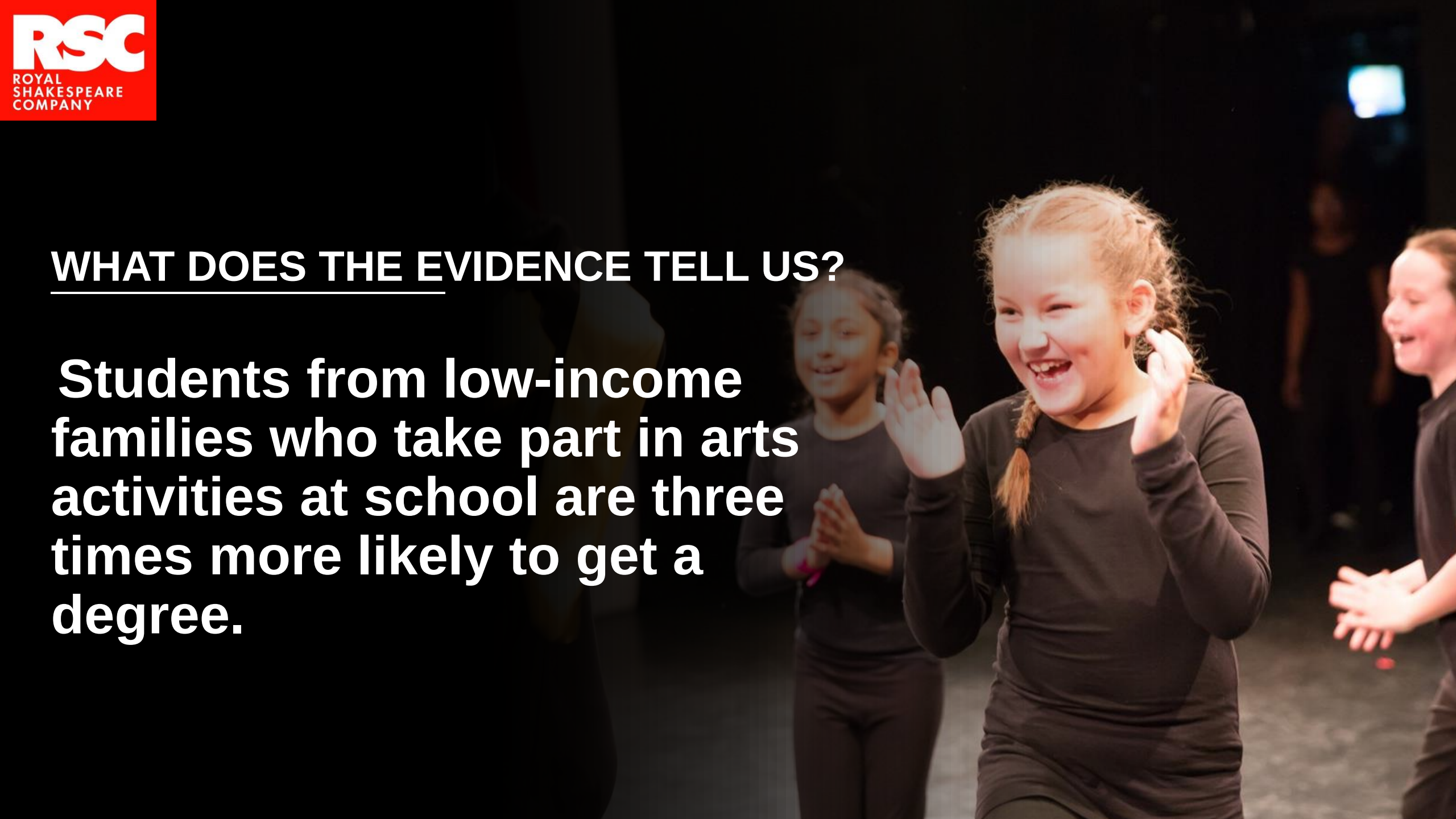
'This is the reproduction circuit associated with schooling and formal education. Those parents equipped with cultural capital are able to drill their children in the cultural forms that predispose them to perform well in the educational system....'

Culture, Class, Distinction, Tony Bennett et al 2009

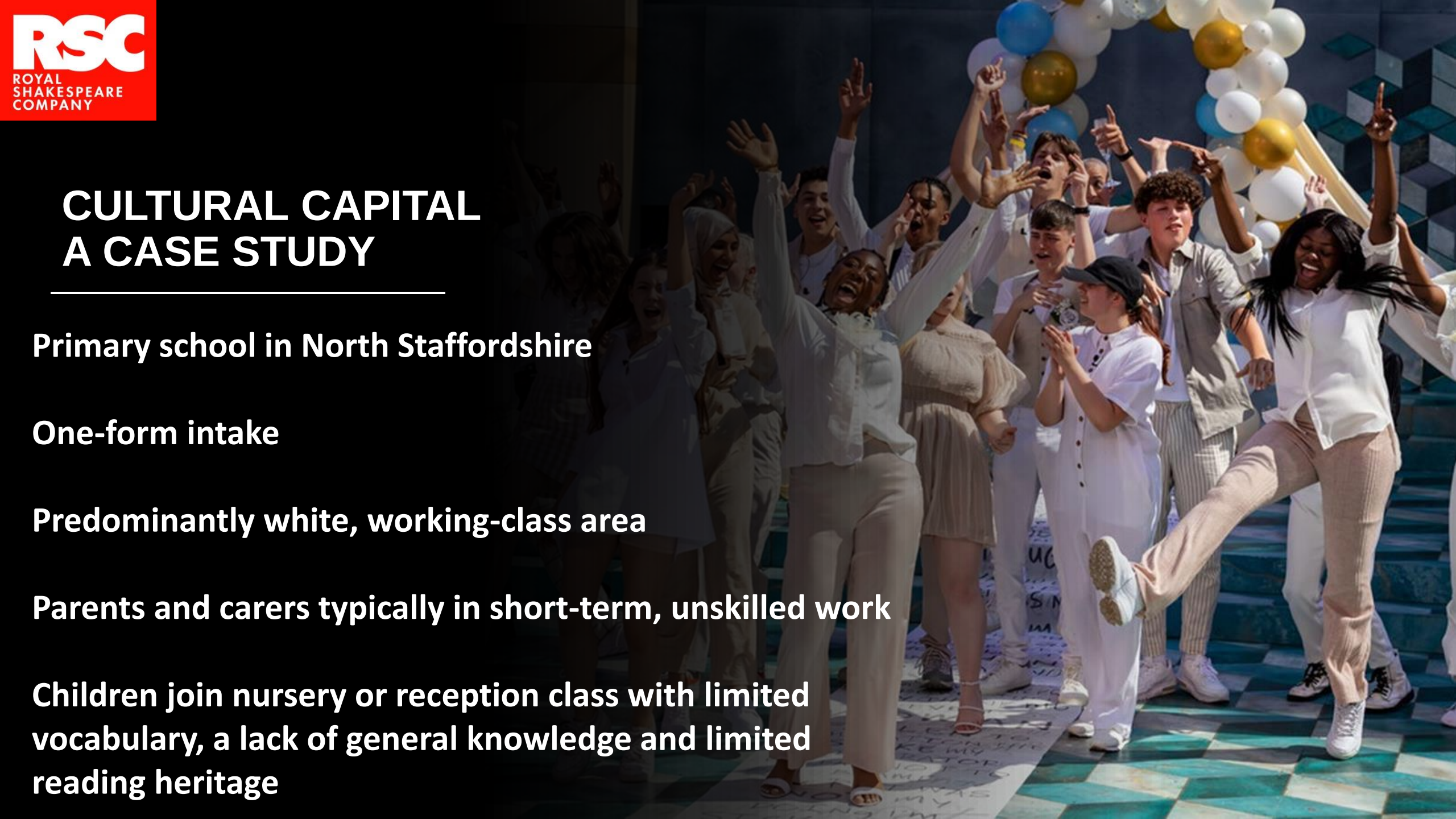
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US?

Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.



CULTURAL CAPITAL
A CASE STUDY



Primary school in North Staffordshire

One-form intake

Predominantly white, working-class area

Parents and carers typically in short-term, unskilled work

Children join nursery or reception class with limited vocabulary, a lack of general knowledge and limited reading heritage

THE POWER OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

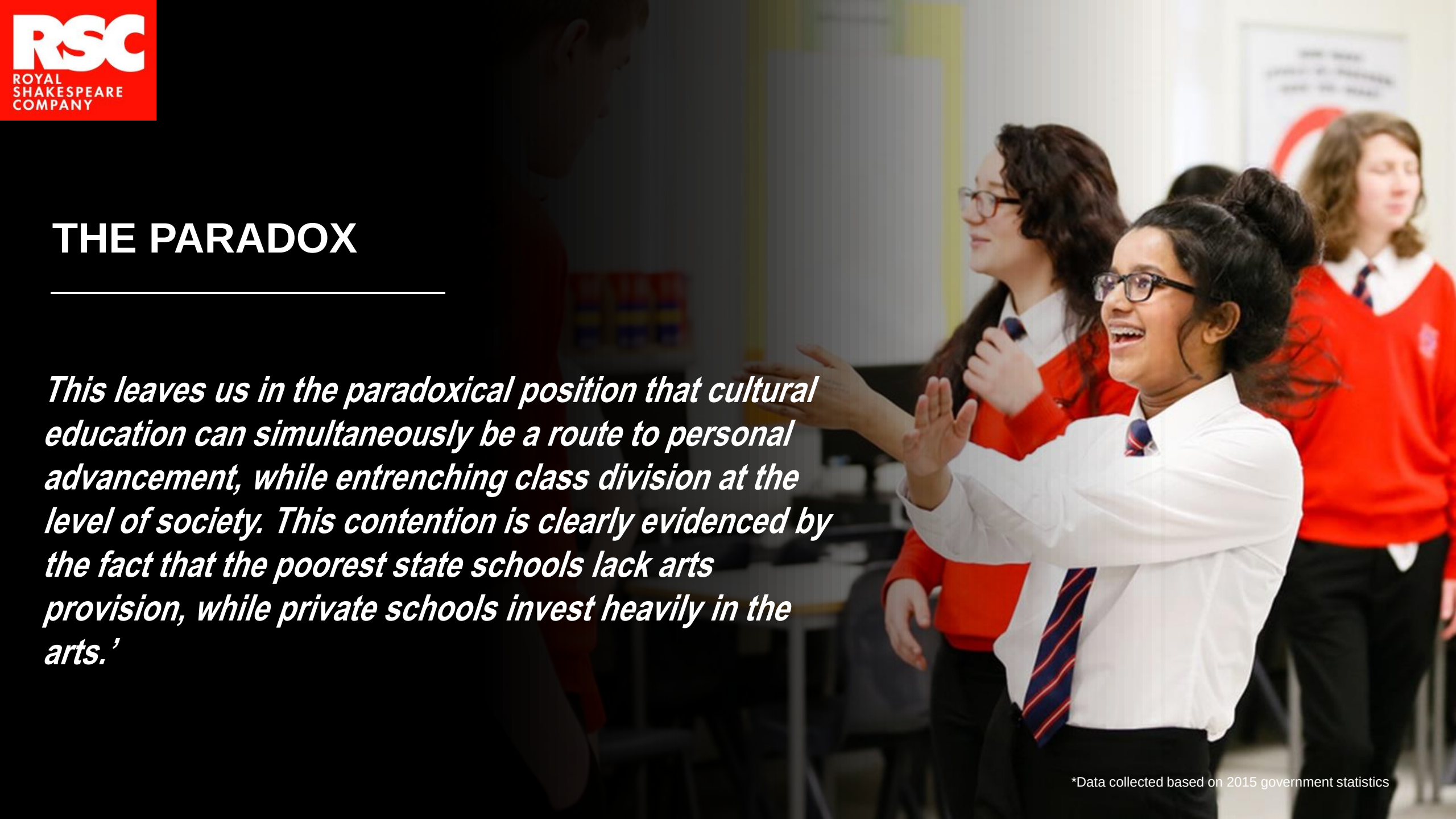
MAKING CONNECTIONS ACROSS SUBJECT AREAS AND DISCIPLINES

GOOD LEARNING HABITS

SELF WORTH, WELLBEING, ACADEMIC SELF CONCEPT

THE PARADOX

This leaves us in the paradoxical position that cultural education can simultaneously be a route to personal advancement, while entrenching class division at the level of society. This contention is clearly evidenced by the fact that the poorest state schools lack arts provision, while private schools invest heavily in the arts.'



*Data collected based on 2015 government statistics

CULTURAL CAPITAL

Definitions of cultural capital need to celebrate and embrace the different backgrounds, heritage, language and traditions of all the children living in this country.

What next?

Arts and Cultural Education in Outstanding Schools – Arts Council

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/arts-and-cultural-education-outstanding-schools

Cultural Learning Alliance – champions a right to arts and culture for every child

https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/

Cultural Education Partnerships / Bridge Organisations / regional theatres, museums, galleries

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