

INTEGRATION OF PROPHETIC STORIES INTO STORYTELLING TO STRENGTHEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRAK

Literasi sebagai kompetensi fundamental bagi peserta didik sekolah dasar kini menghadapi tantangan serius di tengah era digital, di mana minat baca semakin terkikis oleh dominasi konten visual dan hiburan yang bersifat instan. Situasi ini mendorong perlunya terobosan dalam desain pembelajaran—yang tidak hanya mampu menarik perhatian, tetapi juga menginternalisasi nilai-nilai karakter. Salah satu pendekatan yang dinilai potensial adalah penggabungan narasi kisah para nabi ke dalam metode *storytelling*, yang secara simultan mengintegrasikan dimensi kognitif, afektif, dan spiritual dalam proses belajar. Penelitian ini dirancang untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana integrasi kisah nabi dalam *storytelling* dapat menjadi strategi penguatan literasi siswa sekolah dasar di tengah dinamika digital, sekaligus mengkaji peran teknologi dalam mendukung efektivitas pendekatan tersebut. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kepustakaan (*library research*), data dikumpulkan melalui penelusuran sistematis terhadap artikel jurnal, buku, dan referensi ilmiah terkait. Proses analisis data dilakukan dengan teknik analisis isi, meliputi tahapan reduksi data, pengelompokan tema, interpretasi, dan sintesis kesimpulan. Temuan kajian mengindikasikan bahwa *storytelling* yang mengangkat kisah nabi mampu meningkatkan kompetensi literasi siswa, mencakup keterampilan membaca, menyimak, serta pemahaman makna teks. Di sisi lain, metode ini juga efektif dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai karakter mulia, seperti integritas, ketabahan, dan rasa tanggung jawab. Dukungan teknologi digital melalui animasi, platform interaktif, dan media multimedia turut meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi belajar peserta didik. Dengan demikian, integrasi narasi kenabian dalam *storytelling* berbasis digital merupakan strategi yang kontekstual dan relevan untuk memperkuat literasi sekaligus membentuk karakter siswa. Pendekatan ini dapat dijadikan alternatif inovatif dalam merespons kompleksitas tantangan pembelajaran di era digital.

Kata kunci : *Storytelling, Kisah Nabi, Literasi Siswa, Sekolah Dasar, Era Digital* .

ABSTRACT

Literacy is a crucial core competency for elementary school students, but in the digital era, reading interest tends to decline due to the dominance of visual media and instant entertainment. This situation demands learning innovations that are not only engaging but also capable of instilling character values. One relevant approach is the integration of prophetic stories through storytelling, which combines cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects in learning. This study aims to examine the integration of prophetic stories through storytelling as a strategy for strengthening elementary school students' literacy in the digital era and to analyze the role of technology in supporting this process. This study used a qualitative approach with a library research design. Data were obtained from journal articles, books, and relevant scientific sources through a systematic literature search. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques with the stages of data reduction, theme categorization, interpretation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that storytelling based on prophetic stories contributes to improving students' literacy skills, both in reading, listening, and understanding the meaning of the text. In addition, this method also plays a role in instilling character values such as honesty, patience, and responsibility. The use of digital technology, such as animation and interactive media, also strengthens students' engagement and interest in learning. Integrating prophetic stories into digital storytelling is a relevant and contextual strategy for strengthening literacy and developing student character. This approach can be an innovative alternative to address the challenges of learning in the digital age.

Keywords: *Storytelling, Prophetic Stories, Student Literacy, Elementary School, Digital Era.*

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is one of the most crucial foundational competencies for elementary school students, as it serves as the primary foundation for the entire learning process in the classroom (Putri et al., 2024). Literacy skills are not limited to the mechanical activities of reading and writing but also encompass the ability to understand, process, and critically evaluate various information within the context of daily life (Abidin et al., 2018). However, amidst the rapid development of the digital age, students' interest in reading has shown a significant downward trend. This phenomenon is influenced by the dominance of visual media and various forms of instant entertainment that capture children's attention more effectively than traditional textbooks. On the other hand, literacy in elementary education also possesses an important spiritual dimension for fostering divine values within

students. A strong culture of literacy is expected to shape students' mindsets so they remain open-minded while possessing a solid foundation of values amidst the tide of globalization. On the other hand, literacy in basic education also has a spiritual dimension that is crucial for fostering divine values in students. A strong literacy culture is expected to foster an open mindset in students while fostering a solid foundation of values amidst globalization (Dewi, 2025). This situation demands innovation in learning methods that are not only visually engaging but also meaningful for student character development.

One approach considered effective in addressing this challenge is storytelling, or the art of storytelling. Storytelling has the power to convey messages emotionally and contextually, making learning materials easier for students to understand (Damanik et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, the stories of the prophets are a rich source of moral, spiritual, and social messages relevant to character building. This method has been proven to enhance student understanding through dynamic and engaging delivery. Through engaging narratives, students not only memorize facts but are also encouraged to understand and experience the exemplary behavior of the prophets. This is necessary so that storytelling can transform abstract religious values into concrete, easily emulated behavior. In addition, this method also strengthens the interaction between teachers and students and stimulates children's imagination, so that learning becomes more lively and meaningful (Harahap & Ginting, 2025).

The integration of prophetic stories into storytelling activities serves a dual purpose: as a means of educational entertainment and a medium for strengthening literacy (Ervina et al., 2025; Nuraini et al., 2025). Through prophetic stories, students are trained to listen, understand the storyline, and learn lessons from each event conveyed. The use of prophetic stories has been proven to improve student understanding, particularly in understanding the history of the Islamic struggle, while also instilling moral values such as honesty, patience, and courage. Students who regularly interact with prophetic stories tend to have better spiritual literacy because the process of internalizing values occurs naturally and enjoyably. Furthermore, this activity also helps develop language skills and enrich students' religious vocabulary (Meiarni, 2025). Therefore, storytelling of prophetic stories is

an effective instrument for strengthening religious literacy and shaping students' overall character.

With technological advancements, storytelling methods can be developed into more innovative and interactive digital storytelling (Puspitasari et al., 2025). Prophetic stories can now be presented through animation, audiovisual media, and interactive digital platforms tailored to the characteristics of the digital generation. Utilizing this technology allows for more concrete and engaging storytelling, making it easier for students to understand and remember the content. Collaboration between early childhood education teachers and Islamic religious education teachers is crucial in designing digital content that is both educational and religious. Digital media serves not only as a visual attraction but also as a pedagogical tool to accelerate the internalization of moral values. Furthermore, the use of technology in storytelling also encourages teacher creativity and increases student engagement and retention in the learning process. Therefore, adapting storytelling into a digital format is a strategic step to ensure learning remains relevant to current developments (Harefa & Nabi, 2025).

Based on this background, this study is crucial to examine in depth how integrating prophetic stories into storytelling can strengthen elementary school students' literacy. The focus of this research is to analyze the effectiveness of storytelling in instilling faith and moral values as a foundation for religious education. Furthermore, this study also explores the potential use of digital media as a supporter in the process of strengthening literacy. The study's findings are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to educators in developing innovative, engaging, and meaningful learning methods. Therefore, strengthening religious literacy through storytelling of the Prophet's stories is not only an alternative but also a necessity in basic education to foster a generation that is both intellectually intelligent and morally upright.

METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative approach through a library research design, aimed at critically and in-depth exploration of the integration of narratives of the prophets into storytelling as a strategic effort to strengthen elementary school

students' literacy amidst the challenges of the digital era. This approach was chosen based on its ability to facilitate conceptual, comparative, and interpretive analysis of various empirical and theoretical findings from relevant previous research. Through this framework, researchers can build a complete and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied, while simultaneously strengthening the argumentative foundation for formulating the pedagogical implications of integrating religious values, narrative strategies, and the use of technology in literacy learning (Sugiyono, 2013). The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data consists of scientific journal articles, proceedings, and research reports that directly discuss storytelling, prophetic stories, elementary school student literacy, and digital-based learning. Meanwhile, secondary data includes books, educational policy documents, and other references that support the research's theoretical framework.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature search in various academic databases. Data analysis used content analysis techniques with a thematic approach. The stages of analysis include (Miles et al., 2014): (1) data reduction through grouping important information, (2) categorization of themes based on the focus of the study, namely the effectiveness of storytelling in improving literacy, the educational value of prophetic stories in character building, and the use of digital technology in learning, (3) data interpretation to find patterns, relationships, and meanings contained in the literature, and (4) drawing comprehensive conclusions. To increase the validity of the findings, source triangulation was carried out by comparing various research results that have similar topics. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively-analytical to provide a systematic and in-depth picture of the role of integrating prophetic stories in the storytelling method as an effort to strengthen elementary school students' literacy in the digital era.

DISCUSSION

1. The Effectiveness of Storytelling in Strengthening Student Literacy

Integrating the story of the Prophet through storytelling is a highly relevant approach for strengthening elementary school students' literacy in

the digital age. Various studies have shown that storytelling, both in conventional and digital forms, has significant potential for increasing student engagement, understanding, and interest in learning. Puspitasari et al. (2025) emphasized that digital storytelling can create enjoyable and effective learning because it combines visual, audio, and engaging narrative elements. This is particularly appropriate for conveying the story of the Prophet, which is rich in moral and spiritual values, thus not only improving reading literacy but also shaping students' character (Puspitasari et al., 2025). The use of storytelling in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can significantly increase student interest in learning because the stories provide a more lively, contextual, and easy-to-understand learning experience (Saidah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Aulia et al. (2025) revealed that the illustrated story method can improve elementary school students' reading comprehension. These findings reinforce the idea that integrating the Prophet's story into visual forms such as illustrations, animations, and interactive digital media will help students understand the storyline and messages more easily. In this context, illustrated stories can be developed into e-books or animated videos, making the learning experience more immersive (Anisah et al., 2025). This finding is further supported by Rhamadhani and Solihati (2024), who emphasized that storytelling positively impacts students' reading comprehension skills, making storytelling not only a medium for delivering material but also a means of practicing listening, reading, and comprehensive text comprehension (Rhamadhan & Solihati, 2024). With technological advancements, the use of digital platforms is also a crucial factor in optimizing storytelling. Alfiana et al. (2025) demonstrated that the use of platforms like Nearpod in storytelling learning allows teachers to present the Prophet's story interactively through quizzes, discussions, and integrated visual media. This increases student participation while encouraging critical and reflective thinking skills regarding the values contained in the story (Alfiana et al., 2025).

Similarly, Musthofa et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of adaptive storytelling strategies in the digital era, where teachers can utilize animated videos, interactive applications, and other digital media to convey the story of the Prophet in a more engaging and effective way, instilling moral values (Musthofa et al., 2025). Furthermore, Waruwu and Dona (2025) also highlight that integrating technology into storytelling methods can increase student engagement, particularly given the characteristics of today's students who are closely connected to the digital world (Waruwu & Dona, 2025). Storytelling not only impacts cognitive aspects but also contributes to strengthening students' affective and social aspects.

Developing storytelling media can increase interest in learning while instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. When linked to the story of the Prophet, storytelling becomes a highly effective tool in shaping students' character holistically. Overall, integrating the story of the Prophet into digital-based storytelling methods is an innovative and contextual strategy in learning. This approach not only strengthens students' literacy in reading and comprehension, but also develops critical thinking skills and character development based on Islamic values. Teachers are required to be creative and adaptive in developing storytelling media and methods to optimize elementary school students' literacy potential comprehensively amidst the challenges of the modern technological era.

2. The Role of Emotion and Imagination in the Literacy Process

Integrating stories of the Prophet through storytelling is an effective strategy for strengthening elementary school students' literacy in the digital age, especially when combined with a creative, meaningful, and interactive learning approach. In general, storytelling serves not only as a medium for conveying stories but also as a means of developing literacy skills, imagination, and character building. This is evident in various studies that emphasize that combining storytelling with modern learning strategies can significantly improve the quality of learning (Arifah et al., 2025; Meirisa & Yuliant, 2025).

Bilbina et al. (2025) explain that the CERIA (Story, Expressive, Imagination-Stimulating, Interactive) method emphasizes the importance of a fun approach in fostering children's interest in reading. When linked to the stories of the Prophet, this method is highly relevant because the Prophet's stories have a strong plot, are rich in moral values, and are easily developed expressively. Interactive and imaginative storytelling not only engages students but also encourages them to read and understand the story more deeply, thus becoming an important foundation for strengthening early literacy (Bilbina et al., 2025). The concept of deep learning emphasizes meaningful, mindful, and joyful aspects. Integrating the Prophet's story into storytelling can fulfill all three aspects because it contains profound life meaning (meaningful), encourages students' reflective awareness (mindful), and can be delivered in a fun (joyful) manner through digital media such as animation, video, or interactive platforms. Thus, learning not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also touches on students' affective and spiritual dimensions (Diputera et al., 2024).

On the other hand, Saputra et al. (2025) highlight the importance of learning strategies that encourage critical and creative thinking in strengthening Indonesian language literacy in elementary schools. In the context of storytelling, this can be realized through follow-up activities such as discussion, reflection, and creative assignments, such as rewriting the story or creating illustrations. These activities not only improve reading and writing skills but also train students to think critically about the moral messages contained in the stories (Saputra et al., 2025). Furthermore, Arifah et al. (2025) emphasize the integration of flipped classrooms and digital storytelling in deep learning-based instruction. This approach allows students to independently study the story of the Prophet through digital media before class, allowing face-to-face time to focus on discussion, analysis, and value reinforcement. This process is effective in improving literacy comprehension while developing students' critical thinking skills and creativity in interpreting the story's meaning (Arifah et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, Meirisa and Yulianti (2025) developed a reading learning model based on interactive storytelling integrated with artificial intelligence (AI) and gamification. The use of this technology has been shown to significantly increase student reading interest and engagement. In the context of the story of the Prophet, storytelling can be packaged in the form of animations, quizzes, or educational games that allow direct interaction with the storyline. Gamification increases learning motivation through challenges and rewards, while AI provides adaptive feedback tailored to students' abilities (Meirisa & Yuliant, 2025).

With the support of digital technology, storytelling about the Prophet's story can be presented more vividly through a combination of text, images, audio, and video, tailored to the characteristics of the digital generation. This approach broadens the meaning of literacy beyond simply reading text, but also as the ability to understand information in a multimodal and interactive manner. Furthermore, follow-up activities such as discussion, reflection, and story reconstruction further strengthen students' critical and creative thinking skills.

Overall, the integration of the Prophet's story into storytelling, combined with the CERIA approach, deep learning, the flipped classroom, and the use of technologies such as AI and gamification, represents an innovative and contextual approach to strengthening elementary school students' literacy. This approach not only improves literacy skills but also shapes character and 21st-century skills. Therefore, teachers need to continue innovating in developing adaptive, engaging, and meaningful learning to optimally develop students' literacy potential in the digital age. Integrating the story of the Prophet into storytelling is an effective strategy for strengthening elementary school students' literacy in the digital age, especially when combined with a creative, meaningful, and interactive learning approach.

3. Storytelling Prophetic Stories as a Medium for Literacy and Character Building

Integrating narratives of prophetic stories into storytelling is an effective strategy for optimizing elementary school students' literacy amidst the challenges of the digital era, as this approach unites cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions within a unified learning framework. Prophetic stories serve not merely as narrative material but also as a medium for instilling values, strengthening character, and stimulating critical thinking. Through storytelling, the learning process is designed to engage the emotional aspect, spark imagination, and encourage deep reflection, making the learning experience more meaningful and easily internalized (Kurdi, 2024).

In line with this, Radjendra et al. (2025) emphasize that internalizing philosophical values from the exemplary stories of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) plays a crucial role in fostering noble character. Noble values such as honesty, patience, and responsibility can be optimally transferred when conveyed through engaging storytelling techniques that are relevant to students' lives. In practice, students not only understand the storyline but are also encouraged to reflect on and actualize these values in their daily lives. Therefore, storytelling not only improves reading skills but also contributes to character development (Radjendra et al., 2024). This finding aligns with research by Mananna et al. (2025), which revealed that narrative works such as children's stories have a strategic function as a vehicle for moral education. Prophetic stories, rich in concrete examples, can strengthen literacy and shape students' character through active involvement in the process of understanding and reflecting on the story's meaning (Mananna et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Rizqiani et al. (2025) revealed that integrating prophetic texts as a critical literacy medium can foster elementary school students' critical thinking skills. In the context of storytelling, the Prophet's stories can serve as discussion material that challenges students to analyze events, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and relate the values in the stories to the realities of modern life. Thus, the literacy developed is not passive, but rather active, reflective, and contextual (Rizqiani et al., 2025).

This is further reinforced by Kurdi (2024), who asserted that storytelling helps students understand the plot, enrich vocabulary, and develop reflective and critical thinking skills on an ongoing basis.

On the other hand, Mahmudi and Jenuri (2024) highlighted the positive impact of stories about the Prophet and the Apostles on the character education of young people in the digital age. Amidst the rapid and diverse flow of information, storytelling based on the Prophet's story acts as a value filter that helps students sort information wisely. The use of digital media such as animated videos, podcasts, and interactive learning applications further strengthens the appeal of storytelling, thereby increasing student engagement and motivation (Mahmudi & Jenuri, 2024). This aligns with the findings of Efendi and Subando (2025), who developed a storytelling-based video learning about dates, which was proven to increase elementary school students' learning interest. Video media provides an interactive and multimodal learning experience, enabling students not only to read but also to listen, observe, and interpret information in greater depth (Efendi & Subando, 2025).

Furthermore, Firtikasari et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of transforming learning through the use of digital technology. Although within the context of traditional arts, these findings are relevant to storytelling-based learning, where technology enables the creative and innovative integration of various media such as audio, visual, and animation. This digitalization can increase the appeal and effectiveness of learning, thereby strengthening students' digital literacy (Firtikasari et al., 2025). The integration of the philosophical values of the Prophet's story, a critical literacy approach, and the use of digital technology makes storytelling a relevant and contextual method. Teachers can develop various activities such as reading, listening, discussing, and rewriting stories from different perspectives to enhance students' literacy skills and creativity. Overall, the integration of the Prophet's story into a digital-based storytelling method is a learning innovation that not only strengthens elementary school students' literacy, but also increases their interest in

learning, religiosity, and forms their character as a whole, thereby producing a generation that is intellectually intelligent and has noble morals.

4. Digital Storytelling: Opportunities and Challenges of Implementation

Integrating the Prophet's story into storytelling is a relevant and strategic approach to strengthening elementary school students' literacy in the digital age, particularly in the context of technology-based learning transformation. Various studies have shown that digital storytelling functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means of building meaningful, interactive, and contextual learning experiences. Puspitasari et al. (2025) emphasized that combining visual, audio, and narrative elements in digital storytelling can increase student engagement and strengthen multimodal understanding of texts. In the context of the Prophet's story, this approach allows for a more vivid presentation of the story through media such as animated videos and interactive platforms, thereby increasing not only reading interest but also the ability to listen and understand the message in depth (Puspitasari et al., 2025).

The transformation of education in the digital age demands the integration of knowledge acquisition and character development. In this regard, storytelling based on the Prophet's story not only transmits information but also internalizes values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy through a contextual, reflective process (Nipan et al., 2024). These findings align with those of Safni and Syarifudin (2025) and Zuhriyah and Fradana (2025), who assert that narrative approaches, whether in the form of religious stories or folktales, are highly effective in shaping character while enhancing students' literacy skills through a more contextual understanding of meaning (Safni & Syarifudin, 2025; Zuhriyah & Fradana, 2025). Conversely, the use of digital technology expands the potential of storytelling to be more innovative and adaptive. Ellyawati et al. (2026) demonstrated that the use of animated media such as Powtoon can increase student engagement in learning, and the integration of digital media contributes to the effectiveness of evaluation and learning

interactions(Ellyawati et al., 2026). Furthermore, Madi and Zalmi (2025) revealed that digital storytelling has the potential to transmit cultural values and local knowledge sustainably (Madi & Zalmi, 2025), which, in the context of the Prophet's story, can be interpreted as an effort to contextualize Islamic values in students' lives.

However, the implementation of digital storytelling also faces challenges, particularly related to technological readiness, teachers' digital literacy, and the ability to design educational and engaging content(Madi & Zalmi, 2025). Therefore, the success of integrating the Prophet's story into storytelling depends not only on the use of technology but also on the teacher's pedagogical competence in managing learning creatively and reflectively. Integrating the Prophet's story into digital storytelling methods not only contributes to improving basic literacy skills such as reading and understanding texts, but also strengthens digital literacy, character development, and the internalization of students' moral values. This approach is an innovative and contextual solution to the challenges of education in the digital era, as it is able to deliver learning that is not only engaging and interactive, but also meaningful and transformative.

5. Practical and Theoretical Implications

The integration of the Prophet's story into the storytelling method has significant practical and theoretical implications for strengthening elementary school students' literacy in the digital age, especially when supported by literacy habits and the use of technology. Theoretically, this approach demonstrates that storytelling functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means of moral formation and developing holistic literacy skills. Trisnawati et al. (2025) emphasized that storytelling is an effective method for improving students' morals because it can engage the emotional aspect and provide concrete examples. When the Prophet's story is presented through storytelling, students not only understand the storyline but also absorb moral values such as honesty, patience, and responsibility, while simultaneously practicing their ability to

understand the content, meaning, and moral message of a text (Trisnawati et al., 2025).

From a practical perspective, literacy strengthening can be optimized through the integration of reading culture and storytelling. Masruroh and Rohman (2025) demonstrated that reading activities before learning significantly improved students' literacy. This practice becomes even more effective when combined with storytelling based on the Prophet's story, as students already have prior knowledge that helps them understand the story more deeply. Thus, learning is not only receptive through listening, but also active through reading and reflection on the reading content (Masruroh & Rohman, 2025).

The use of technology also strengthens the effectiveness of this approach. Lestari et al. (2025) emphasize that storytelling combined with interactive technology media can significantly improve student literacy. The use of interactive applications, videos, and animations makes stories more engaging, easier to understand, and can improve reading, listening, and comprehension skills in an integrated manner. In this context, the Prophet's story can be packaged in a visual and attractive digital storytelling format, thereby increasing student interest in learning (Lestari et al., 2025). Furthermore, teacher readiness to utilize technology is a crucial factor in implementing learning. Ellyawati et al. (2026) demonstrated that training in the use of Powtoon improved teachers' ability to produce digital storytelling. Animated media such as Powtoon provide teachers with opportunities to present stories of the Prophet in creative and innovative ways, thus better aligning with the characteristics of students in the digital age, who tend to be drawn to visual and interactive content (Ellyawati et al., 2026).

Overall, integrating stories of the Prophet into digital storytelling methods provides a comprehensive contribution to strengthening student literacy. This approach not only improves basic literacy but also encourages digital literacy and character development. The combination of reading habits, storytelling methods, and the use of technology creates more engaging, effective, and meaningful learning. Therefore, this approach can

be a contextual solution to address educational challenges in the digital age while strengthening students' religious values and character from an early age.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that integrating stories of the Prophets into storytelling methods is an effective and relevant approach to improving the literacy of elementary school students in the digital age. This strategy not only hones fundamental literacy skills such as reading, listening, and understanding texts, but also strengthens the affective and spiritual dimensions by instilling the noble values inherent in each narrative. The use of digital technology in storytelling activities enriches students' learning by presenting a more interactive, engaging presentation that aligns with the habits of today's generation. Furthermore, the synergy between religious messages, innovative teaching strategies, and digital device support makes this method a holistic form of learning that simultaneously stimulates students' cognitive, emotional, and moral domains. Thus, storytelling based on the stories of the prophets serves not only as an instrument for improving literacy but also as a strategic step in shaping a generation that is information-literate, has strong character, and is adaptable to the dynamics of the times.

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