

# lab exercise 56 cat dissection digestive system Tutorial

## Lab Exercise 56: Cat Dissection ? The Digestive System

**Lab exercise 56 cat dissection digestive system** provides students and anatomy enthusiasts with an in-depth exploration of the feline digestive tract. This practical dissection offers insights into the structure and function of various organs that facilitate the processing of food from ingestion to waste elimination. Understanding the cat's digestive system not only advances knowledge of mammalian anatomy but also enhances comprehension of comparative physiology, as the feline digestive tract exhibits unique features tailored to its carnivorous diet. This detailed dissection procedure involves systematic identification, examination, and understanding of each component within the digestive pathway, highlighting the interconnectedness and specialization of each organ involved.

## Overview of the Cat's Digestive System

### Purpose and Significance

The primary purpose of the digestive system in cats is to break down food into absorbable nutrients, facilitate nutrient absorption, and eliminate indigestible waste. Given their obligate carnivorous nature, feline digestive systems are highly specialized for a meat-based diet, impacting the anatomy and physiology of their organs. Studying the cat's digestive system provides a comparative perspective against herbivorous and omnivorous mammals, emphasizing adaptations related to dietary needs.

### Basic Anatomy and Layout

The digestive system comprises a continuous tube extending from the mouth to the anus, including several specialized organs:

- Oral cavity and associated structures
- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Small intestine (duodenum, jejunum, ileum)
- Large intestine (cecum, colon, rectum)
- Accessory organs (liver, pancreas, gall bladder)

## Preparation and Procedure for Dissection

### Materials Needed

- Dissection tray and pins
- Scalpel and scissors
- Forceps and scissors
- Dissection needles
- Gloves and safety equipment
- Dissection guide and anatomical charts

### Dissection Steps

- Position the cat dorsal side up on the dissection tray.
- Make a midline incision from the sternum to the pelvis, carefully cutting through the skin and abdominal muscles.
- Reflect the skin and musculature to expose the abdominal cavity.
- Identify and carefully dissect out the digestive organs, noting their relative positions.
- Document and examine each organ, noting features and connections.

## Detailed Examination of the Digestive Organs

### Oral Cavity and Associated Structures

The initial site of digestion, the oral cavity, includes the teeth, tongue, palate, and salivary glands.

- **Teeth:** Sharp carnassial teeth for shearing meat.
- **Tongue:** Covered with papillae for grooming and manipulating food.
- **Salivary glands:** Parotid, mandibular, and sublingual glands secrete saliva to moistify food and begin digestion.

### Esophagus

A muscular tube that transports food from the pharynx to the stomach, exhibiting peristaltic movements.

- Runs dorsal to the trachea.

- In cats, it is relatively short and straight, facilitating rapid swallowing.

## Stomach

The stomach is a J-shaped organ situated on the left side of the abdominal cavity, vital for enzymatic digestion.

- **Regions:** Cardia, fundus, body, pyloric region.
- **Features:** Rugae (folds) allow expansion.
- **Function:** Secretes acid and enzymes (like pepsin) to initiate protein digestion.

## Small Intestine

The longest part of the digestive tract, divided into three sections:

### Duodenum

- Receives chyme from the stomach.
- Receives digestive enzymes from pancreas and bile from liver via the bile duct.

### Jejunum

- Main site for nutrient absorption.
- Has numerous villi increasing surface area.

### Ileum

- Absorbs vitamin B12 and bile salts.
- Connects to the large intestine at the ileocecal valve.

## Large Intestine

Responsible for water absorption and feces formation.

- **Cecum:** Small pouch that may house microbes aiding in fermentation.
- **Colon:** Divided into ascending, transverse, and descending parts; absorbs water and

electrolytes.

- **Rectum:** Stores feces until defecation.

## Accessory Organs

### Liver

- Large, lobed organ located in the cranial abdomen.
- Produces bile, which emulsifies fats.
- Stores glycogen and detoxifies substances.

### Gall Bladder

- Sits beneath the liver.
- Stores and concentrates bile from the liver.

### Pancreas

- Located near the duodenum.
- Produces digestive enzymes and insulin.

## Key Features and Variations in Feline Digestive Anatomy

### Comparison with Other Mammals

While the general layout resembles other mammals, cats have distinctive features adapted for a carnivorous diet:

- Shorter digestive tract compared to herbivores.
- Highly developed carnassial teeth for meat shearing.
- Enlarged stomach for storing large meals.
- Limited fermentation chambers like ceca, reflecting their meat-based diet.

### Physiological Specializations

- High acidity in the stomach to digest protein and kill bacteria.

- Rapid transit time for digestion.
- Limited ability to digest plant material, reflected in their anatomy.

## Common Dissection Challenges and Tips

### Handling Delicate Structures

- Use fine forceps and scissors to avoid damaging tissues.
- Identify and preserve the integrity of the mesentery connecting the intestines.

### Ensuring Complete Organ Identification

- Follow the natural anatomical pathways systematically.
- Compare with anatomical diagrams when in doubt.

## Summary and Key Takeaways

The lab exercise involving the dissection of the cat's digestive system offers a comprehensive view of mammalian digestion. From the initial ingestion in the oral cavity to the absorption and waste elimination processes, each organ plays a vital role. Recognizing the anatomical features and their functions enhances understanding of both normal physiology and potential pathological conditions. The dissection process fosters hands-on learning, critical thinking, and an appreciation for the complexity of mammalian systems, especially in specialized diets like that of cats.

## Conclusion

Completing this dissection deepens knowledge of the feline digestive system's structure and function. It underscores the importance of each organ within the process of digestion and how evolutionary adaptations shape anatomical features to meet dietary needs. This exercise not only provides practical skills but also reinforces theoretical concepts essential for students of veterinary science, biology, and comparative anatomy. Through careful examination and study, learners gain invaluable insights into the intricacies of mammalian digestion, paving the way for further explorations into physiology and medicine.

### Lab Exercise 56: Cat Dissection of the Digestive System ? An In-Depth Exploration

In the realm of biological sciences, dissecting a cat's digestive system provides an invaluable window into the intricate anatomy and physiology of mammalian digestion. This lab exercise not only enhances understanding of anatomical structures but also offers practical insights into how various

components work synergistically to facilitate nutrient intake, digestion, absorption, and waste elimination. Such dissection exercises are fundamental in comparative anatomy, veterinary studies, and biological education, fostering a deeper appreciation for the complexity and efficiency of mammalian digestive systems.

## Introduction to the Cat Digestive System

The domestic cat (*Felis catus*), a carnivorous mammal, possesses a digestive system uniquely adapted to a meat-based diet. Its anatomy reflects evolutionary adaptations for swift processing of high-protein, high-fat foods, with structural features optimized for capturing, chewing, digesting, and absorbing nutrients from animal tissues.

During the dissection, students observe a series of interconnected organs, each with specific roles. These include the mouth and salivary glands, esophagus, stomach, small intestine (duodenum, jejunum, ileum), large intestine (cecum, colon, rectum), liver, pancreas, and associated accessory structures. Understanding their spatial relationships and functions provides insights into the overall efficiency of mammalian digestion.

## Preparation and Safety Considerations

Before embarking on dissection, students should ensure all safety protocols are followed. This includes:

- Wearing appropriate protective gear: gloves, lab coat, and eye protection.
- Handling dissection tools carefully to prevent injury.
- Properly disposing of biological waste in accordance with institutional guidelines.
- Using preserved specimens responsibly, acknowledging ethical considerations.

Preparation also involves reviewing the anatomy diagrams and labeling charts of the cat's digestive system to facilitate identification during dissection.

## External Anatomy and Initial Observations

The dissection begins with examining the external features of the cat, noting the location of the abdominal cavity, the skin, fur, and superficial structures. Key external landmarks include:

- The rib cage, which protects the thoracic cavity.
- The linea alba, a connective tissue line running along the midline of the abdomen.

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**Question** What are the main parts of the cat's digestive system examined in Lab Exercise 56? The main parts include the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, liver, pancreas, and rectum. Why is the dissection of the cat's digestive system important in understanding mammalian anatomy? It helps students learn the structure and function of different digestive organs, providing insights into mammalian physiology and comparative anatomy. What are the key differences between the cat's digestive system and that of humans? While similar, differences include the size and shape of certain organs, the presence of a cecum in cats, and variations in digestive enzyme distribution, reflecting dietary adaptations. What precautions should be taken during the dissection of the cat's digestive system? Proper handling of sharp instruments, wearing gloves and safety goggles, and careful identification of organs to prevent damage and ensure safety. How can the dissection of the digestive system aid in understanding diseases affecting mammals? It allows students to observe normal anatomy, which can then be compared to diseased states, aiding in the understanding of pathological conditions like blockages or organ damage. What is the significance of the liver and pancreas in the cat's digestive system? The liver produces bile to aid fat digestion, while the pancreas secretes enzymes that help break down carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, essential for nutrient absorption. How does the structure of the cat's small intestine facilitate nutrient absorption? Its length, villi, and microvilli increase surface area, optimizing the absorption of nutrients from digested food into the bloodstream.

**Related keywords:** cat dissection, digestive system, lab exercise, anatomy, veterinary science, gastrointestinal tract, dissection techniques, internal organs, biology lab, animal anatomy

## KEY FOR QUIZ 2 COMPARATIVE DIGESTIVE SYSTEMS

### key for quiz 2 comparative digestive systems

Understanding the differences and similarities among various digestive systems is essential for students, educators, and anyone interested in biology and physiology. This comprehensive guide provides an in-depth overview of the key concepts, terminologies, and features relevant to quiz 2 on comparative digestive systems. Whether you're preparing for an exam or seeking to deepen your knowledge, this article offers essential insights supported by clear explanations and structured information.

#### Introduction to Comparative Digestive Systems

The digestive system is vital for the survival of all animals as it processes food, absorbs nutrients,

and eliminates waste. However, the structure and complexity of digestive systems vary widely among different species, reflecting adaptations to their environments, diets, and evolutionary histories.

### Why Study Comparative Digestive Systems?

Studying comparative digestive systems helps in:

- Understanding evolutionary relationships among species
- Recognizing adaptations to specific diets
- Applying knowledge to fields like medicine, zoology, and ecology
- Preparing for exams and quizzes related to biology

### Key Concepts in Comparative Digestive Systems

Before delving into specific systems, it's important to familiarize yourself with fundamental concepts and terminology.

### Basic Components of Digestive Systems

Most digestive systems share core components, including:

- Mouth: the entry point for food
- Esophagus: transports food to the stomach
- Stomach: site of initial digestion and food storage
- Intestines: absorption of nutrients (small intestine) and water absorption (large intestine)
- Accessory organs: liver, pancreas, gallbladder, which produce enzymes and bile

### Types of Digestive Systems

Digestive systems can be broadly classified into:

- Incomplete digestive systems (gastrovascular cavities): where digestion and nutrient absorption occur in the same space
- Complete digestive systems (alimentary canals): with a separate mouth and anus allowing for specialized regions

### Key Features of Different Digestive Systems



Different animals possess varying structures suited to their diets and habitats.

### - Incomplete Digestive Systems

#### Characteristics

- Single opening serving as both mouth and anus
- Gastrovascular cavity for digestion
- Common in simple animals like cnidarians (jellies, hydras) and flatworms

#### Advantages and Disadvantages

- Simpler structure; less energy investment
- Limited specialization; digestion occurs in a single cavity
- Suitable for small or simple organisms with a diet of easily digestible food

### - Complete Digestive Systems

#### Characteristics

- Two openings: mouth and anus
- Specialized regions for different digestive processes
- Allows for continuous food processing

#### Examples

- Most vertebrates, including humans, birds, and mammals
- Many invertebrates like annelids and mollusks

#### Key Differences in Digestive Systems Among Major Animal Groups

Understanding the distinctions among various groups can enhance your grasp of comparative anatomy.

#### A. Digestive System of Carnivores

## Features

- Shorter digestive tracts relative to body length
- Highly acidic stomach for protein breakdown
- Less developed fermentation chambers

## Examples

- Cats, dogs, lions

## B. Digestive System of Herbivores

### Features

- Longer digestive tracts to allow fermentation and breakdown of cellulose
- Presence of specialized chambers like the rumen in ruminants
- Enlarged cecum for fermentation

### Examples

- Cows, horses, rabbits

## C. Digestive System of Omnivores

### Features

- Intermediate length of digestive tract
- Flexible diet allows for varied digestion strategies

### Examples

- Humans, pigs, bears

## Specific Structures in Comparative Digestive Systems

Certain structures are characteristic of particular groups and are crucial for quiz understanding.

- Ruminant Stomach Compartments
  - Rumen: fermentation chamber housing microbes
  - Reticulum: further fermentation and regurgitation (cud chewing)
  - Omasum: absorbs water and nutrients
  - Abomasum: true stomach where enzymatic digestion occurs
  
- Crop and Gizzard in Birds
  - Crop: storage pouch for food
  - Gizzard: muscular digestion chamber that pulverizes food, often with grit
  
- Caecum
  - A pouch connected to the junction of the small and large intestines
  - Enlarged in herbivores for fermentation

## Comparing Digestive Enzymes and Processes

Knowledge of enzymes and digestion processes is vital for understanding system efficiency.

## Key Enzymes

- Amylase: starch breakdown
- Proteases: protein digestion
- Lipases: fat digestion
- Cellulases: cellulose breakdown (present in some animals like termites and ruminants)

## Digestion Process Overview

- Mechanical digestion (chewing, churning)

- Chemical digestion (enzymes breaking down food molecules)
- Absorption (nutrients into bloodstream)
- Elimination (waste removal)

## Evolutionary Perspectives on Digestive Systems

Studying evolution helps explain why certain features develop.

### Evolution of the Digestive Tract

- Transition from simple to complex systems correlates with diet complexity
- Development of specialized chambers (e.g., rumen, cecum) for fermentation
- Adaptations like elongated intestines in herbivores

## Phylogenetic Relationships

- Similarities in digestive systems can indicate common ancestry
- Differences reflect adaptation to specific ecological niches

## Key Terms for Quiz 2 on Comparative Digestive Systems

To excel in your quiz, familiarize yourself with these essential terms:

- Gastrovascular cavity
- Alimentary canal
- Accessory organs
- Rumen, reticulum, omasum, abomasum
- Cecum
- Fermentation chambers
- Herbivore, carnivore, omnivore
- Digestive enzymes
- Mechanical vs. chemical digestion
- Complete vs. incomplete digestive system

## Tips for Remembering Key Differences

- Use mnemonic devices to remember the order of ruminant stomachs: Running Rats Often And

### Ramble (Rumen, Reticulum, Omasum, Abomasum)

- Visualize the digestive tract for different animals to understand length and specialization
- Relate diet to digestive adaptations (e.g., long intestines in herbivores)
- Practice labeling diagrams of digestive systems to reinforce learning

### Conclusion

Understanding the key features and differences of comparative digestive systems is essential for success in quiz 2 and a broader comprehension of animal biology. Recognizing whether an animal has an incomplete or complete system, identifying specialized structures like the rumen or gizzard, and knowing the functions of accessory organs are fundamental to mastering the material. By reviewing these concepts, utilizing diagrams, and memorizing essential terms, you'll be well-prepared to confidently navigate questions related to the comparative anatomy of digestive systems.

### Additional Resources

- Textbooks on zoology and physiology
- Diagrams of digestive systems
- Flashcards for key terms
- Practice quizzes on comparative anatomy

Prepared to help students ace quiz 2 on comparative digestive systems with clarity and thoroughness.

### Key for Quiz 2: Comparative Digestive Systems

Understanding the diversity and complexity of digestive systems across different organisms is essential for mastering comparative anatomy and physiology. This guide provides an in-depth overview of the key concepts, structures, and functions involved in various digestive systems, helping students prepare thoroughly for Quiz 2. We will explore the major types of digestive systems, their anatomical features, physiological processes, adaptations, and evolutionary significance.

## Introduction to Digestive Systems

The digestive system is a vital biological construct that enables organisms to process food, extract nutrients, and eliminate waste. Its structure and complexity vary widely among different taxa, reflecting adaptations to their diets, environments, and lifestyles.

### Key Concepts:

- Digestion: The process of breaking down food into absorbable units.
- Absorption: The uptake of nutrients into the bloodstream or body tissues.
- Egestion: The elimination of indigestible substances and waste products.

Understanding these concepts in a comparative context involves examining the structural features, physiological processes, and evolutionary adaptations that define each system.

## Major Types of Digestive Systems

Organisms exhibit a range of digestive system configurations, which can be broadly categorized based on their complexity, organization, and specialization.

- Intracellular Digestion
  - Found in simple organisms like sponges and cnidarians.
  - Digestion occurs within cells via food vacuoles.
  - No specialized digestive tract.
- Gastrovascular Cavity (Single opening)
  - Present in cnidarians and flatworms.
  - Functions both as mouth and anus (incomplete gut).
  - Food enters and waste leaves through the same opening.
  - Allows for extracellular digestion within the cavity.
- Complete Digestive Tract (Tube-within-a-tube system)
  - Found in most bilaterian animals, including annelids, mollusks, arthropods, and vertebrates.
  - Has two openings: mouth and anus.
  - Allows for specialized regions to optimize different digestive processes.

## Comparative Anatomy of Digestive Systems

Different organisms have evolved specialized structures suited to their diets and habitats. Here, we compare key features across major groups.

## Simple Digestive Systems

Cnidarians and Platyhelminthes:

- Gastrovascular cavity: Usually a single, sac-like structure with multiple branches increasing surface area.
- Features:
  - Single opening serving as both mouth and anus.
  - Limited regional differentiation.
  - Digestive enzymes secreted into the cavity.
  - Cells lining the cavity absorb nutrients directly.

Advantages:

- Simplicity supports a sedentary or slow-moving lifestyle.
- Low energetic cost.

Limitations:

- No storage capacity for food.
- Limited processing and absorption efficiency.

## Complex Digestive Systems in Higher Organisms

Mollusks and Arthropods:

- Foregut, midgut, hindgut: Regional specialization allows for efficient digestion and absorption.
- Features:
  - Mouthparts adapted to diet (e.g., mandibles, radula).
  - Muscular stomach or gizzard for mechanical digestion.
  - Digestive glands (e.g., salivary glands, liver) secrete enzymes.
  - Intestine for nutrient absorption.

Vertebrates:

- Highly specialized structures, often with accessory organs.

## Key Structures in Vertebrate Digestive Systems

- Oral Cavity
  - Entry point for food.
  - Involves mechanical digestion (chewing) and chemical digestion (salivary enzymes).
- Esophagus
  - Muscular tube transporting food from mouth to stomach via peristalsis.
- Stomach
  - Muscular, sac-like organ.
  - Functions:
    - Mechanical churning.
    - Chemical digestion with enzymes (e.g., pepsin).
    - Acid secretion (hydrochloric acid) to denature proteins.
- Small Intestine
  - Main site for digestion and nutrient absorption.
  - Composed of three parts:
    - Duodenum: Receives chyme, digestive enzymes from pancreas, bile from liver.
    - Jejunum: Nutrient absorption.
    - Ileum: Absorbs bile salts, vitamin B12, and other nutrients.
- Accessory Organs



- Liver: Produces bile to emulsify fats.
- Gallbladder: Stores and concentrates bile.
- Pancreas: Secretes digestive enzymes (amylase, lipase, proteases) and bicarbonate to neutralize stomach acid.

- Large Intestine (Colon)

- Absorbs water and electrolytes.
- Forms and stores feces.
- Houses gut microbiota aiding in fermentation and vitamin synthesis.

- Anus

- Terminal opening for waste elimination.

## Physiological Processes in Digestive Systems

Breaking down the digestion process into key phases:

- Ingestion

- Intake of food through the mouth.

- Mechanical Digestion

- Chewing, churning in stomach, segmentation in intestines.

- Chemical Digestion

- Breakdown of macromolecules by enzymes:
- Carbohydrates: Amylases break starch into sugars.

- Proteins: Proteases (pepsin, trypsin) break proteins into amino acids.
- Fats: Lipases convert triglycerides into fatty acids and glycerol.
- Absorption
  - Nutrients pass through intestinal epithelium into blood or lymph.
  - Specialized structures like villi and microvilli increase surface area.
- Egestion
  - Indigestible residues expelled through the anus.

## Adaptations and Variations in Digestive Systems

Different species have evolved unique adaptations to optimize digestion based on their diets.

### Herbivores

- Features:
  - Enlarged cecum or fermentation chambers (e.g., ruminant stomachs in cows).
  - Symbiotic gut microbes to digest cellulose.
  - Longer intestines for increased nutrient absorption.

### Carnivores

- Features:
  - Shorter, simpler digestive tracts as meat is easier to digest.
  - Acidic stomach environment for rapid digestion and pathogen destruction.

### Omnivores

- Features:
  - Intermediate digestive tract length.
  - Versatile enzyme production.

## Specialized Structures

- Ruminant Stomach: Four chambers (rumen, reticulum, omasum, abomasum) for fermenting plant material.
- Crop in Birds: Storage pouch allowing for preliminary digestion and regurgitation.

## Evolutionary Perspectives

The evolution of digestive systems reflects dietary shifts and ecological pressures.

### Key Evolutionary Trends:

- Increasing specialization from simple gastrovascular cavities to complex, multi-chambered guts.
- Development of accessory organs like liver and pancreas to enhance digestion efficiency.
- Adoption of regional differentiation within the gut to optimize nutrient processing.

### Phylogenetic Significance:

- Digestive system complexity often correlates with organismal complexity.
- Fossil and molecular data help trace the evolution from primitive to advanced systems.

## Practical Applications and Study Tips

To excel in the quiz, focus on understanding not just the structures but their functions and evolutionary significance.

### Study Strategies:

- Use diagrams to memorize the anatomy of different systems.
- Compare and contrast features across taxa.
- Focus on the relationship between structure and function.
- Review key terms such as "accessory organs," "microvilli," "fermentation chambers," etc.

### Sample Questions to Practice:

- How does the digestive system of a herbivore differ from that of a carnivore?

- What are the main functions of the small intestine?
- Describe the role of the liver and gallbladder in digestion.
- Explain the significance of regional specialization within the digestive tract.

## Summary

Mastering the comparative digestive systems involves understanding the structural diversity, physiological processes, adaptations, and evolutionary trends across different organisms. Recognizing the key features?such as the presence of a complete versus incomplete gut, regional specialization, accessory organs, and microbial symbiosis?will provide a solid foundation for Quiz 2. Remember that the complexity of the system often correlates with dietary habits and ecological niches, making this a fascinating area of comparative anatomy and physiology.

In conclusion, a thorough grasp of these core concepts will enable you to approach quiz questions confidently, analyze differences among species, and appreciate the evolutionary adaptations that have shaped the diverse array of digestive systems in the animal kingdom.

**Question** What are the main differences between the digestive systems of herbivores and carnivores? Herbivores typically have longer digestive tracts with specialized chambers like the rumen to break down plant material, while carnivores have shorter, simpler digestive systems optimized for quick protein digestion. How does the structure of the ruminant's stomach facilitate digestion? Ruminants have a four-chambered stomach (rumen, reticulum, omasum, abomasum) that allows them to ferment plant material, break down cellulose, and efficiently extract nutrients from fibrous plants. What role does the enzyme amylase play in the digestive systems of different species? Amylase helps break down starch into simpler sugars. Its presence and activity levels vary among species; for example, humans and pigs produce amylase in saliva, while ruminants rely more on microbial fermentation. Why do some animals have a longer small intestine compared to others? Animals that consume a high-fiber diet, like herbivores, have longer small intestines to maximize nutrient absorption from plant material, whereas carnivores have shorter intestines suited for rapid digestion of meat. How does the digestive system of a fish differ from that of a mammal? Fish generally have a simpler, shorter digestive tract with a single stomach or no stomach at all, while mammals have a more complex system with specialized regions like the stomach and intestines for varied digestion. What adaptations in the digestive system allow rabbits to efficiently process fibrous plant material? Rabbits have a large cecum and an extensive colon that facilitate fermentation of fibrous plants, along with mechanisms like coprophagy to re-ingest nutrient-rich cecal pellets for further digestion. How does the presence of a crop in some birds' digestive systems benefit their feeding habits? The crop acts as a storage pouch, allowing birds to gather and soften food before digestion, which is especially useful for species that need to feed quickly or store food for later digestion. In what ways do the digestive systems of ruminants and non-ruminant herbivores differ? Ruminants have a multi-chambered stomach with fermentation chambers, enabling extensive microbial digestion of cellulose, while non-ruminant herbivores have a simple stomach but rely on a

large cecum or colon for fermentation.

**Related keywords:** digestive system, quiz 2, comparative anatomy, gastrointestinal tract, herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, digestion process, digestive organs, nutrient absorption

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