

How
conversational
copy got
awkward

Steve Howe



Hello

What's conversation?

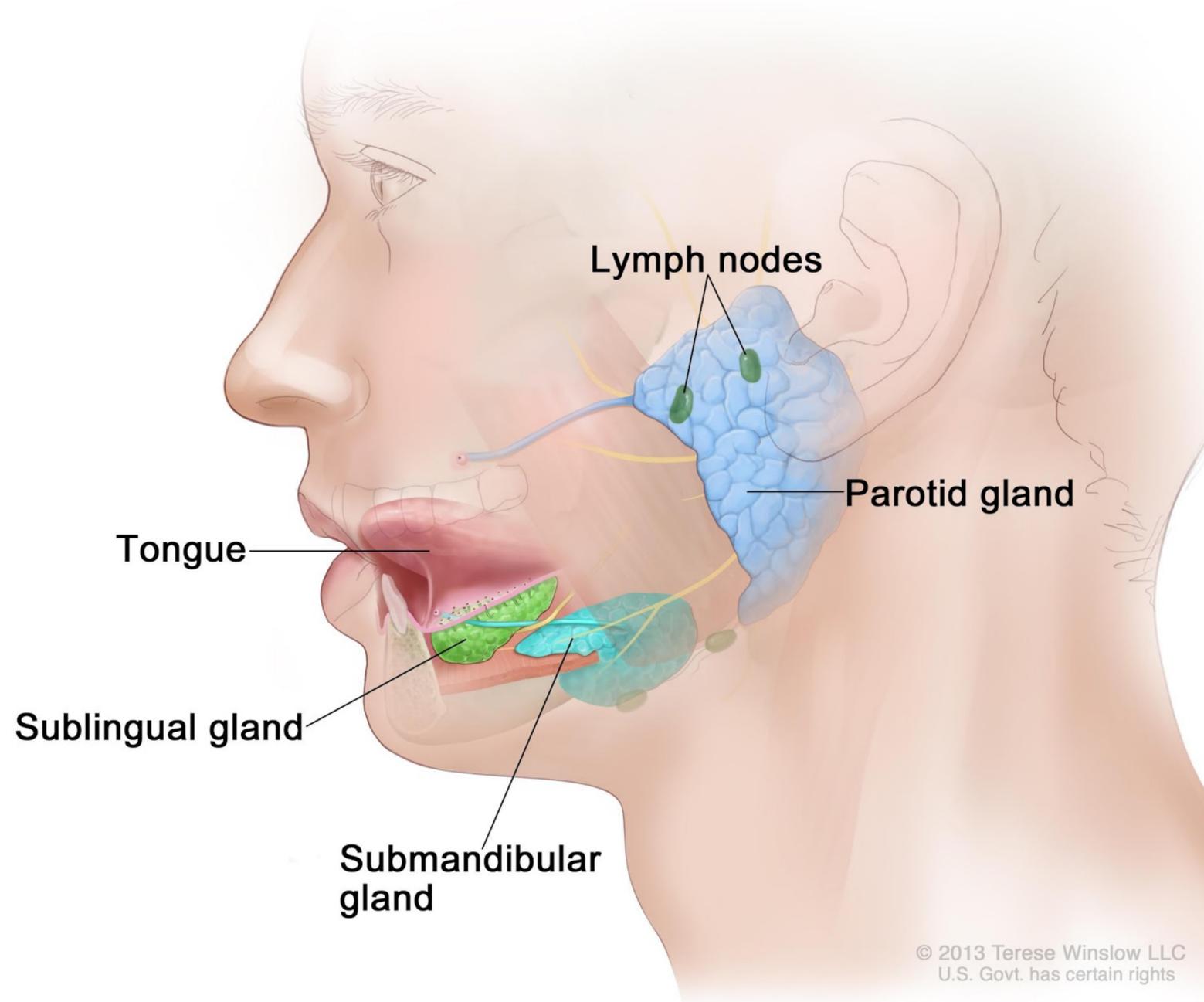
What's conversational?

The problem with 'chatty'

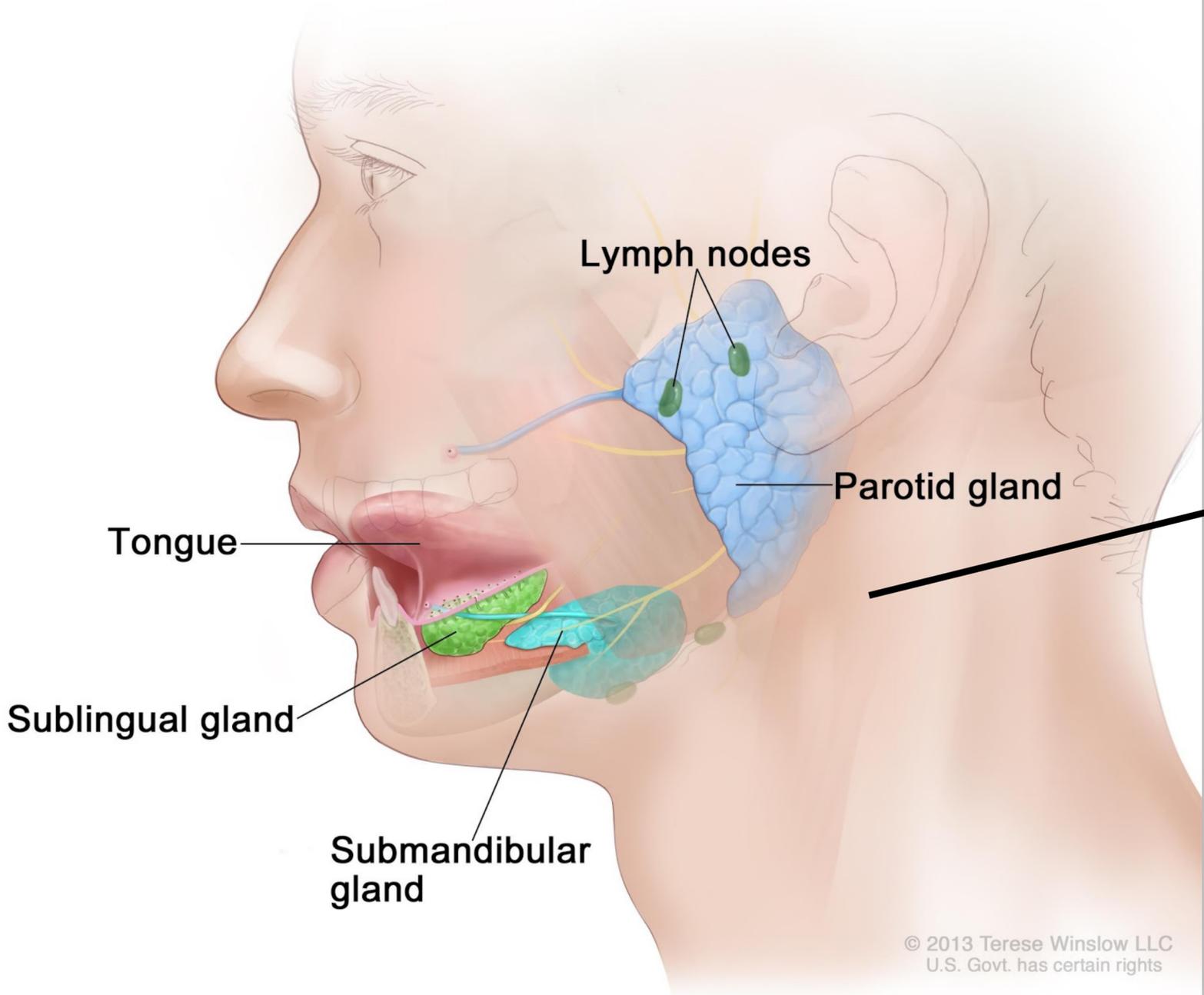
Examples from Typeform

Conclusion

Anatomy of the Salivary Glands



Anatomy of the Salivary Glands



Cringe gland

‘Conversational
, copy

‘Conversational
, copy

Oh, looks like you've been busy. No worries,



So, like...
what's
conversation?



Elizabeth
Stokoe

01 Customer: Hello - do you have Wi-Fi?

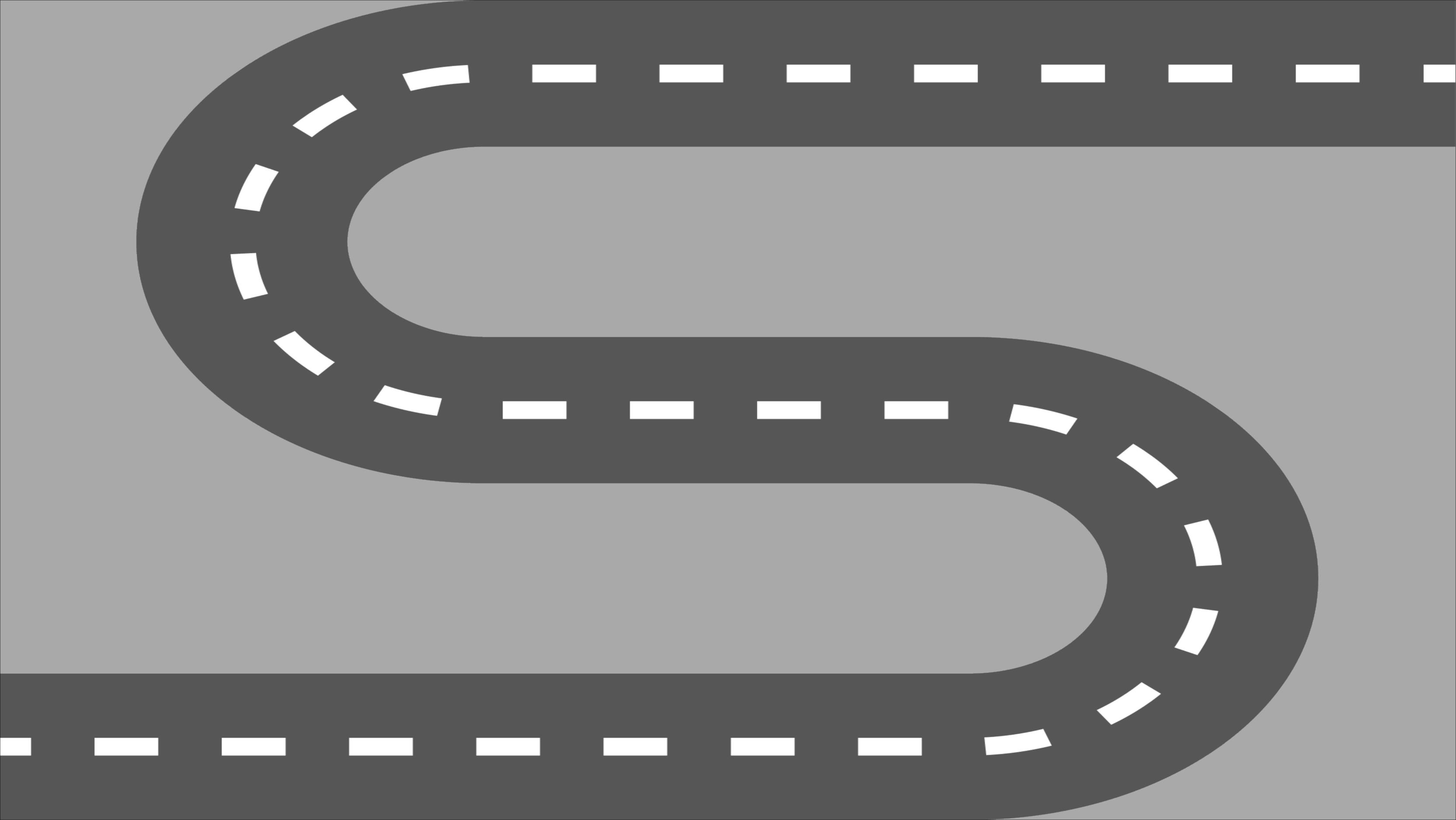
02 Café staff: Yes we do.

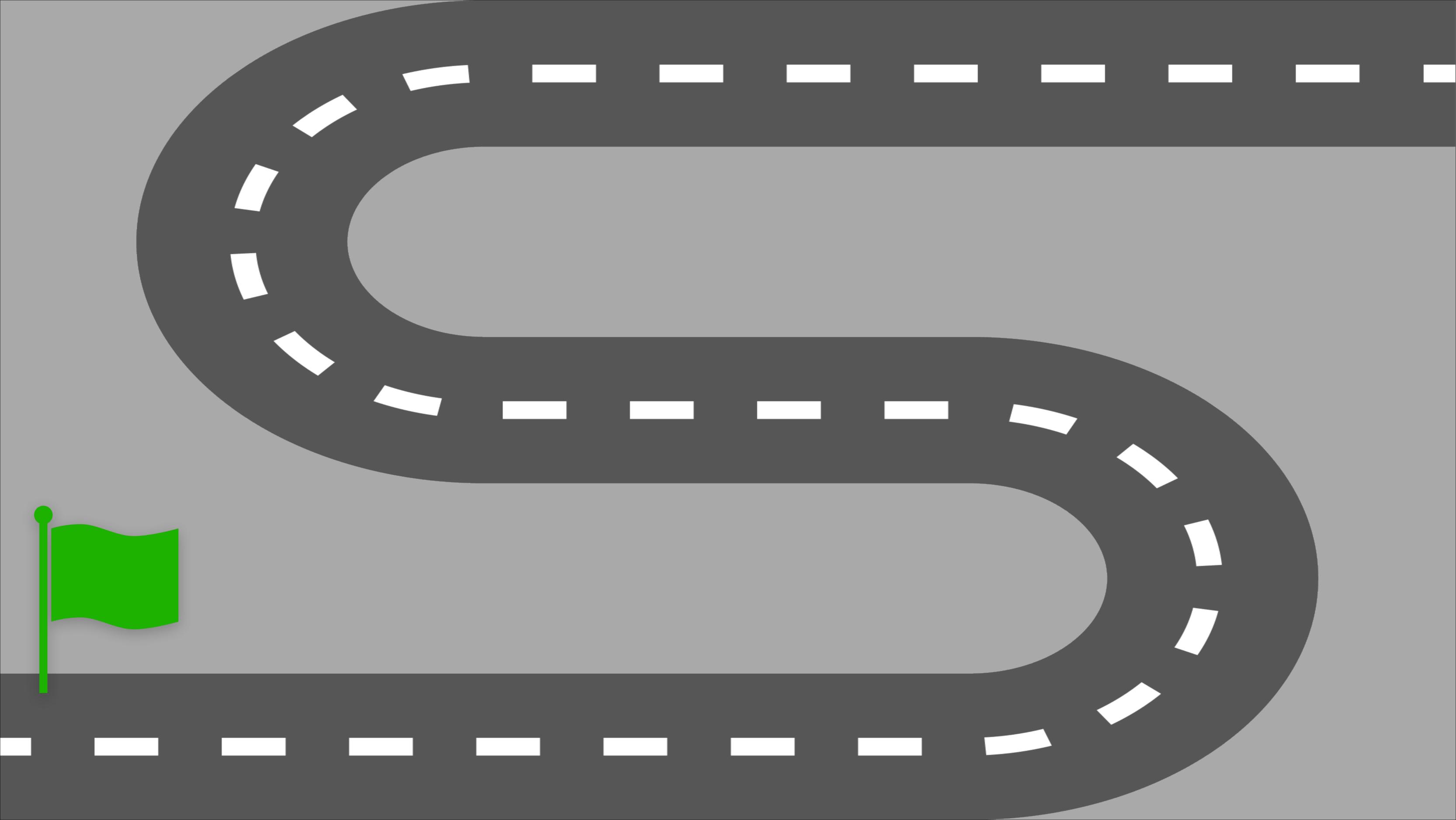
03 Customer: Can customers use it?

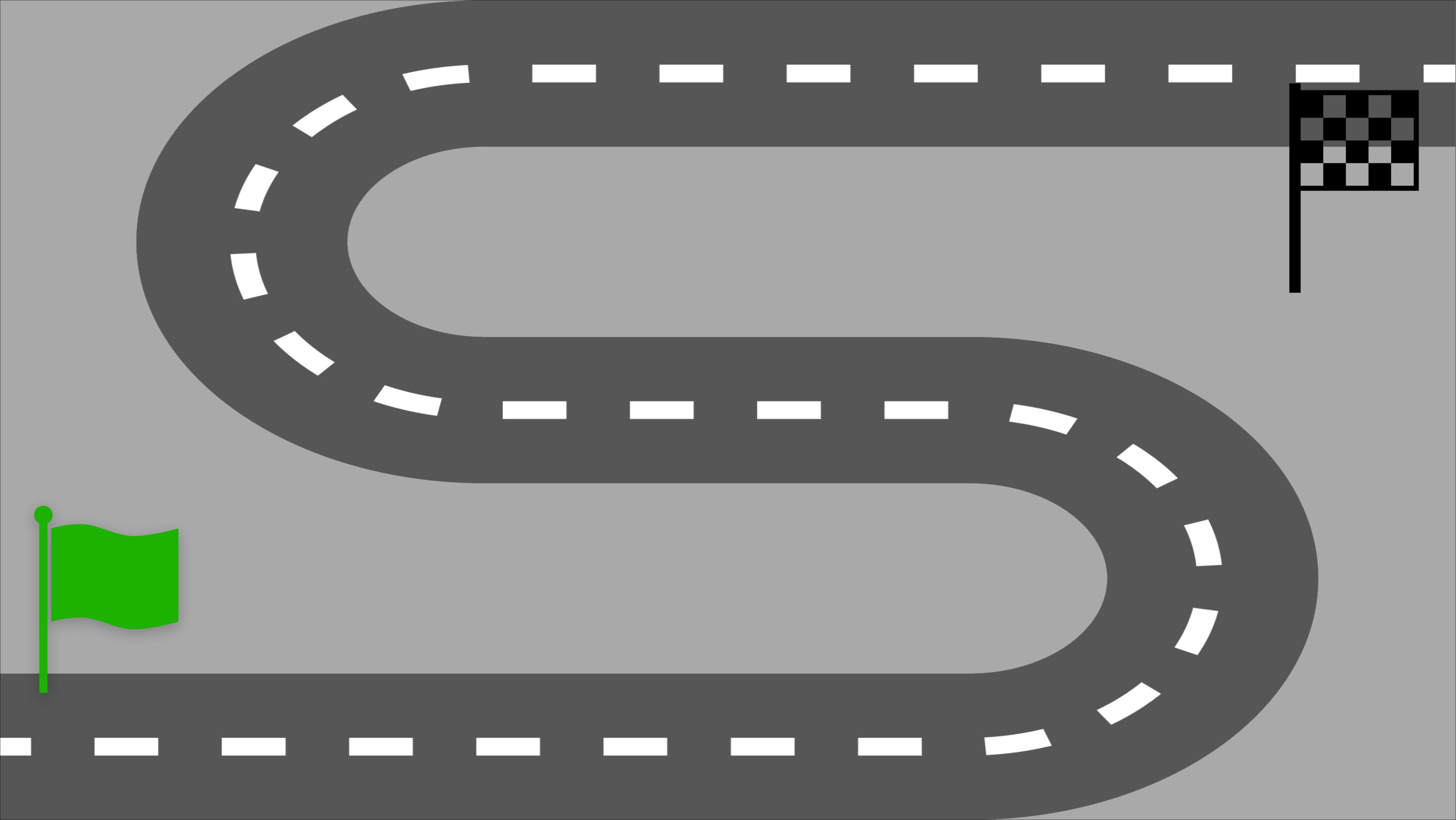
04 Café staff: Yes they can.

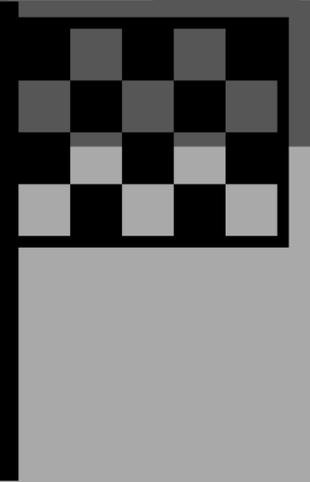
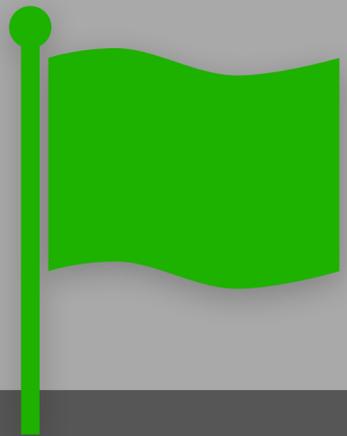
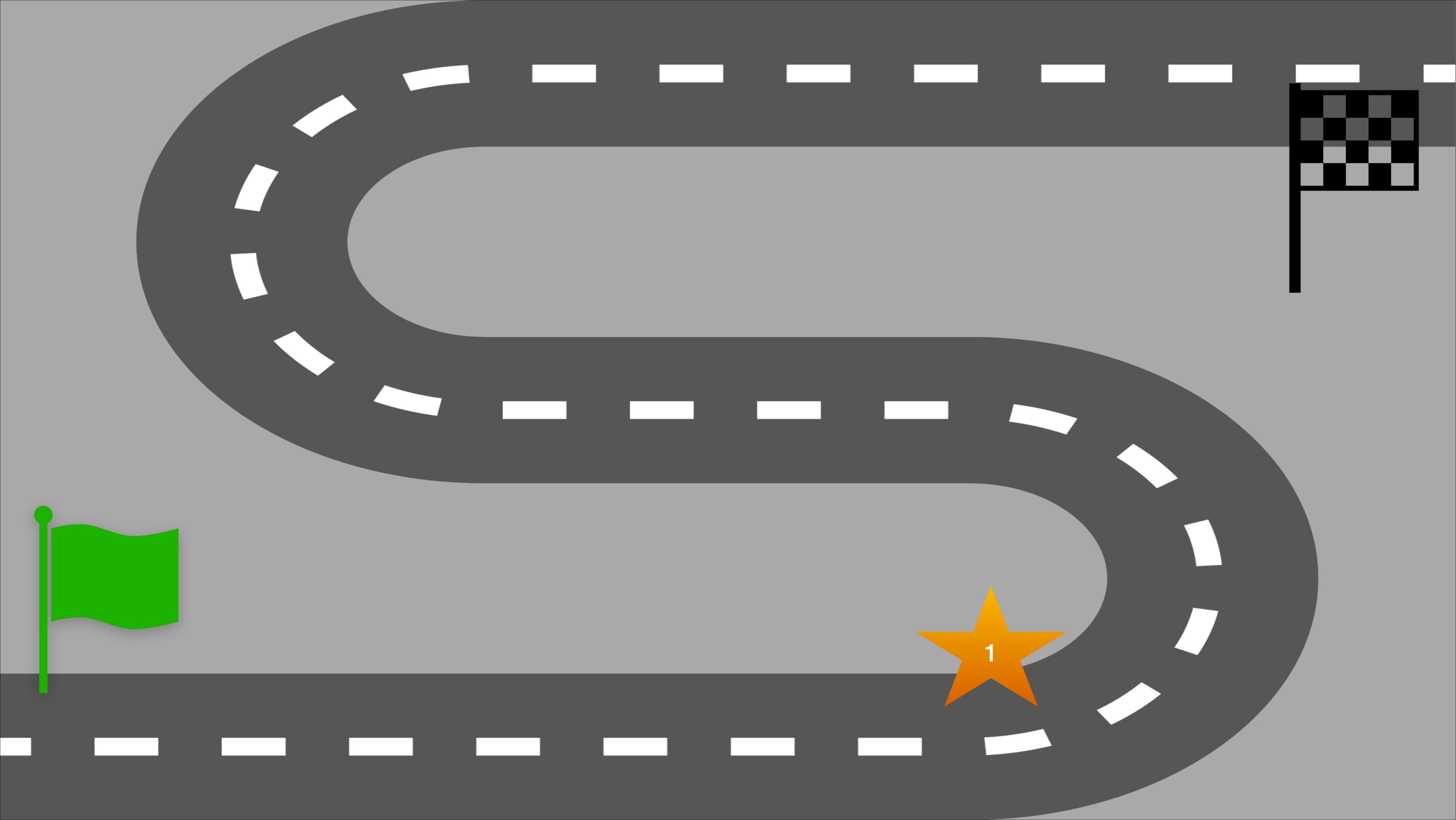
05 Customer: Is there a code, or...

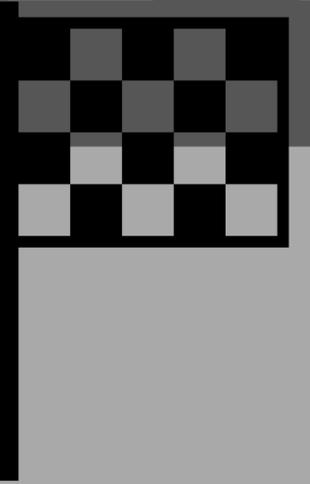
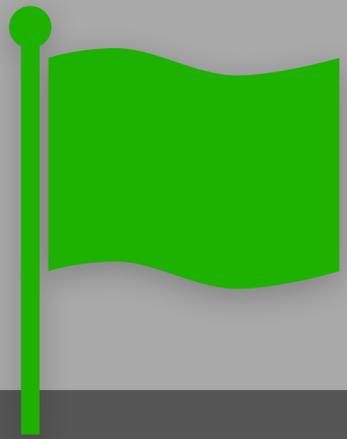
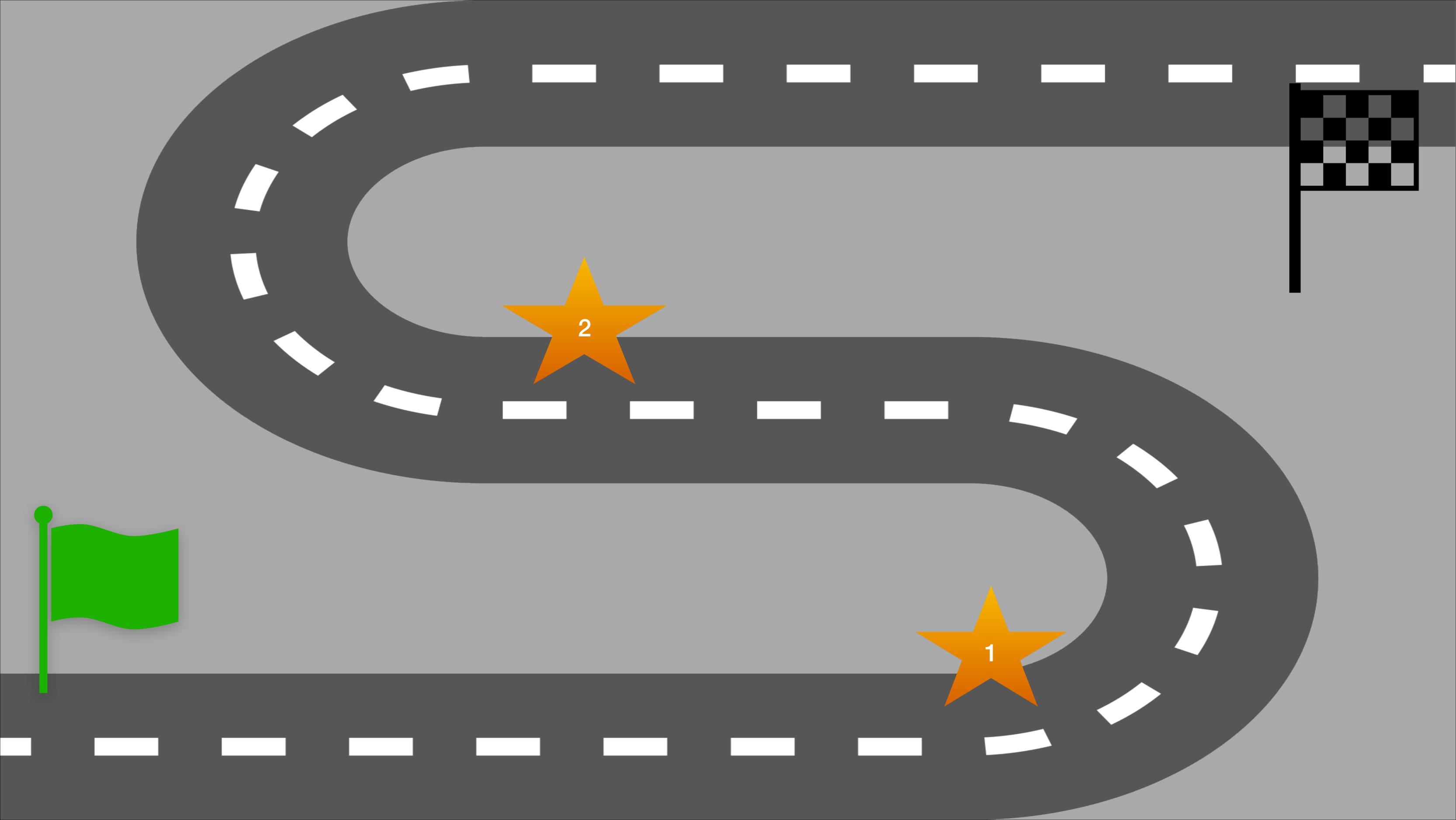
06 Café staff: ((Points at code written on café wall))

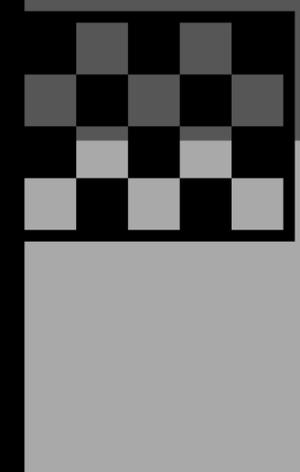
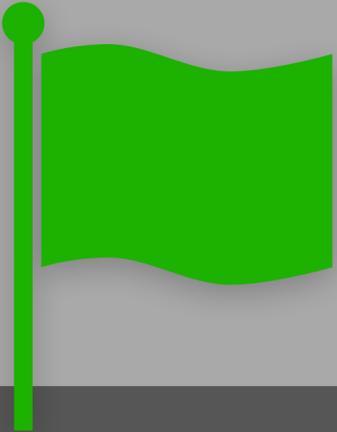
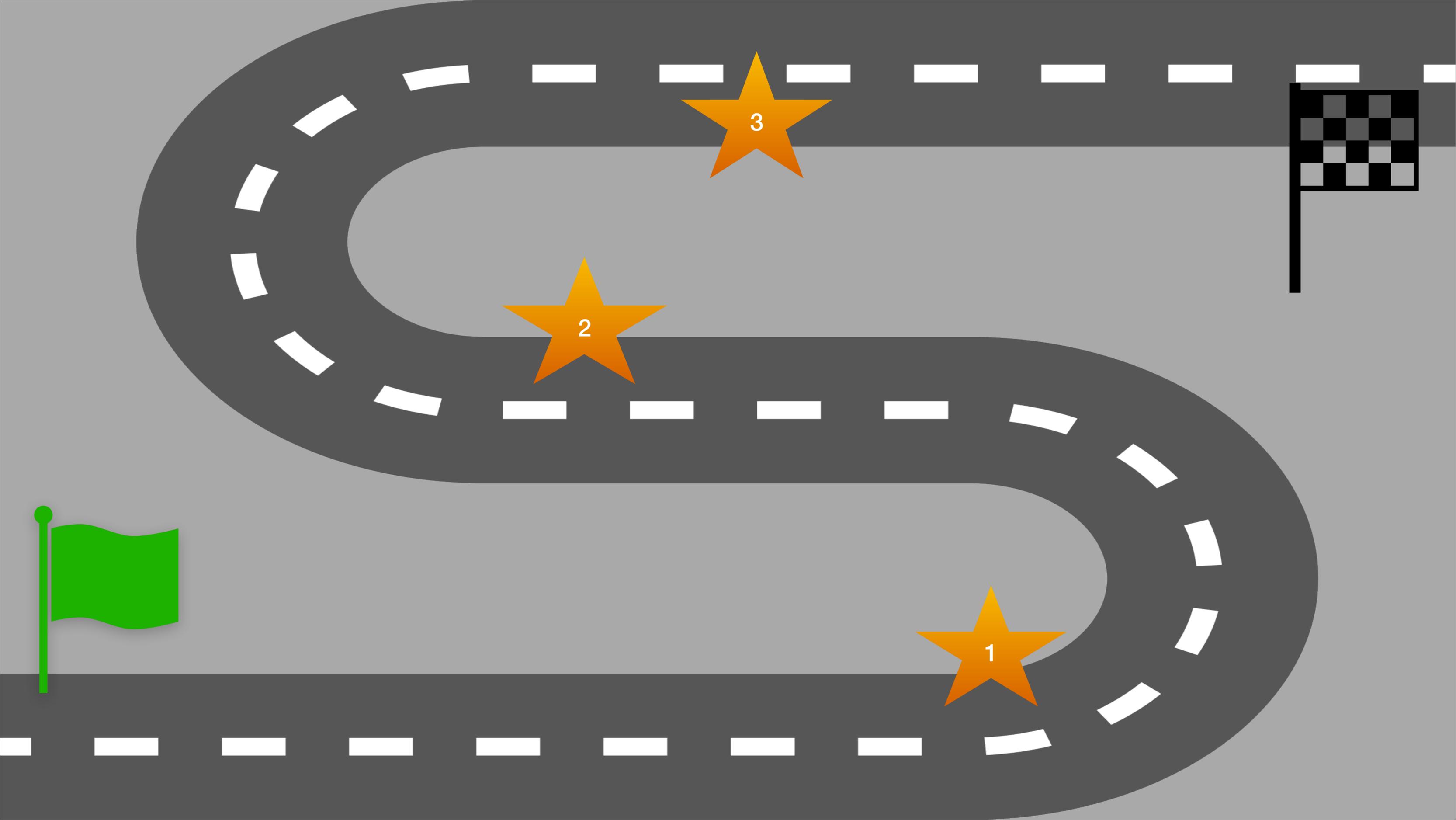


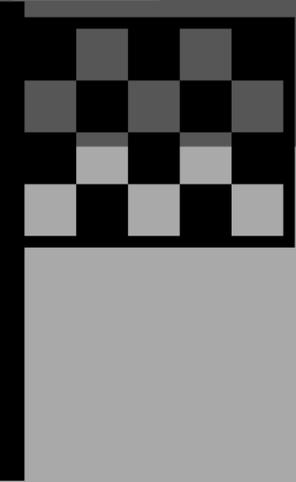
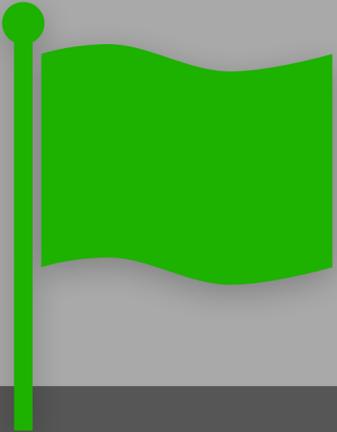
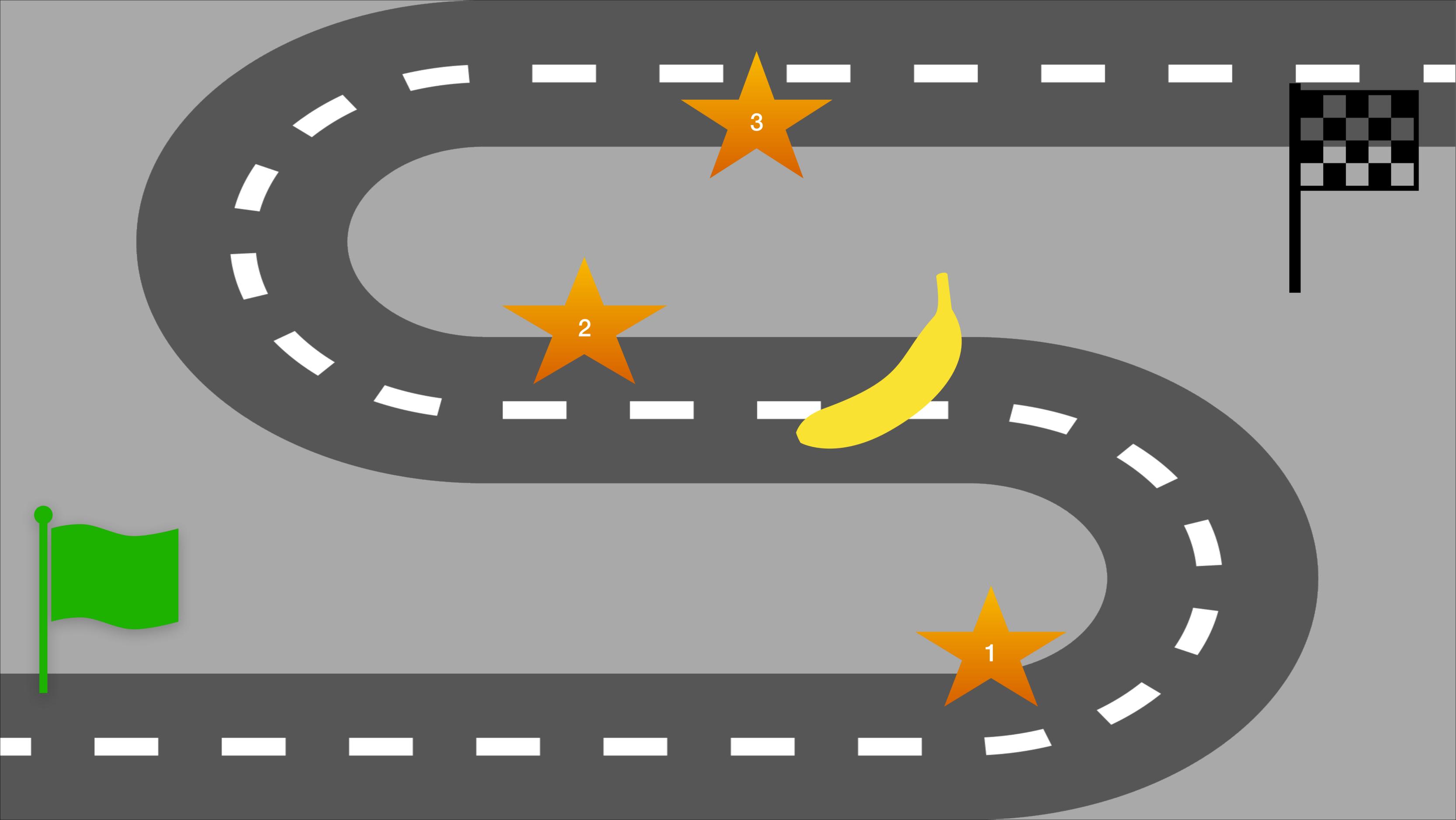




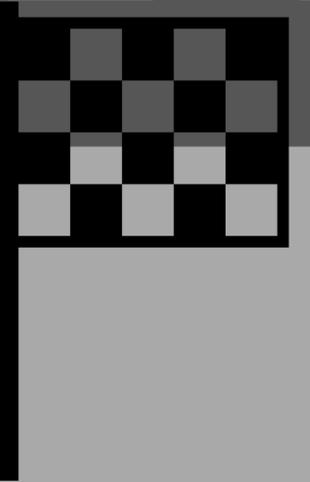
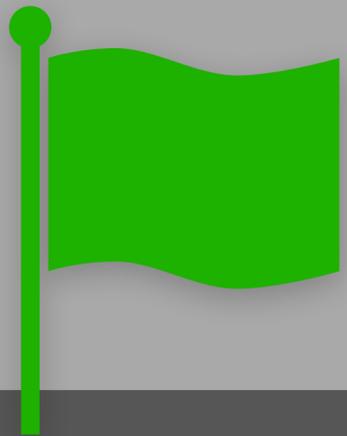
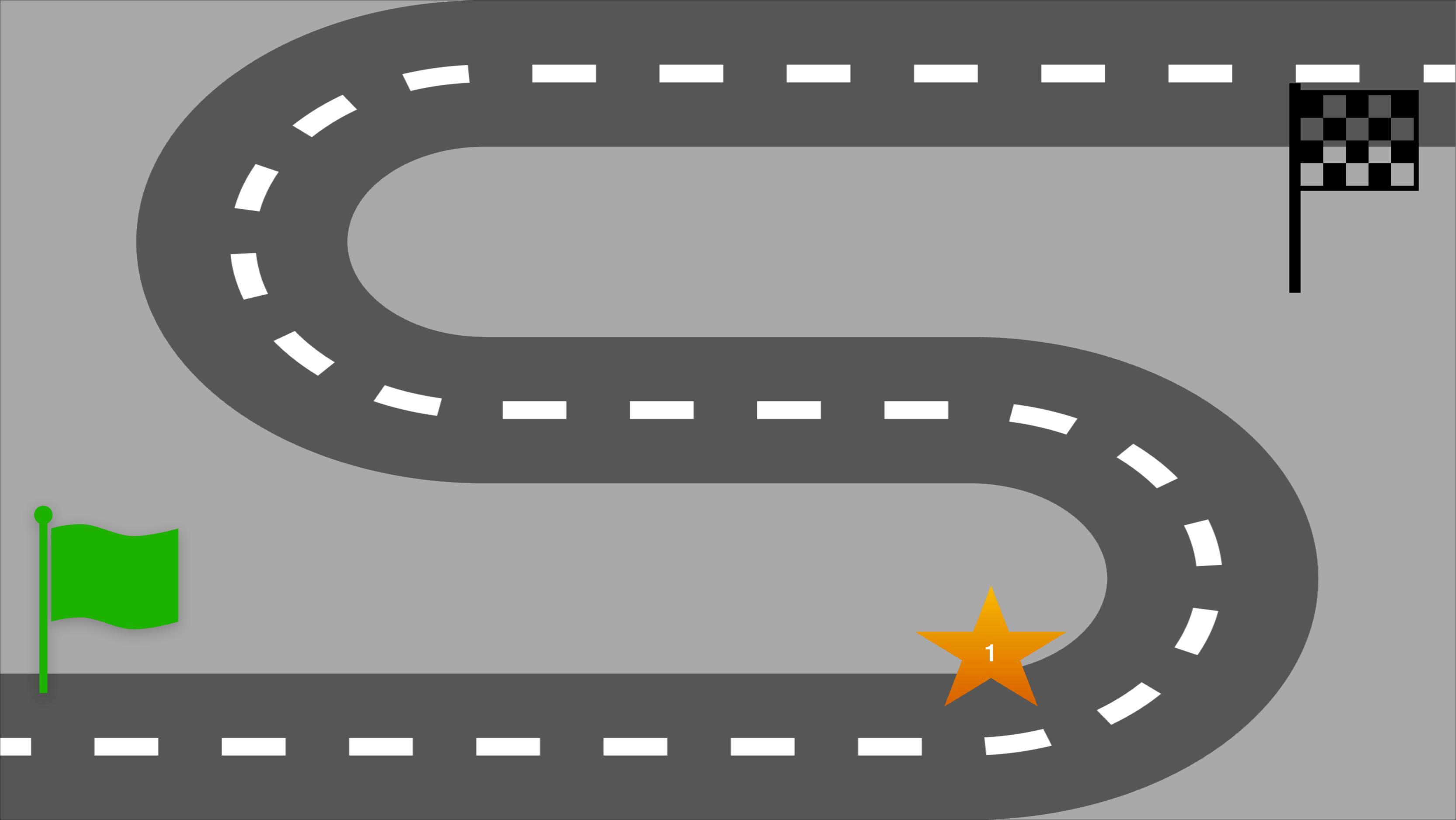














Take an order



Take an order

Offer



Take an order

Offer

Order



Take an order

Offer

Request

Order



Offer

Request



“May I take your
order?”

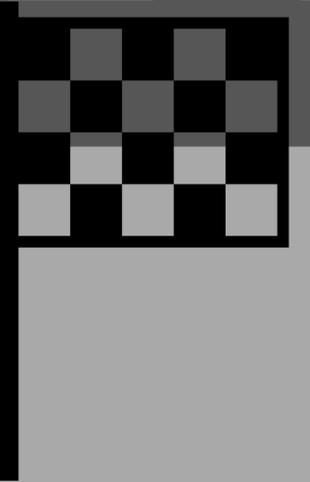
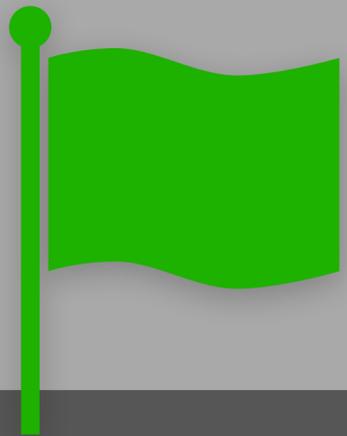
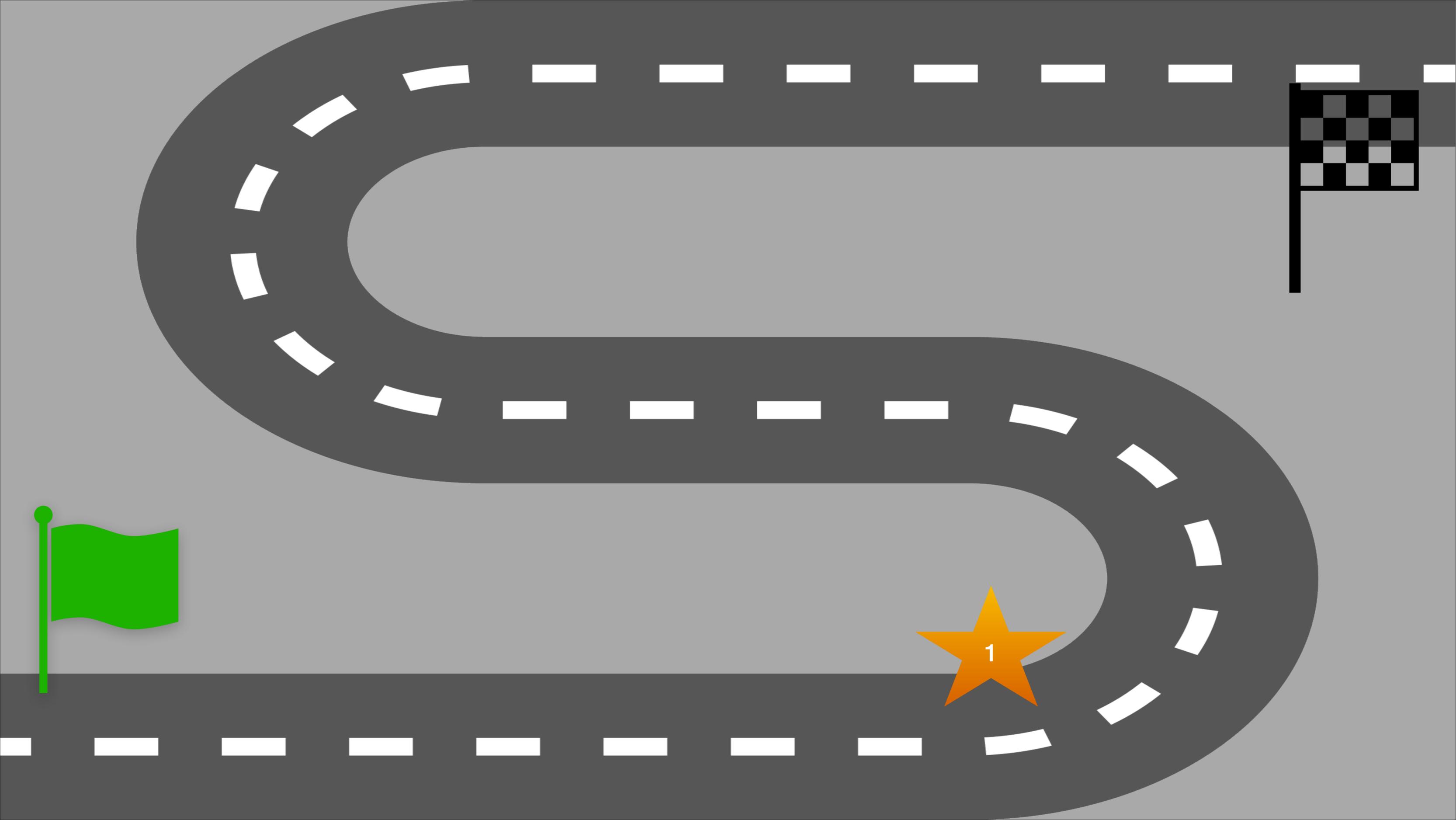


“I’ll have your
biggest lobster”



“Uhh...”





Order



Request Order



Be loved

Request
Order



Be loved

Compliment

Request

Order



Compliment Request



“I like your eyelashes”

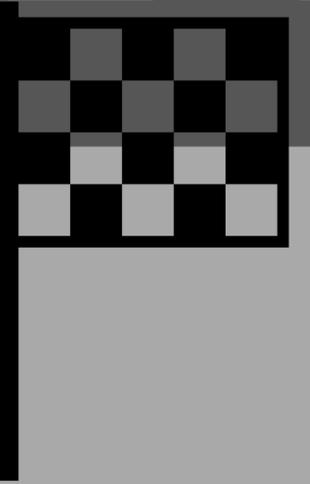
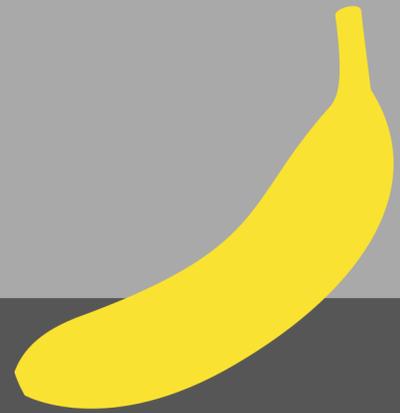
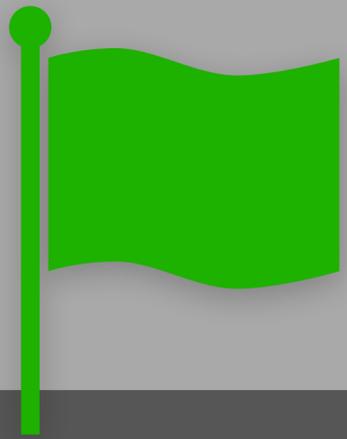
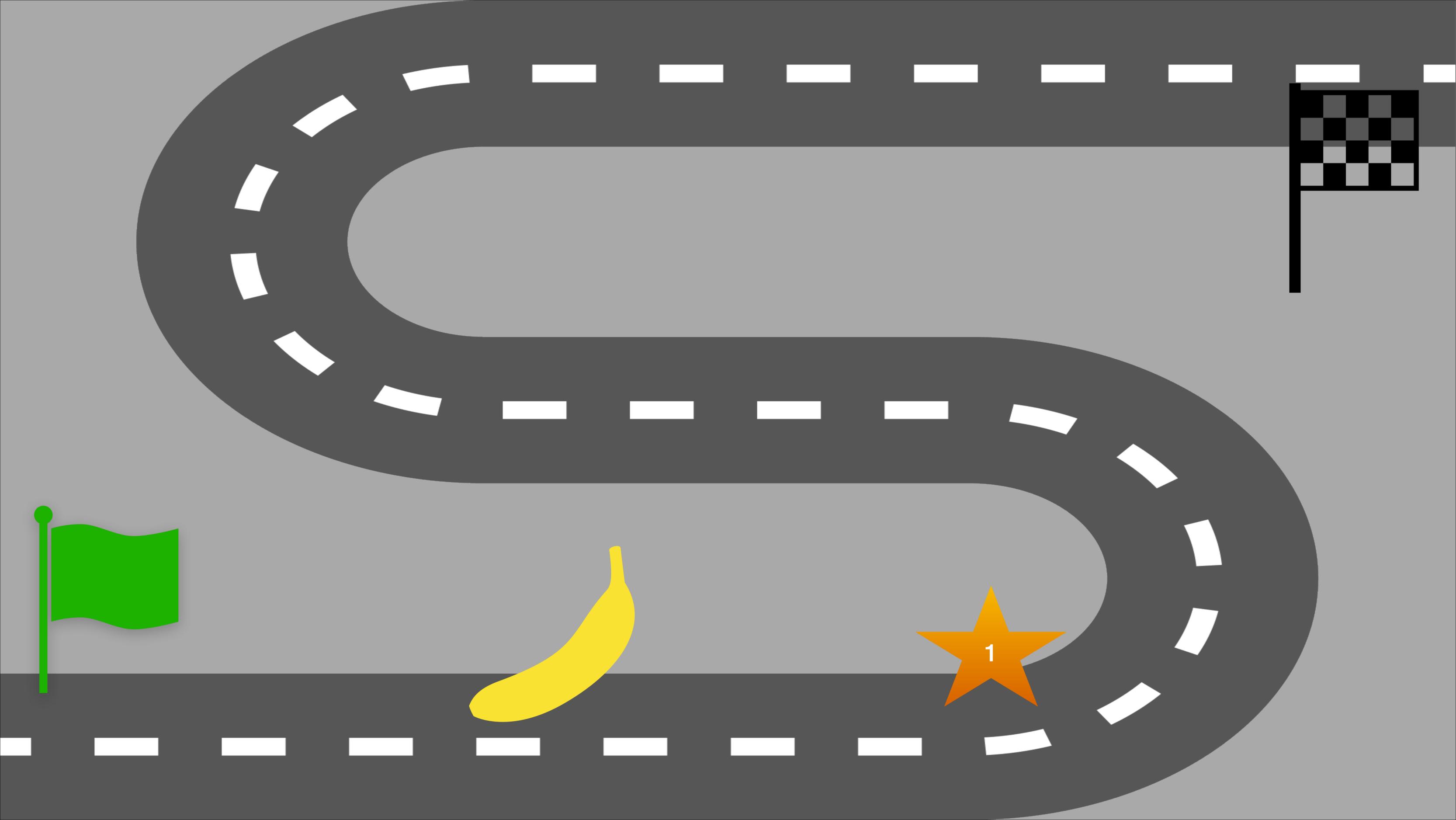




“Uhh...”

“Dude I’m sitting right here”







Unburden your respondent



Right. So
what's
conversational?

**‘Conversational’
is a buzzword**

OLD WAY

TRADITIONAL MARKETING

BEFORE DRIFT

Visitor



Customer



T I M E

Days to Weeks

NEW WAY

CONVERSATIONAL MARKETING

AFTER DRIFT

Visitor



Customer



T I M E

Minutes





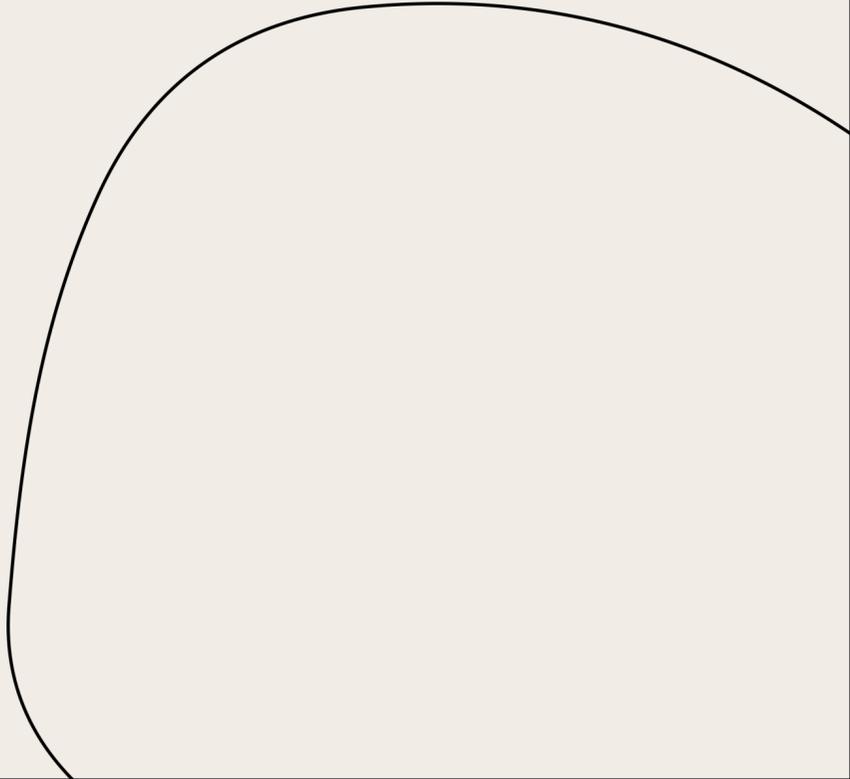
**Conversational marketing
is hotter than a hot thing on a steam table.**

058%

Abstract



Conversation(al)
is mechanics,
not content





“When humans talk, they can’t be anything other than conversational.”





Conversational

≠

Chatty, friendly, casual



The old way:



Machines don't need
to sound like humans

STOP: c0000218 Unknown Hard Error

Unknown Hard Error

The new(ish) way:



It might be easier
if machines sounded
like humans



High fives!

**Your campaign is in the
send queue and will go out shortly.**

Husam, Product Psychology and User Experience sent to 121 subscribers.

Track Performance in Reports

Track Performance in Mobile App

View or share it at: http://leapurl.com/_wpfb



GO TO SECTION

[Writing Goals and Principles](#)

[Voice and Tone](#)

[Writing About People](#)

[Grammar and Mechanics](#)

[Web Elements](#)

[Writing Blog Posts](#)

[Writing Technical Content](#)

[Writing Legal Content](#)

[Writing Email Newsletters](#)

[Writing for Social Media](#)

[Writing for Accessibility](#)

[Writing for Translation](#)

[Creating Structured Content](#)

[Copyright and Trademarks](#)

Voice

At Mailchimp, we've walked in our customers' shoes, and we know marketing technology is a minefield of confusing terminology. That's why we speak like the experienced and passionate business partner we wish we'd had way back when.

We treat every hopeful brand seriously. We want to educate people without patronizing or confusing them.

Using offbeat humor and a conversational voice, we play with language to bring joy to their work. We prefer the subtle over the noisy, the wry over the farcical. We don't take ourselves too seriously.

Whether people know what they need from us or don't know the first thing about marketing, every word we say informs and encourages. We impart our expertise with clarity, empathy, and wit.

All of this means that when we write copy:

1. **We are plainspoken.** We understand the world our customers are living in: one muddled by hyperbolic language, upsells, and over-promises. We strip all that away and value clarity above all. Because businesses come to Mailchimp to get to work, we avoid distractions like fluffy metaphors

The new way:



Brands can have
personalities, like us!

The new way:



We're conversational,
aren't we?

The new way:



And conversational

=

chatty, friendly, casual...right?

**Let's make it
all, like, chatty!**

Yeah, so... the
problem with
chatty

Presumptuous

Condescending

Overfamiliar

Obstructive

Self-indulgent

Desperate



innocent
little tasty drinks

If you're reading this, you must be bored. So why not try doing this stuff instead: weed the garden path, disco strut all the way to work, top up the dishwasher salt, go to the park and talk to the squirrels. Go on. Off you pop.

CSICERT



3

HECKED AND CERTIFIED FOOD PACKAGING
Patent FLM 006

If you're reading this, you must be bored. So why not try doing this stuff instead: weed the garden path, disco strut all the way to work, top up the dishwasher salt, go to the park and talk to the squirrels. Go on. Off you pop.

CSICERT



3

HECKED AND CERTIFIED FOOD PACKAGING
Patent FLM 006 UNI 10192 - DM 21-03-73

Should we send out a search party?

Inbox ×



William [Typeform] <william.ing@typeform.com>

Tue, Jun 11, 11:44 PM



to me ▾

Should we send out a search party? Inbox x



William [Typeform] <william.ing@typeform.com>

Tue, Jun 11, 11:44 PM



to me ▾

Hey [redacted];

It's us again. We emailed you recently but we haven't heard back, so we're guessing you're in a remote tropical location surrounded by swaying palms. Sweet.

Should we send out a search party? Inbox x



William [Typeform] <william.ing@typeform.com>

Tue, Jun 11, 11:44 PM



to me ▾

Hey [redacted];

It's us again. We emailed you recently but we haven't heard back, so we're guessing you're in a remote tropical location surrounded by swaying palms. Sweet.

Should we send out a search party? Inbox x



William [Typeform] <william.ing@typeform.com>

Tue, Jun 11, 11:44 PM



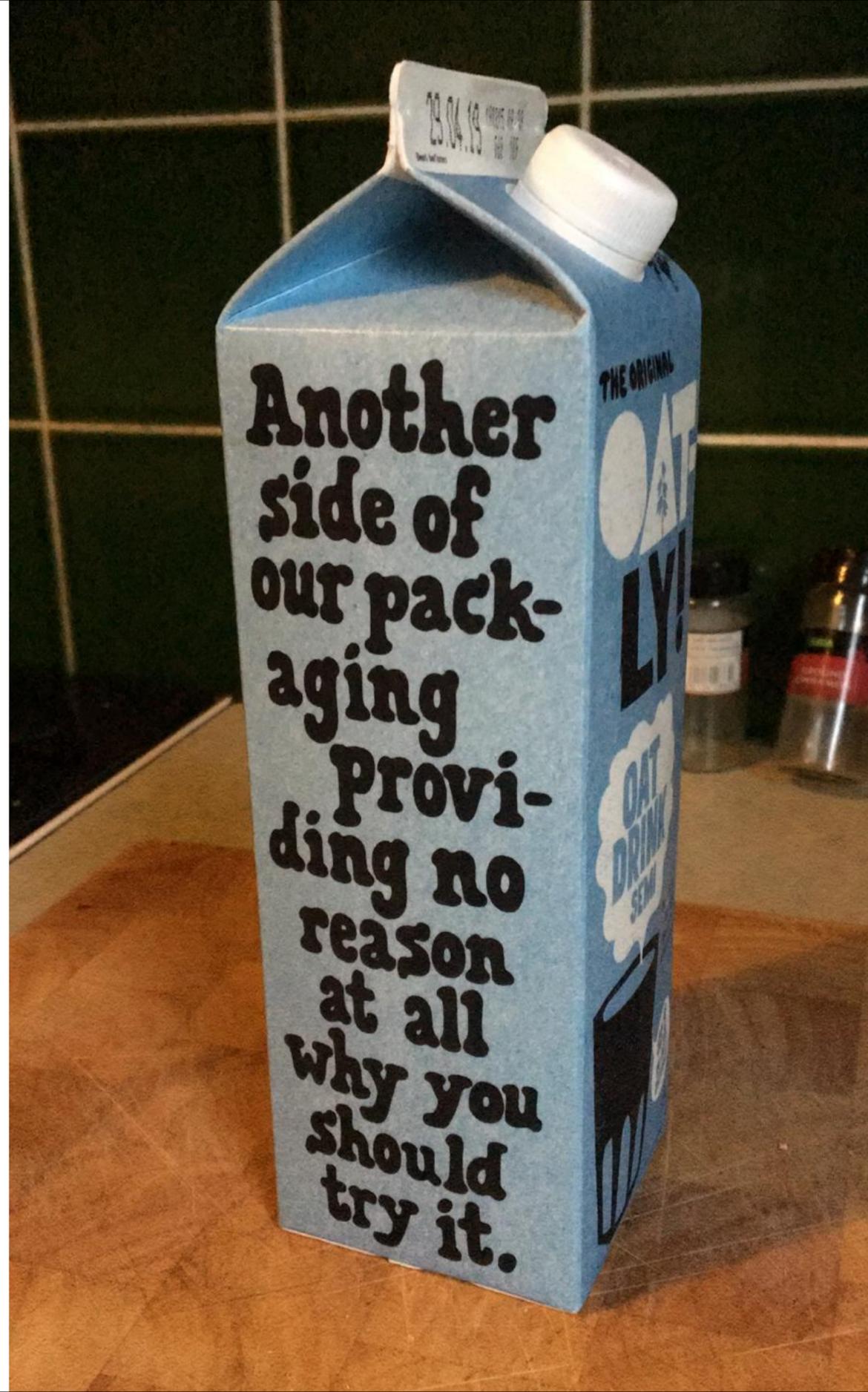
to me ▾

Hey [redacted];

It's us again. We emailed you recently but we haven't heard back, so we're guessing you're in a remote tropical location surrounded by swaying palms. Sweet.

Sorry to bring you back to reality, but we're contacting you about the [redacted] account. We need to let you know that we were unable to charge your card ending in [redacted] recently. If you need a recap, you were due to pay \$4.00 for the monthly PRO plan, but your bank came back to us with this message: "Card was declined."

Presumptuous
Condescending
Overfamiliar
Obstructive
Self-indulgent
Desperate



THE ORIGINAL

OAT!
LY!

JCDecaux

¡WMO!

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO BE SAID ABOUT THIS PRODUCT, BUT WE'VE BEEN TOLD THAT SPANISH PEOPLE DON'T READ ADS IN ENGLISH.





Oatly
@OatlyAB

Seguir



En respuesta a @OatlyAB @LadyMichunet

> No ha sido nuestra intención ofender a nadie y sentimos si el mensaje se ha interpretado de esa manera. Sabemos que mucha gente en España habla y entiende el Inglés, aunque nos dijeron que los españoles no prestan atención a los anuncios en este idioma.>

0:30 - 25 oct. 2018



1





Oatly
@OatlyAB

Seguir



En respuesta a @OatlyAB @LadyMichunet

“It wasn’t our intention to offend anyone and we’re sorry if the message was interpreted this way. We know that many people in Spain speak and understand English, although we were told Spanish people don’t pay attention to ads in English.”

0:30 - 25 oct. 2018



Presumptuous

Condescending

Overfamiliar

Obstructive

Self-indulgent

Desperate



Already a Cheerzer? With one click, log in!



Login with an email address



Login with Facebook



Login with Google

[You don't already have an account? Create one](#)

Presumptuous

Condescending

Overfamiliar

Obstructive

Self-indulgent

Desperate

Drag 1 to 4 photos here

April 2019

In the month of the diamond, you shine especially bright

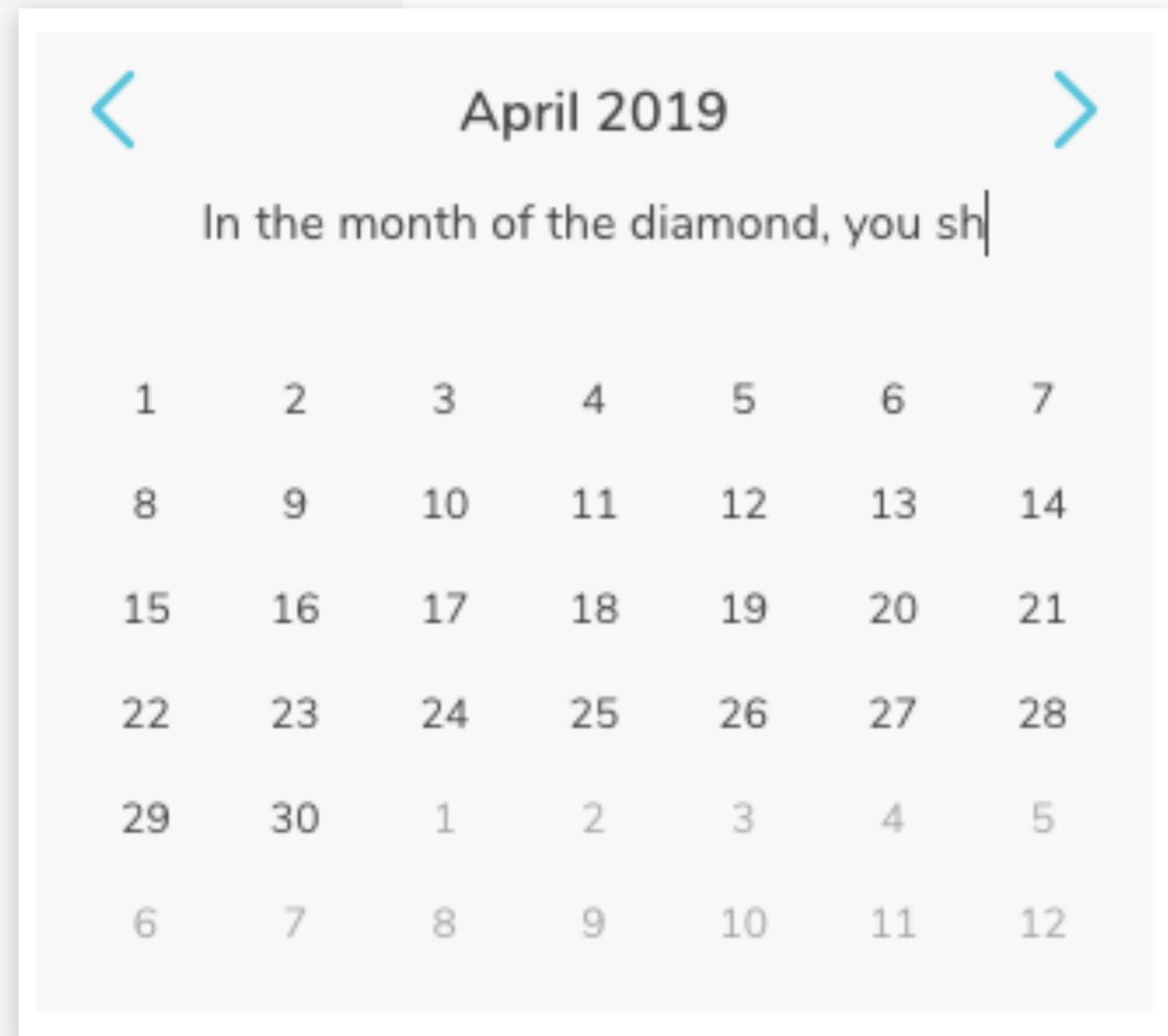
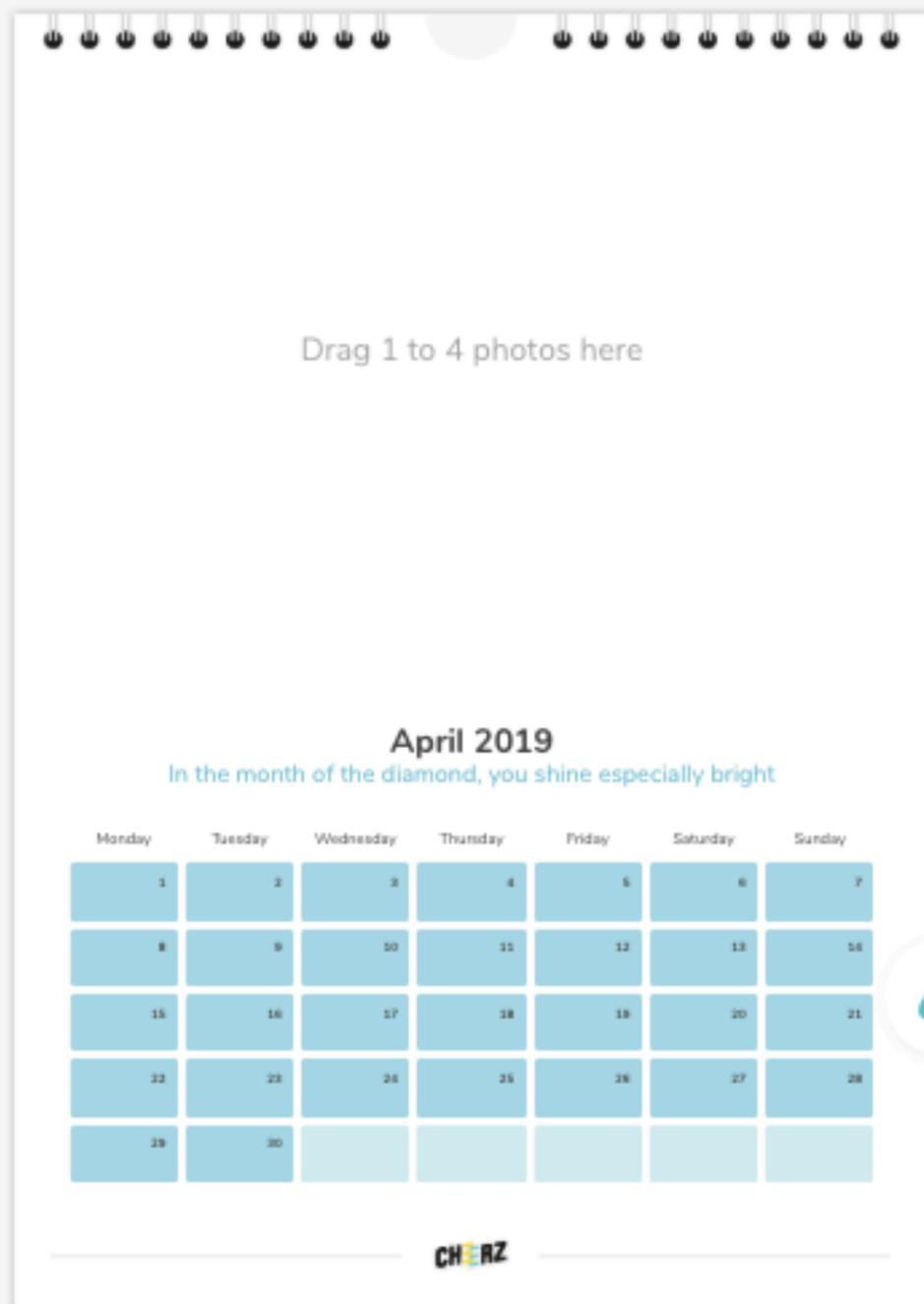
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



Color

CHERZ





Color

J F M **A** M J J A S O N D



Presumptuous

Condescending

Overfamiliar

Obstructive

Self-indulgent

Desperate

After all, our members will tell you what's good about us at giffgaff.com.

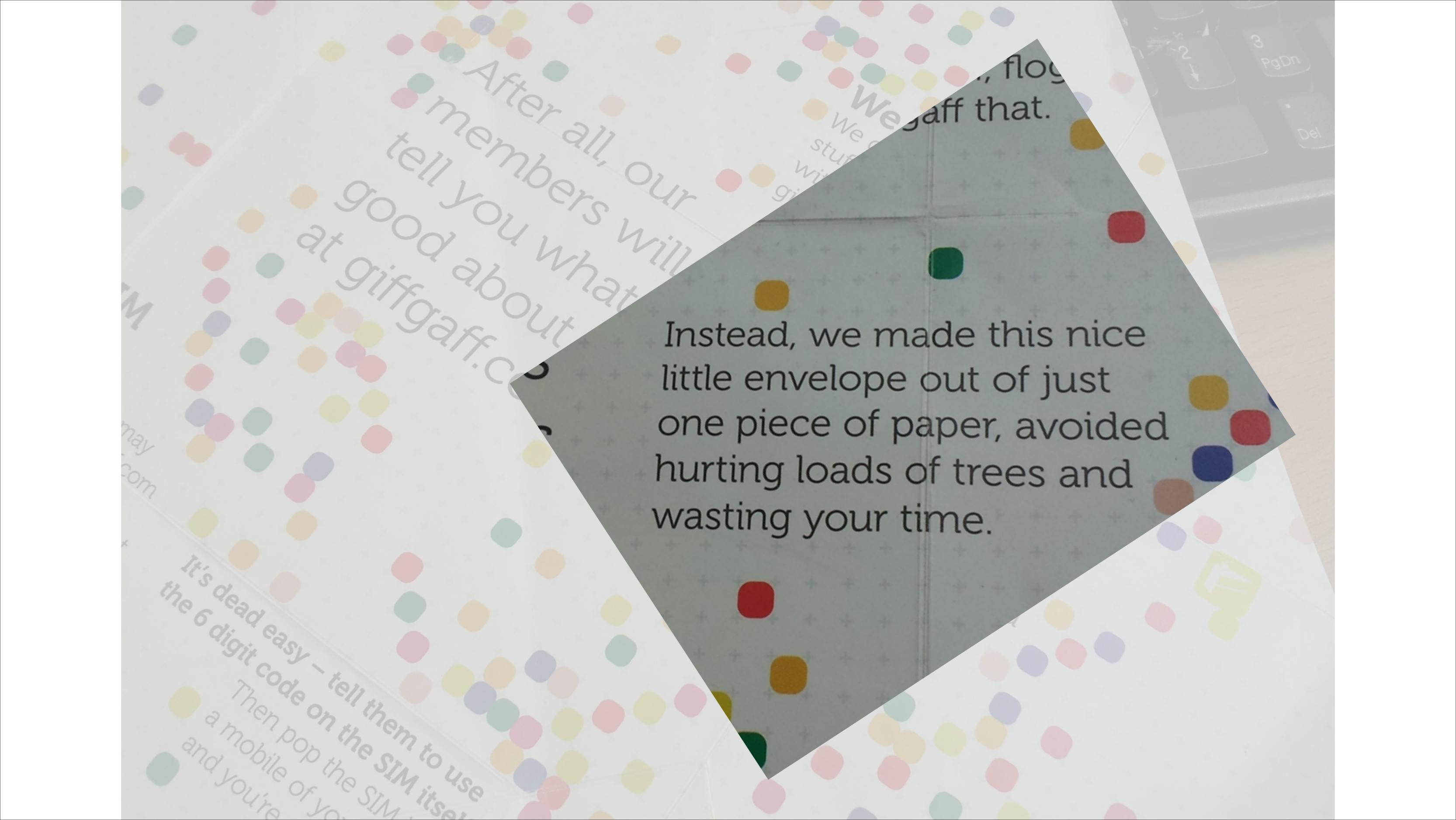
We don't like waste.

We didn't see much point in stuffing this little envelope with lots of tedious stuff, flogging giffgaff this and giffgaff that.

Instead, we made this nice little envelope out of just one piece of paper, avoided hurting loads of trees and wasting your time.

It's dead easy – tell them to use the 6 digit code on the SIM itself. Then pop the SIM in a mobile of your choice and you're





Instead, we made this nice little envelope out of just one piece of paper, avoided hurting loads of trees and wasting your time.

After all, our members will tell you what's good about at giffgaff.com

It's dead easy – tell them to use the 6 digit code on the SIM itself
Then pop the SIM in a mobile of your choice and you're

Updates



Available

[Update All](#)



Trainline: Book
Train Tickets

Yesterday

UPDATE

Music to your ears

We've been tightening strings and conducting some fine tuning to keep everything in our app playing in perfect harmony. This update is more a ditty than a ballad, so you probably won't notice any major key changes.

Want to sing our praises? Got some feedback?
Leave us a note!

Presumptuous

Condescending

Overfamiliar

Obstructive

Self-indulgent

Desperate



Your opinion matters a lot to us!
Share your thoughts in three quick clicks



Hi Steve

Please take 30 seconds (max, we promise) to answer a few questions about your order and product. We will be grateful forever. You help us be better!

Don't be a stranger,



“If you sell too hard,
your reader’s amygdala
lights up like a
Christmas tree. That’s
the fight or flight part of
the brain [...] you’re now
perceived as a threat.”

~Nick Usborne



Presumptuous

Condescending

Overfamiliar

Obstructive

Self-indulgent

Desperate



**Why take the
risk?**



What about
Typeform, eh?

→ Registration

User ID Must be between 6-40 characters in length, with allowable characters being A-Z, a-z, 0-9 and the following special characters (@, ., -, _). No spaces are allowed.

Password Must be between 8-20 characters in length and include 4 alpha characters; 1 numeric character (0-9) or 1 special character (!, #, \$, %). The password is case sensitive and must not contain spaces or be the same as your user ID.

Verify Password Re-enter your password.

Email Address Allowable characters being A-Z, a-z, 0-9 and the following special characters (@, ., -, _). No spaces are allowed.

Verify Email Address Re-enter your email address.

Security Question 1

Security Answer 1

Security Question 2

Security Answer 2

Security Question 3

Security Answer 3

Security Question 4

Security Answer 4

Security Question 5

Security Answer 5

DL/ID # DL/ID # must be as it appears on your card (DL/ID # is case sensitive).

Date of Birth(DOB)

Last 4 digits of SSN

DL/ID Issue Date [Show Me How](#)





SHALL WE PLAY A GAME?

→ Registration

User ID Must be between 6-40 characters in length, with allowable characters being A-Z, a-z, 0-9 and the following special characters (@, ., -, _,). No spaces are allowed.

Password Must be between 8-20 characters in length and include 4 alpha characters; 1 numeric character (0-9) or 1 special character (!, #, \$, %). The password is case sensitive and must not contain spaces or be the same as your user ID.

Verify Password Re-enter your password.

Email Address Allowable characters being A-Z, a-z, 0-9 and the following special characters (@, ., -, _,). No spaces are allowed.

Verify Email Address Re-enter your email address.

Security Question 1

Security Answer 1

Security Question 2

Security Answer 2

Security Question 3

Security Answer 3

Security Question 4

Security Answer 4

Security Question 5

Security Answer 5

DL/ID # DL/ID # must be as it appears on your card (DL/ID # is case sensitive).

Date of Birth(DOB)

Last 4 digits of SSN

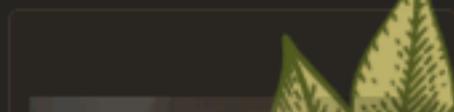
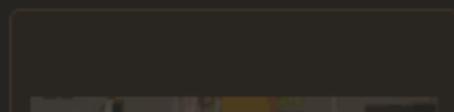
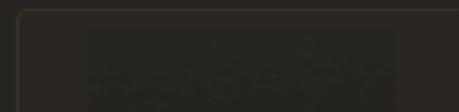
DL/ID Issue Date [Show Me How](#)

1 → Shall we play a game?

Yes

No

2 → Nice. Which game?



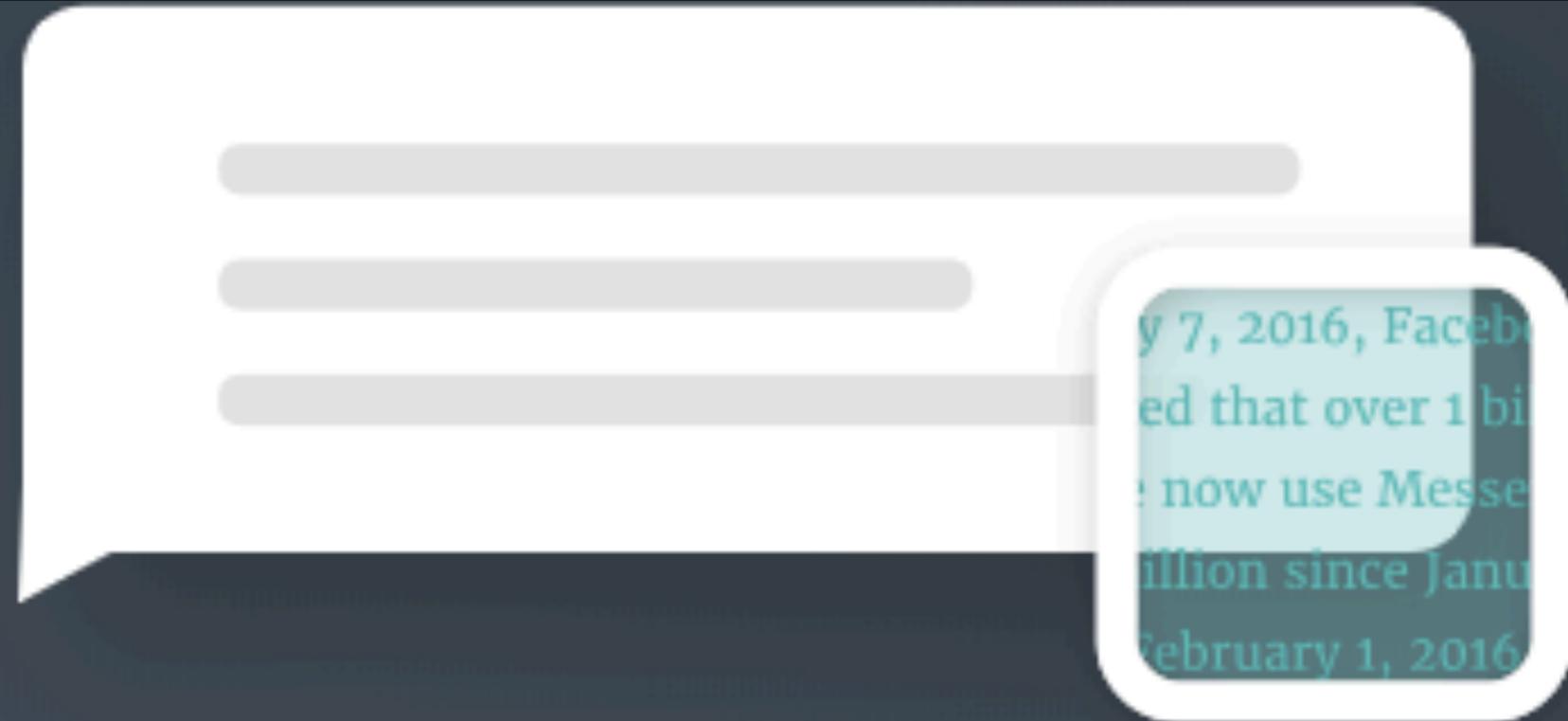
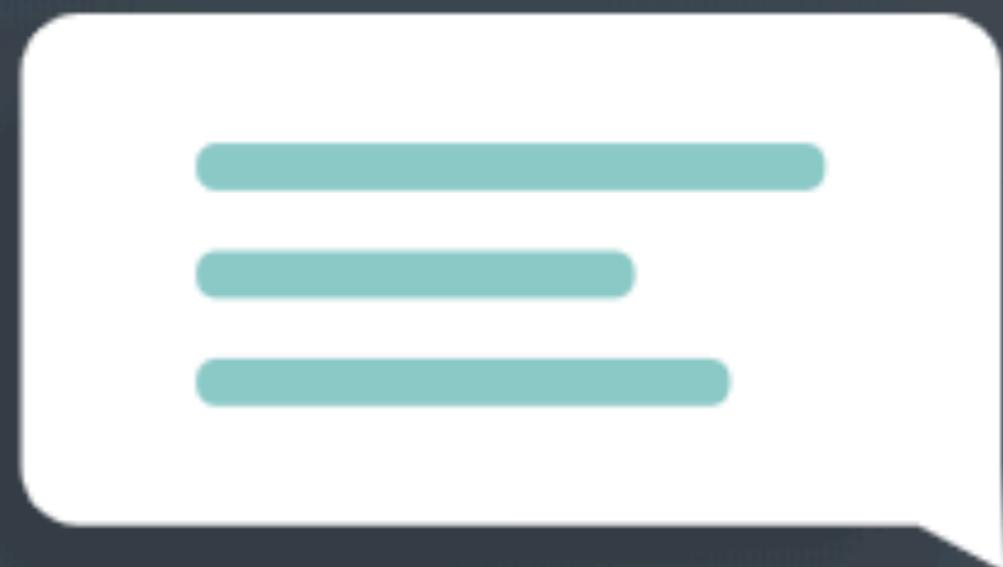
0 of 3 answered

Powered by **Typeform**

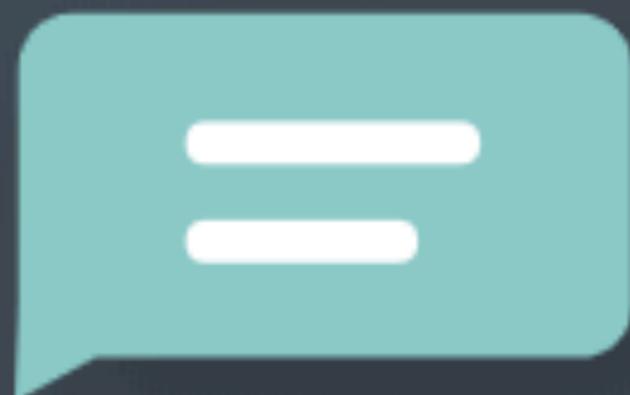




What we
preached...



By 7, 2016, Facebook announced that over 1 billion people now use Messenger. This is a significant milestone, as it marks the first time that the number of active users has surpassed 1 billion since January 1, 2016.



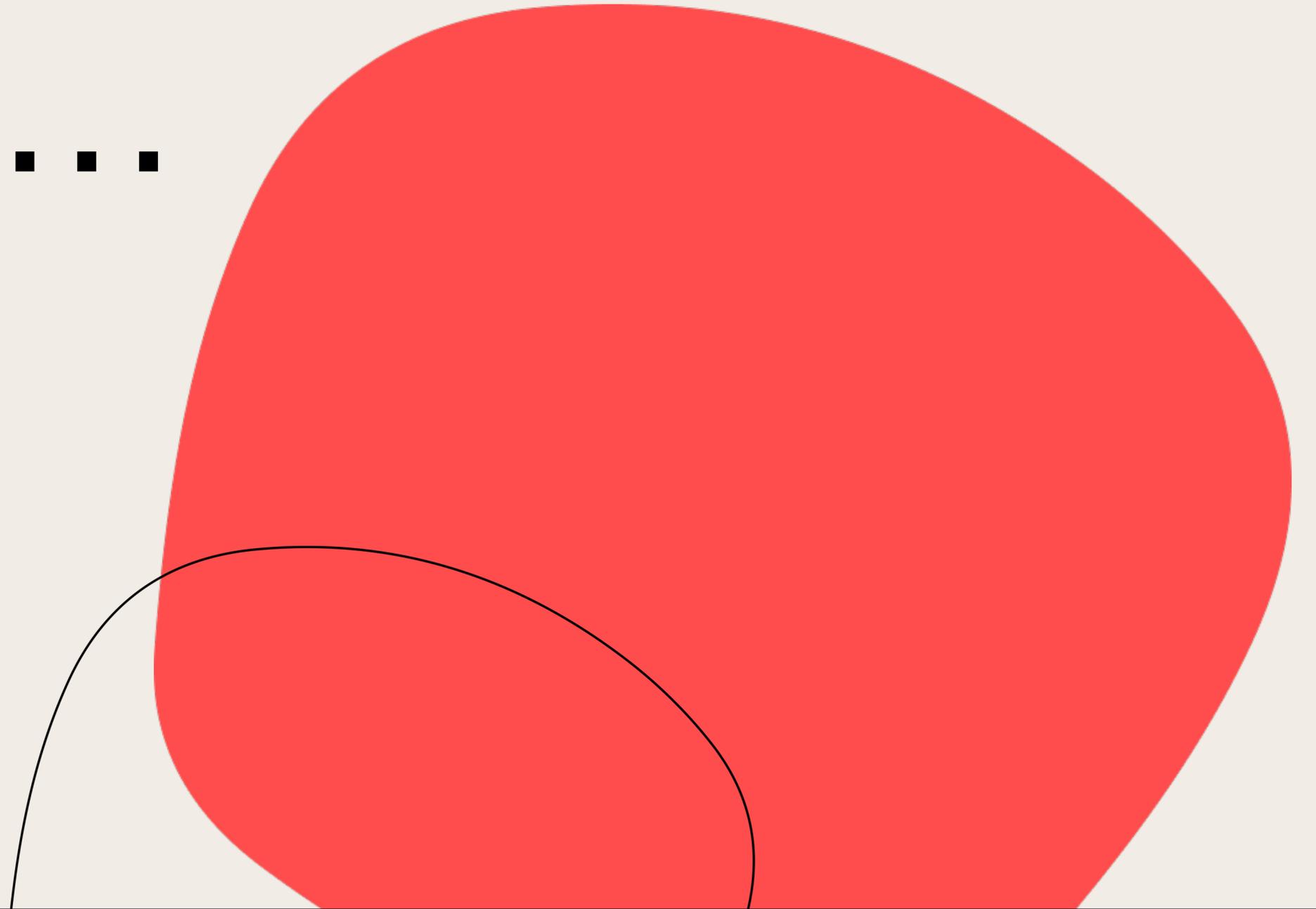
Technology Imitates Art

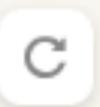
The rise of the conversational interface



Say "hello" to
conversational
data collection

What we
practised...





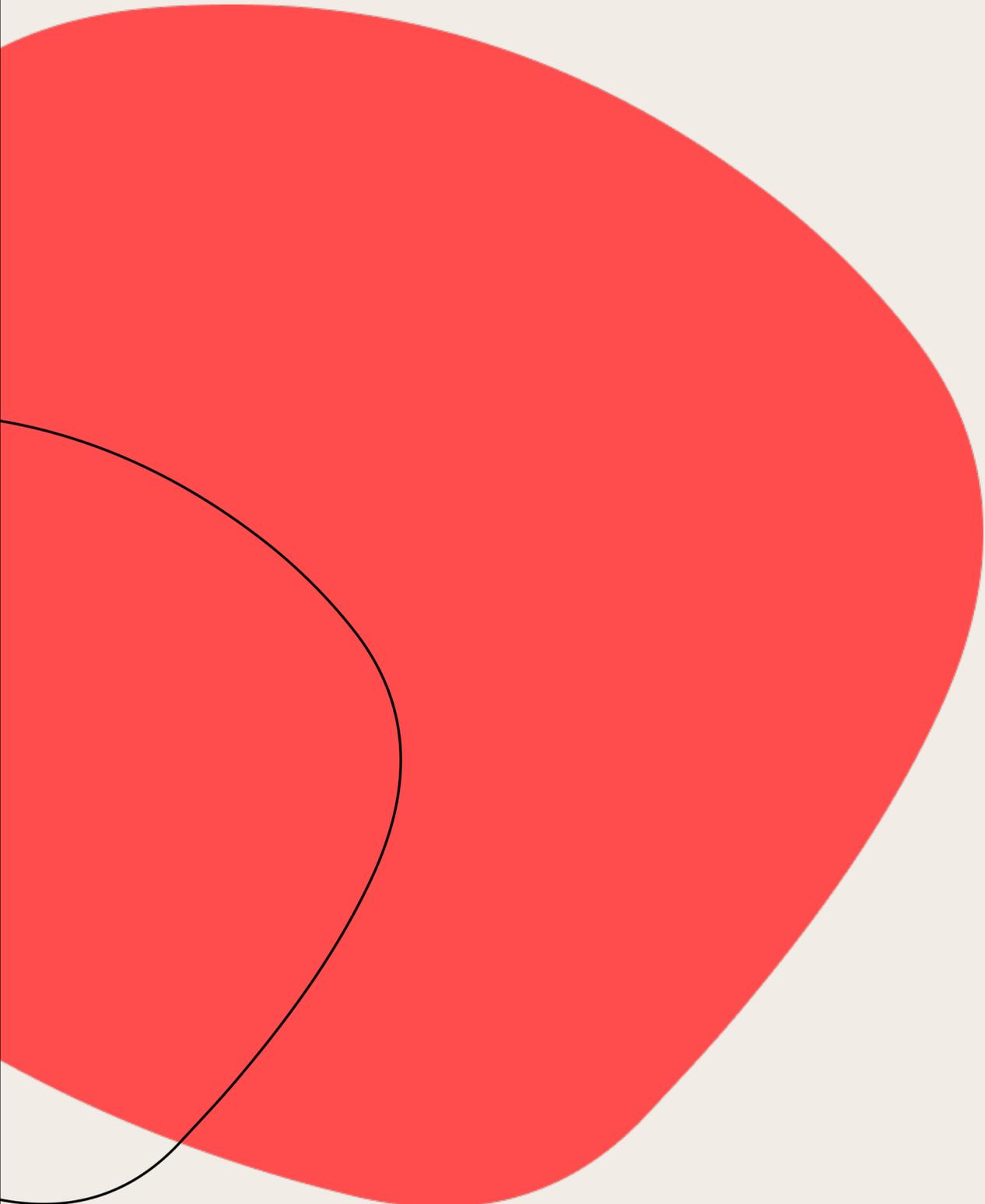
1 → **Hello, friend!** What's your first name?



Herd your answer into here, partner

2 → And how will you be dressed, _____?





What the
professor
told us...



**“Stop
building
rapport!”**

WHY
YOU SHOULD
CUT THE SMALL
TALK WITH YOUR
CUSTOMERS

Some examples



3 → What can we help with? *

A Help! I'm in the middle of building a typeform but I have a question ✓

B Oops! I can't log in to my account

C I need to ask about my billing status / invoices

D I don't have an account yet, but I would like to ask something

E I have a question about the account plans / my plan

F I have a different question



T

4 → Ah, issue with building, Steve? No worries, we're here for you!
What can we help with?

A Logic Jump

B Social media / Share

C Design

D Teams / Workspaces

E Results / Reports

F Calculator / Hidden Fields

G Notifications

H Integrations

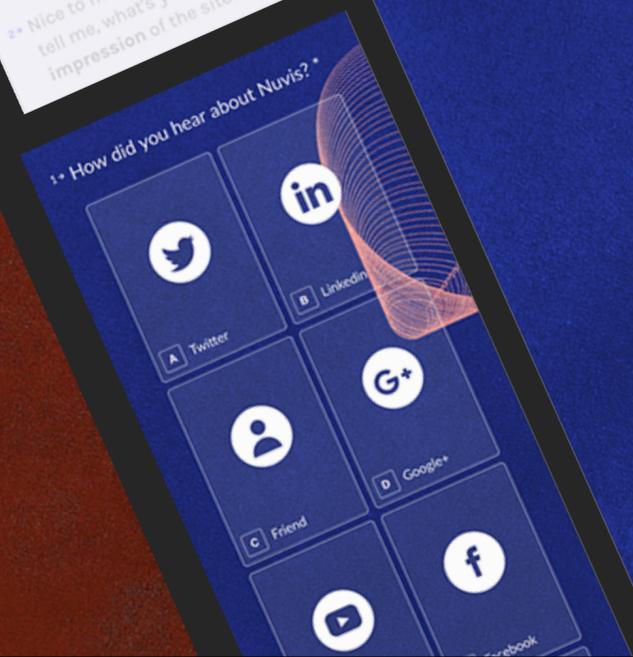
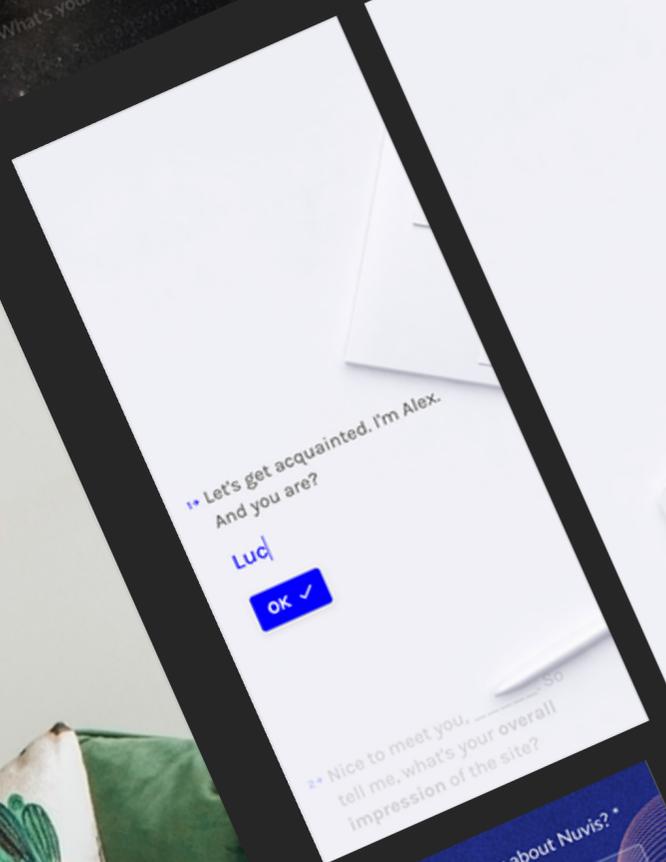
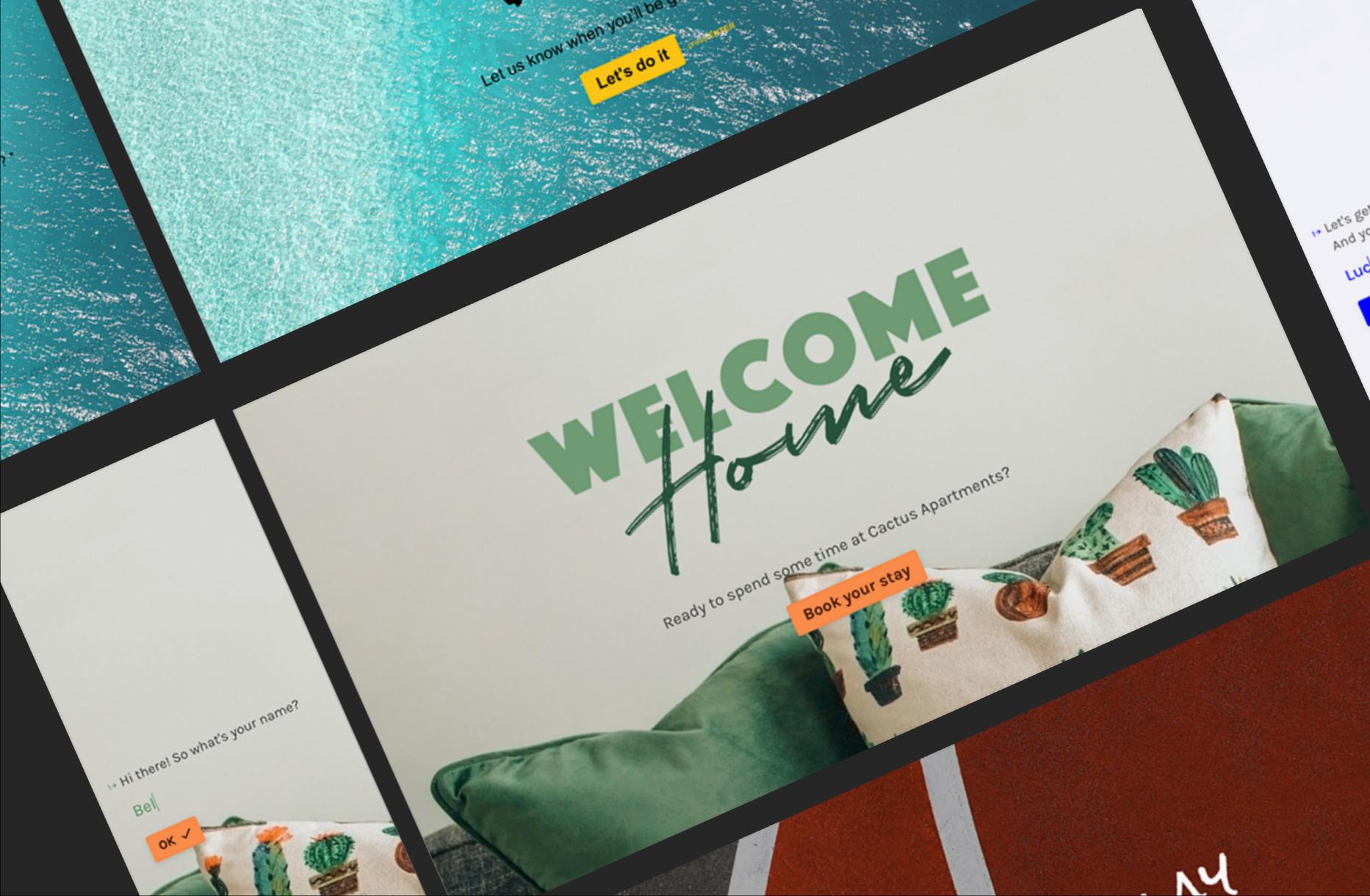
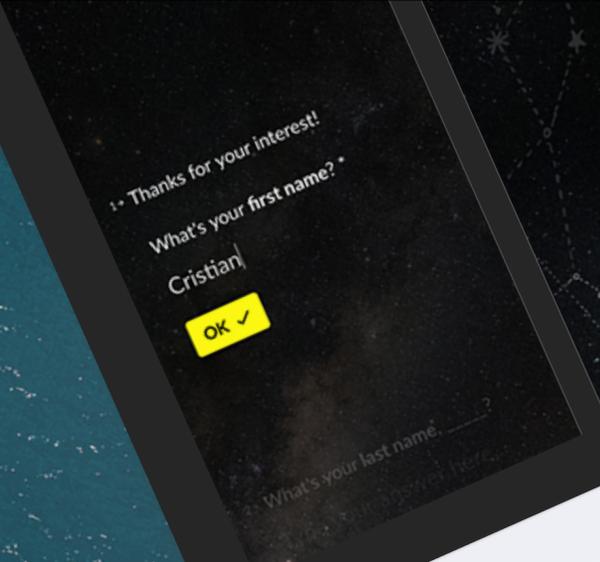
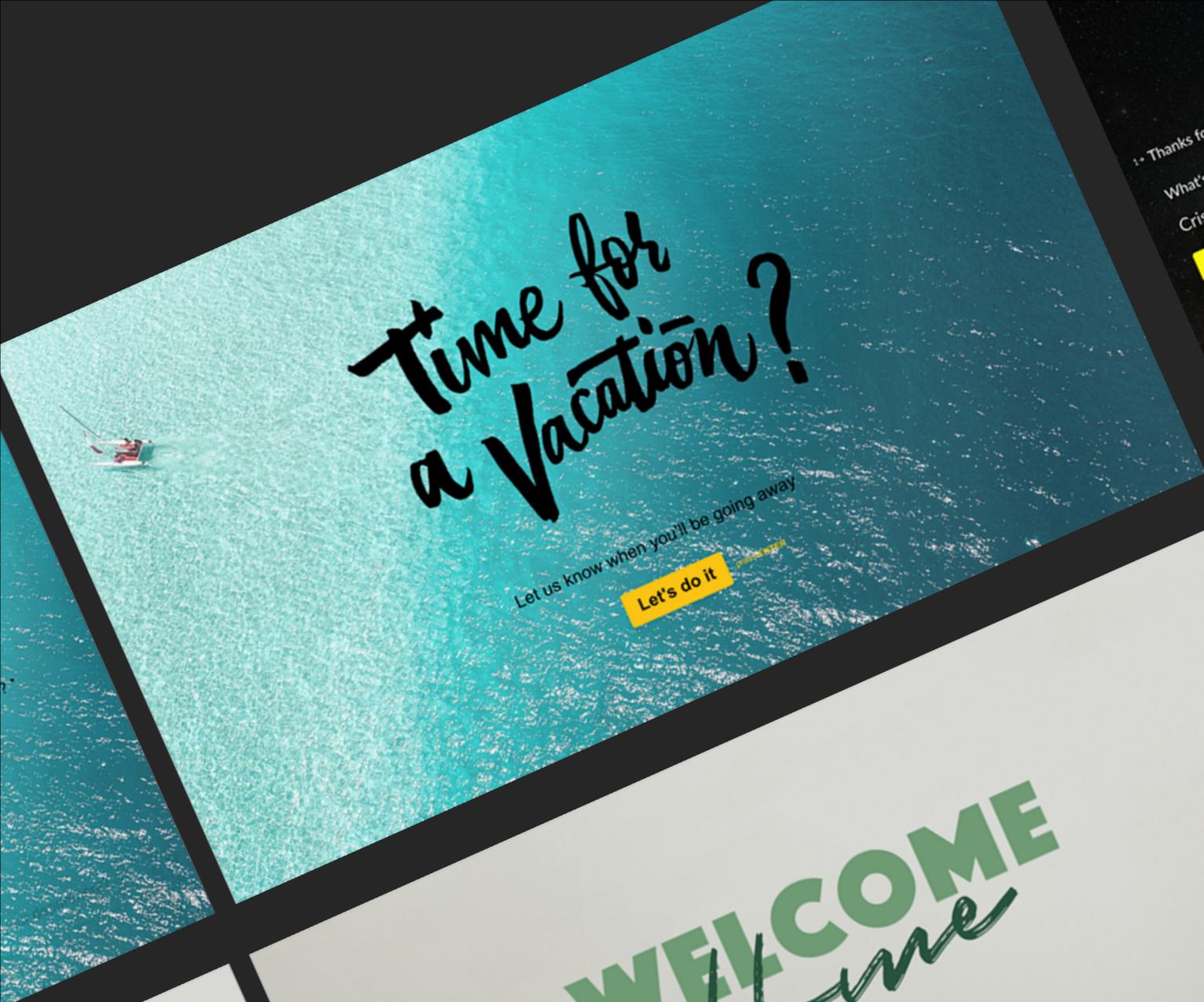
I Technical / Developers ✓

J Other



13 → Wildcard! We dig it. How can we help?

SHIFT + ENTER to make a line break





What's your name?



Special day coming up?

Order one of our delicious cakes. We'll tailor it to your needs.

Bake my cake

press ENTER



STEVEN MARTIN

HOWE!





Special day coming up?

Order one of our delicious cakes. We'll tailor it to your needs.

Bake my cake

press ENTER

1 → Thanks for reaching out. What's your message about?

Think of this like the subject field in an email. But already filled in for you.

A I want to know more about you

B I have some feedback for you

C I'm looking for some advice

D I'd just like to chat

2 → Great. What would you like to ask or tell us?



1→ Thanks for reaching out. What's your message about?

A I want to know more about you

B I have some feedback for you

C I'm looking for some advice

D I'd just like to chat

2→ Great. What would you like to ask or tell us?



3 → Great! So, will you be joining us? *

YES

A I'd be delighted to attend.

SORRY

B I can't make it. Have a great day!



3 → Great! So, will you be joining us? *

YES

A I'd be delighted to attend.

SORRY

B I can't make it.



6 → What's your favorite color?

| Type your answer here...

0 of 7 answered

Powered by **Typeform**



6 → And what's your favorite color?

Type your answer here...

0 of 7 answered

Powered by **Typeform**



7 → What's your favorite Christmas film?

Type your answer here...

OK ✓

press ENTER

0 of 7 answered

Powered by **Typeform**



7 → Finally, what's your favorite Christmas film?

Type your answer here...

OK ✓

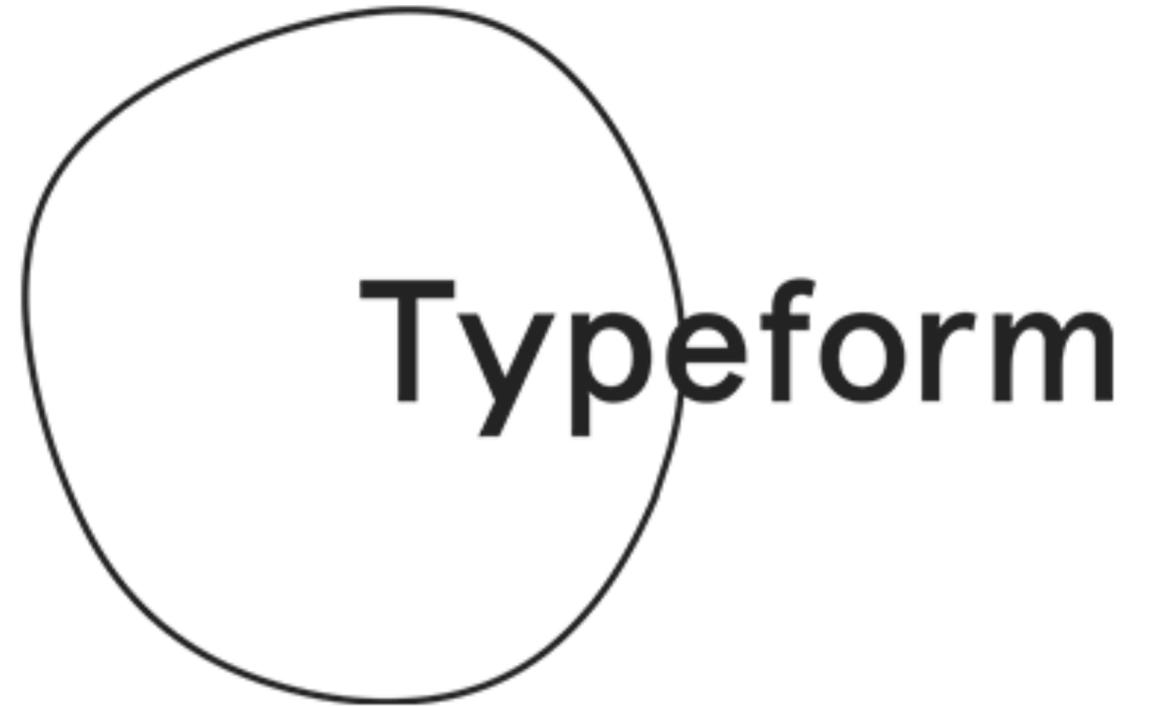
press ENTER

0 of 7 answered

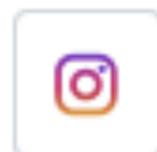
Powered by **Typeform**



Typeform |



Log in to Typeform | Visit Help Center | See our blog



love from Barcelona

Don't want to hear from us anymore? That's okay, you can [unsubscribe](#).

We'll be sad, but **no hard feelings**.

Log in to Typeform

Visit the Help Center

Read our Blog



With love, from Barcelona

Need a break from our emails?

You can [unsubscribe](#) or change your settings [here](#).



jumps to 3

2

Thanks @

https://copycat.typeform.com/to/YUCVzE?name=xxxxx

Test Logic



3 → You're off to the cinema. Which of these choices on the bill would you pick? *

Make between 1 and 4 choices

* 3

You're off to the cinema. Which of these choices on the bill would you pick?

- I'll let the person I go with decide
- A short documentary
- A sedate comedy
- An international art house film
- A rip-roaring action movie

comes from 1

Duplicate

Delete

* 4

What's your ideal breakfast?

- A bowl of cereal
- I skip breakfast
- A piece of fruit
- Eggs Benedict with avocado
- Bacon, eggs, and sausages

0% completed





Multiple choice ▾

Required

Description

Piping

+ Add

Image

+ Add

Video

+ Add

Multiple selection



Randomize

Add "Other" option

Vertical Alignment



Hi! What's your name?

Thanks, . What would you like to buy?

- TV \$50

- Games console \$280

- Self worth \$1027

You're breaking us up?

You set up a Logic Jump for this block.

. Would you like to buy

something else?

If you want to delete, reorder, or change it, remove all Logic Jumps tied to this block first.

Thanks, . What else would you like to buy?

Got it

- Self worth \$1027

OK. Just to check, have we got the right email for you?

@

Previews for Logic, Calculator, Hidden Fields, and Configure settings are shown...

to buy?

Choose as many as you like...

TV \$50

Games console \$280

Self worth \$1027

OK. Just to check, have we got the right email for you?

@

Delete this question?



You set up a Logic Jump or Calculation for this question. If you delete it, you'll break the logic.

Are you sure you want to delete this question?

No, keep it

Yes, delete it

2 → Hi Steve! Which flavor would you like to order? *



A Chocolate Chip Cake



B New York Blackout Cake





BLOCK [2] ^ v x



2 Short Text v

Required

Description

Variables

Image

Video

Max characters

1 What's in Santa's sack now?

2 Really? A @

ADD VARIABLE FROM...

1. What's in Santa's sack now?



25%

“I need to recall the answer to this question. If there is a way, there’s not an obvious way.”

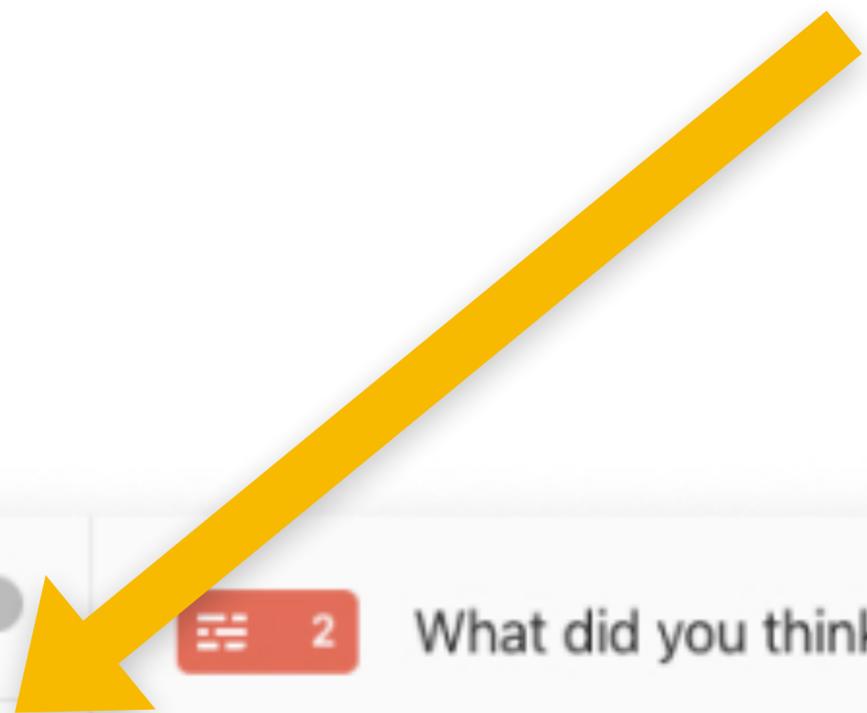


“I need to **recall the answer** to this question. If there is a way, there’s not an obvious way.”



show @

Description	<input type="checkbox"/>	 2	What did you think of the magic show @
Recall Information	Add	 	
			
Image	Add	 3	How would you rate the show overall?
Video URL	Add		



Recall information from...

-  1 What's your name?

100%





Google Sheets

Send your data straight to Google Sheets. Automatically syncs as results come in. **Oh sheet!**

Connect



Miles Burke

@milesb

Follow



My 'micro-copy of the day' award goes to @typeform - I love the personality in this. 😊
#product #ux #copywriting #words



Google Sheets

Send your data straight to Google Sheets. Automatically syncs as results come in. Oh sheet!

9:09 PM - 21 Nov 2018

1 Retweet 1 Like



1



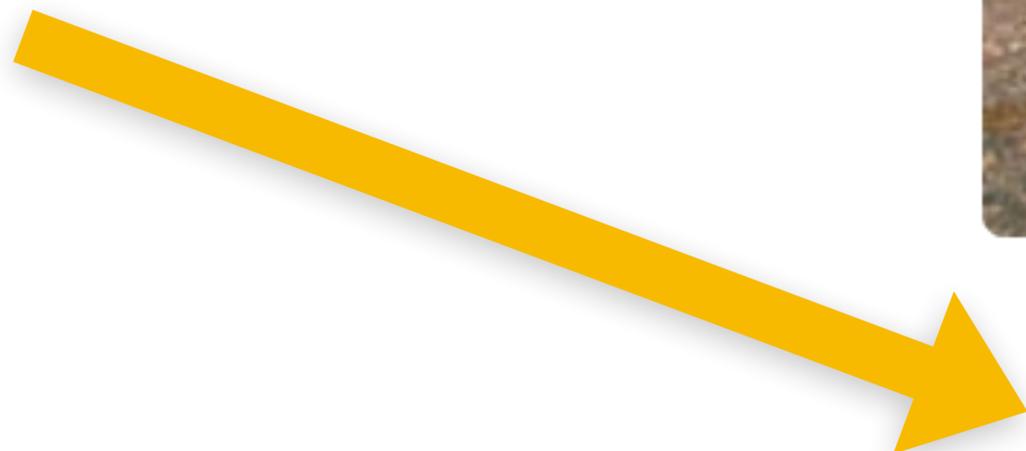
1

Add an image

SEARCH

UPLOAD

Q bored



That's your lot. Take your pic.

Cancel

Add image



Buscar correo



PRINCIPAL



Social

Meetup

1 nuevo



Promociones

Deportes

fr-mdirector.com, Raya's Diving Center, Scott fro...

67 nuevo



YouTube

13:35

Changes to YouTube's Terms of Servi...

YouTube As part of our ongoing effort...



Search mail



51-100 of 11,154



31

☆ **Typeform**

We updated our terms. Cue gasps of excitement. - Hi there, We've up...

May 26



Search mail



51-100 of 11,154



31

☆ Typeform

We updated our terms. Cue gasps of excitement. - Hi there, We've up



should i write something funny here

@eugenekudashev

Follow



“Cue gasps of excitement”

@typeform can i hug your copywriter? this is brilliant

Typeform

00:51 >

We updated our terms. Cue gasps of excitement.
Hi there, We've updated our
terms and conditions, which will come into effect...

7:24 AM - 23 May 2019

3 Likes



3



2 → Which version of our Service Terms and Conditions do you want?

A The legal, jargon-filled version

B The plain English version



Busca



Janté Diaz ▶ **Microcopy & UX Writing**



Ayer a las 10:51 •

Kudos to Typeform 🏆

2 → Which version of our payment terms do you want?

A The legal, jargon-filled version

B The plain English version ✓

20

5 comentarios

Me gusta

Comentar

Clear

trumps

chatty

What's
the
conclusio

We've confused
'conversational'
for 'chatty'

Conversation is dynamic

Text is static



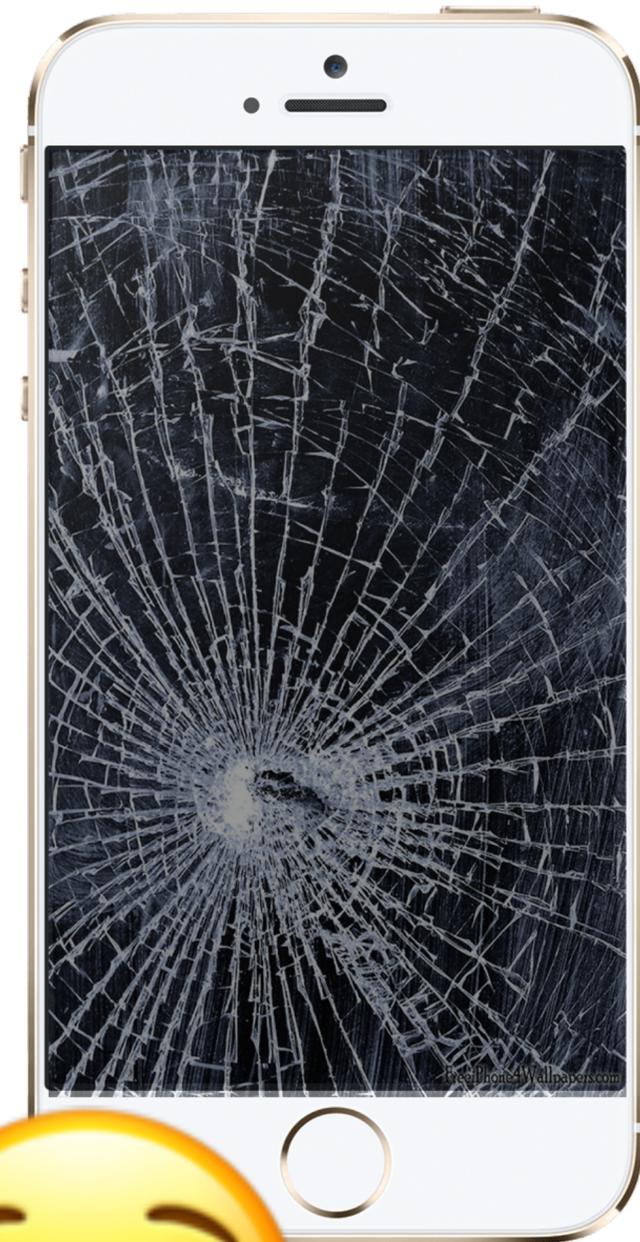
Hello. My phone broke. I sent it back a month ago. Where is it?

giffgaff

10:22 >

Thanks for your query [incident # 190...

If you can't see it in all its glory click

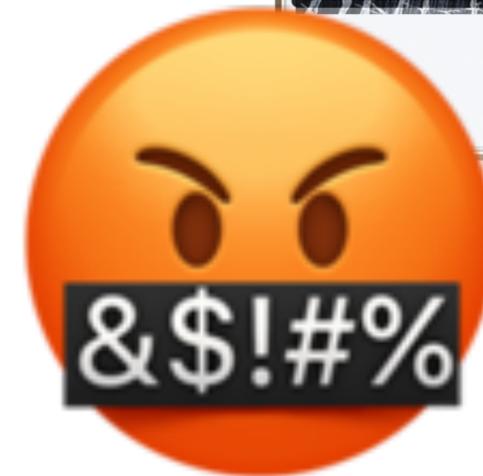
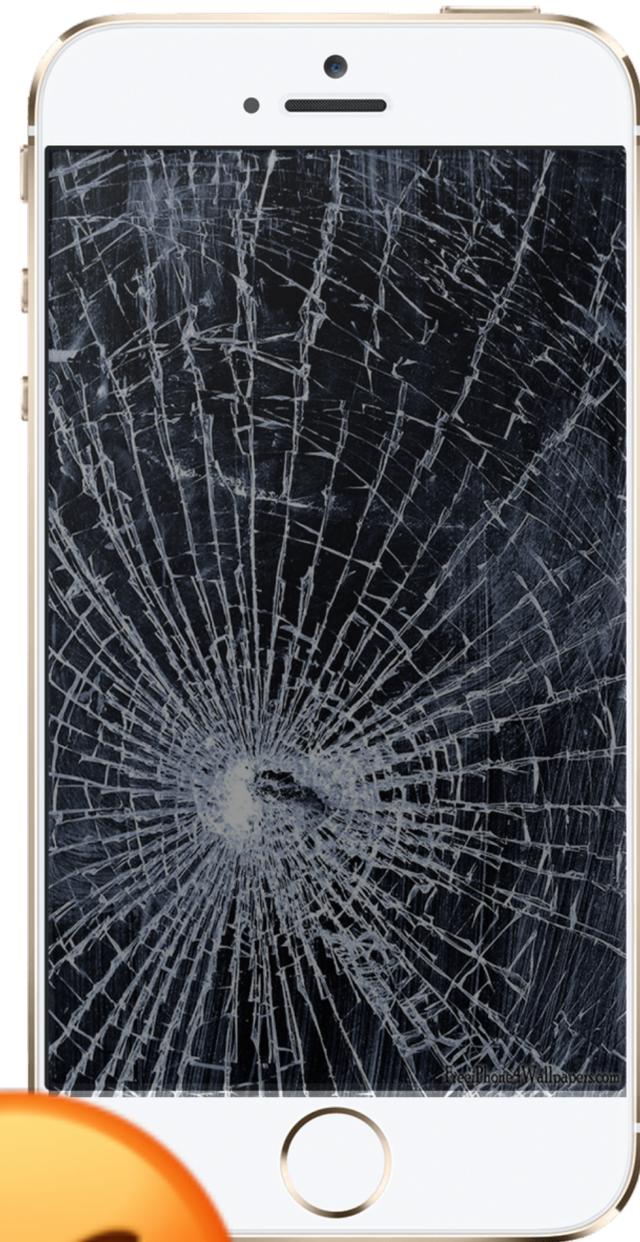


So you've lost my phone. Is there any compensation?

Today 10:19

Hi. Our agents have added £20.00 credit to your account. Your new balance is £20.00.

Lovely Jubbly.





Lovely jubbly

Lovely jubbly

Lovely jubbly

What do we really want?



What do we really want?



Empathetic
interactions



Don't let the
conversation
get awkward

Nice one



stevhoweblacelona

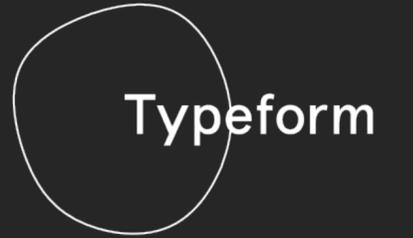


[linkedin.com/in/stevenmartinhowe](https://www.linkedin.com/in/stevenmartinhowe)



medium.com/writing-at-typeform

Resources,



Elizabeth Stokoe and Typeform: <https://try.typeform.com/ownyourinteractions>

Elizabeth Stokoe: Talk: The Science of Conversation

 [stevehoweblacelona](#)

 [linkedin.com/in/stevenmartinhowe](https://www.linkedin.com/in/stevenmartinhowe)

 medium.com/writing-at-typeform