TimeFlies – A Tool for Time Tracking

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November 10, 2012

User Manual and Reference TimeFlies 0.5

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1 What is *TimeFlies* About?

Do you want to account for the time you spend at work? What project or work package have you been working on? Do you want to keep track of the hours you work? How much leave have you got left for this year?

Do you keep a daily work journal containing things you did, problems you solved, some kind of to do list?

Do you want to make an estimate of effort for a project or work package? Would you like to break down those things into smaller items and possibly break down those again too?

TimeFlies can help you with this – and this is how: you keep a journal of what you do using *TimeFlies*' hopefully not too overbearing markup syntax. *TimeFlies* can later distill from your journal files what you did when, how much you worked and on which projects.

TimeFlies assumes you can tell what you are doing on a daily basis and it relies on you entering sound data for what you do during the day. It offers a light weight syntax for this. It does not, however, have fine grained time keeping functionality such as stop watch like features some other time keepers have. In that sense TimeFlies is targeted at a slightly higher level of time tracking. Maybe call it macro level time tracking instead of micro level time tracking?

2 Tutorial by Example

In this section we will look at a number of use cases. All *TimeFlies* data is kept in plain text files. So all your data is always easily accessible to you and the format itself is quite human-readable. Moreover it can easily be version controlled.

2.1 Recording Time

To record your work time keep a work log file with day lines specifying the dates and in and out times telling when you arrived at work and when you left. The times can be given in decimals or in hours and minutes:

```
day 2012-09-19 8:30 17:15 day 2012-09-18 8.75 17.75 day 2012-09-17 8 18
```

Do you need to account for breaks you are taking? Use off instructions to state periods of time in a day of work during which you were not actually working:

```
day 2012-09-19 8.5 17.25, off 0.5
day 2012-09-18 8.75 17.75, off 0.75
day 2012-09-17 8 18, off 0.5, off 0.25
```

This last file is equivalent to the following:

```
day 2012-09-19 8.5 17.25
off 0.5
day 2012-09-18 8.75 17.75
off 0.75
day 2012-09-17 8 18
off 0.5
off 0.5
off 0.5
off 0.25
```

Above example illustrates the notion of a day-*block*: a day-*block* extends from one day-keyword to the next and everything inside this day block is part of that day.

The days in the file do not need to be listed chronologically. You could e.g. list the days in reverse order so that the present is always at the top of the file.

If you want to mask out part of your log temporarily you can use the # source comment marker. *TimeFlies* ignores the # and everything following it until the end of line. It works just the same as e.g. a Python comment.

```
day 2012-09-19 8.5 17.25
off 0.5

day 2012-09-18 8.75 17.75
f off 0.75

day 2012-09-17 8 18
off 0.5
off 0.25
```

2.2 Keeping Notes in the Log

Do you want to keep notes about your work in the same place as you keep the time information? Use *log comment* lines like in this file:

```
day 2012-09-19 8.5 17.25
   ; updated regression tests
   off 0.5
   ; fixed build scripts
   day 2012-09-18 8.75 17.75
   ; wrote unit test to reproduce problem report 2012-0098
   ; fixed problem report 2012-0098
   off 0.75
   ; added HTML output option to object dumper
10
   ; discussed implications of Java 1.7 rollout
  day 2012-09-17 8 18
   ; weekly team meeting
14
  off 0.5
   ; monthly quality task force
   off 0.25
17
   ; code review: server side includes
```

A log comment line starts with a semicolon and one or more space characters. All text following these characters until the end of the line (or until a # source comment marker) with trailing spaces removed constitute the recorded log comment.

Now what can you do with such a file? Assume the above work log file's name is work-log.fly, then option -t tells *TimeFlies* to calculate your work times.

```
> timeflies -t work-log.fly
  Time at work overview (all):
       when
                  worked leave
                                  sick balance
3
   2012-09-17 Mon:
                    9.25 ----.--
   2012-09-18 Tue:
                    8.25 ----.-
                                          0.25
   2012-09-19 Wed:
                    8.25 ----.--
                                          0.25
                   25.75 ----.--
    week 2012-38:
                                          1.75
                   25.75 ------
   month 2012-09:
                                          1.75
                        ----,-- ----,--
           total:
                   25.75
                                          1.75
Q
                  worked
                          leave sick balance
10
```

To include the log comments in this output, use the -C option:

```
> timeflies -t -C work-log.fly
   Time at work overview (all):
                                    sick balance
        when
                   worked leave
   2012-09-17 Mon:
                     9.25 ----.--
                ; weekly team meeting
                 ; monthly quality task force
                 ; code review: server side includes
   2012-09-18 Tue:
                     8.25 ----.--
                                            0.25
                ; wrote unit test to reproduce problem report 2012-0098
                 ; fixed problem report 2012-0098
                 ; added HTML output option to object dumper
                 ; discussed implications of Java 1.7 rollout
12
   2012-09-19 Wed:
13
                     8.25 ----.--
                                            0.25
                ; updated regression tests
14
15
                  fixed build scripts
     week 2012-38:
                    25.75 ----.
                                            1.75
16
    month 2012-09:
                    25.75 ----.--
                                            1.75
17
                    25.75 ------
            total:
                                            1.75
        when
                   worked
                          leave
                                    sick balance
19
```

2.3 Time Summaries

Here's a longer example where you can see the use of weekly and montly summaries. Also a few days of annual leave and sickness are inserted using the leave-days and sick instructions.

```
day 2012-08-23 8.5 17.25, off 0.5
day 2012-08-24 8.75 17.75, off 0.75
day 2012-08-27 8.5 17.25, off 0.5
day 2012-08-28 8.75 17.75, off 0.75
day 2012-08-29 8 18, off 0.5, off 0.25
```

```
6 leave-days 2012-08-30 2012-09-04; Hiking
7 day 2012-09-05 8.75 17.75, off 0.75
8 day 2012-09-06 8 18, off 0.5, off 0.25
9 day 2012-09-07 8.5 17.25, off 0.5
10 day 2012-09-10 8.75 17.75, off 0.75
11 day 2012-09-11, sick 8; Broken arm
12 day 2012-09-12, sick 8; Broken leg
13 day 2012-09-13 8.5 17.25, off 0.5
14 day 2012-09-14 8 18, off 0.5, off 0.25
15 day 2012-09-17 8 18, off 0.5, off 0.25
16 day 2012-09-18 8.5 17.25, off 0.5
```

Use option -f week to get an overview of weekly work time balances.

```
> timeflies -t -f week work-log.fly
   Time at work overview (week):
       when
                   worked
                           leave
                                    sick balance
     week 2012-34:
                    16.50 ----.--
                    25.75 16.00 -----
     week 2012-35:
                                            1.75
                          16.00 ----
     week 2012-36:
                    25.75
                                            1.75
     week 2012-37:
                    25.75 ----- 16.00
                                            1.75
     week 2012-38:
                    17.50 ----.--
                                           1.50
           total:
                   111.25
                           32.00 16.00
                                           7.25
       when
                   worked
                           leave
                                    sick balance
10
```

Or have both weekly and monthly balances shown.

```
> timeflies -t -f week, month work-log.fly
   Time at work overview (week, month):
        when
                   worked leave sick balance
                   16.50 ----.-
     week 2012-34:
    month 2012-08:
                    42.25
                           16.00 ----
                                            2.25
     week 2012-35:
                            16.00 -----
                    25.75
                                            1.75
     week 2012-36:
                           16.00 ----
                    25.75
                                            1.75
                                  16.00
     week 2012-37:
                    25.75 -----
                                            1.75
     week 2012-38:
                    17.50 ------
                                            1.50
    month 2012-09:
                    69.00
                           16.00 16.00
                                            5.00
           total:
                   111.25
                            32.00
                                   16.00
                                            7.25
11
        when
                   worked
                            leave
                                    sick balance
12
```

Maybe you only want to look at one month with daily details? Note the comments that have been associated with the leave and the sick days in the input file show up in the respective daily output lines.

```
> timeflies -t -f 2012-09 work-log.fly
Time at work overview (2012-09):
   when
            worked leave
                           sick balance
 week 2012-35: ---.-
                   8.00 ----.-- Hiking
2012-09-03 Mon: -----
2012-09-04 Tue: -----
                    8.00 ----.- Hiking
2012-09-05 Wed:
             8.25 ----.-
                                  0.25
2012-09-06 Thu:
               9.25 ----.--
                                  1.25
2012-09-07 Fri:
               8.25 ----.--
```

```
25.75 16.00 -----
     week 2012-36:
                                         1.75
10
                   8.25 -----
   2012-09-10 Mon:
                                         0.25
   2012-09-11 Tue: ----.--
                                  8.00 -----
                                              Broken arm
12
   2012-09-12 Wed: ------
                                  8.00 ---- Broken leg
   2012-09-13 Thu:
                   8.25 ----.-
                                         0.25
14
   2012-09-14 Fri:
                    9.25 ----.--
                                         1.25
                   25.75 ----- 16.00
     week 2012-37:
                                         1.75
   2012-09-17 Mon:
                    9.25 ----.--
17
   2012-09-18 Tue:
                    8.25 ----.-
                                         0.25
18
    week 2012-38:
                   17.50 ----.--
                                         1.50
19
    month 2012-09:
                   69.00
                          16.00
                                 16.00
                                         5.00
20
                          16.00
           total:
                   69.00
                                 16.00
                                         5.00
       when
                  worked
                          leave
                                  sick balance
22
```

You only need weekly totals in that one month?

```
> timeflies -t -f week,2012-09 work-log.fly
Time at work overview (week, 2012-09):
              worked leave
                              sick balance
    when
 week 2012-35: ----.
 week 2012-36:
               25.75 16.00 -----
                                      1.75
 week 2012-37:
               25.75 ----- 16.00
                                      1.75
 week 2012-38:
               17.50 ----.--
                                      1.50
                      16.00
               69.00
                             16.00
                                      5.00
       total:
    when
               worked
                       leave
                              sick balance
```

2.4 Logging Activities

Log comments are a good way to keep track of things you don't want to forget and have accessible and also aligned with your work time line. Log comments have no work effort assigned to them, though. So you cannot use them in any way for calculations of effort spent.

You use *work packages* and *activities* to connect the time you work with the work packages you work on: first, you define your work packages, then you use *activity* lines in the day blocks instead of log comment lines.

A work package definition is a line starting with the keyword work-package (or its abbreviation wp) followed by a work package name.

An activity line starts with a single dash character - followed by one or more spaces. This is followed by a work package id and a duration. This is optionally followed by a semicolon and some activity comment.

See below the converted example work log file.

```
wp regression-tests
wp meetings
wp quality-task-force
wp problem-reports
wp development
wp other
```

```
day 2012-09-19 8.5 17.25
   - regression-tests 4; updated
   off 0.5
10
    - other 3.5; fixed build scripts
11
12
   day 2012-09-18 8.75 17.75
13
    - problem-reports 2; wrote unit test to reproduce problem report 2012-0098
14
   - problem-reports 2.5; fixed problem report 2012-0098
15
   off 0.75
16
   - development 3; added HTML output option to object dumper
17
   - other 1; discussed implications of Java 1.7 rollout
18
   day 2012-09-17 8 18
20
   - meetings 2.0; weekly team meeting
   off 0.5
22
   - quality-task-force 6
23
   off 0.25
24
   - other 1.25; code review: server side includes
```

Option -w tells *TimeFlies* to calculate the times you have been working on the different work packages:

```
1 > timeflies -w work-log.fly
2 Work package summary (all):
3    25.25 : ALL
4    4.00 : regression-tests
5    2.00 : meetings
6    6.00 : quality-task-force
7    4.50 : problem-reports
8    3.00 : development
9    5.75 : other
```

To also show the activities contributing to the different work packages, use option -a:

```
> timeflies -w -a work-log.fly
   Work package summary (all):
     25.25 : ALL
          4.00 : regression-tests
4
                  - 2012-09-19 4.0; updated
          2.00 : meetings
                  - 2012-09-17 2.0; weekly team meeting
           6.00 : quality-task-force
                  - 2012-09-17 6.0
           4.50 : problem-reports
10
                   2012-09-18 2.0; wrote unit test to reproduce problem report 2012-0098
                  - 2012-09-18 2.5; fixed problem report 2012-0098
12
           3.00 : development
13
                  - 2012-09-18 3.0; added HTML output option to object dumper
14
          5.75 : other
15
                  - 2012-09-19 3.5; fixed build scripts
                   2012-09-18 1.0; discussed implications of Java 1.7 rollout
17
                  - 2012-09-17 1.25; code review: server side includes
```

To check whether you have allocated all your working time to work packages, use option -c:

```
1 > timeflies -c work-log.fly
2 Day check (all):
3 2012-09-18 Tue: worked 8.25, allocated 8.50, delta 0.25
4 2012-09-19 Wed: worked 8.25, allocated 7.50, delta -0.75
5 2 problems detected.
```

This shows that on two days the time at work and the time worked on work packages are differing.

2.5 Work Package Breakdown

In the previous section, work packages have been defined as simple, atomic, named items. A work package can be subdivided and refined hierarchically. See the following example.

```
wp md; MightyDigester: digests inputs of all sorts
        in; read supported input formats
3
            json
            dottxt; dotted text format
5
           binary
        proc; processing modules
           stats; processing statistics
            phase-1; rough break-down
            phase-2; particle recombination
10
            phase-3; regrouping and amalgamation
11
        out; write supported output formats
            xml
13
            ison
            text
15
            binary
16
       mmi
17
            gui
18
            cmdline
```

The items in this work package hierarchy can be referred to in activity lines as dot-delimited work package path names.

Following, a piece of work log for the above project.

```
day 2012-07-01 8 17, off 1
  - md.in.xml 4; updated to new XSD
  - md.out.xml 3; updated to new XSD
  - md.mmi.cmdline 1; XML options
  day 2012-07-02 8 17, off 1
  - md.in.json 5; first minimal implementation
  - md.proc.stats 1.5; line counting
  - md.mmi.cmdline 1.5; statistics options
  day 2012-07-03 8 17, off 1
```

```
- md.in.xml 4; adapted includes
- md.out.xml 3; normalised host node structure
- md.out.text 0.5; don't use TAB any more
- md.mmi.cmdline 0.5; text and xml options
```

Assume file prj-mighty-digester.fly contains the work package defintions and the work log itself is kept in work-log.fly. The work package summary can be calculated with option -w (which was also used in the previous example).

```
> timeflies -w prj-mighty-digester.fly work-log.fly
   Work package summary (all):
2
      24.00 : ALL
3
          24.00 : md; MightyDigester: digests inputs of all sorts
4
              13.00 : in; read supported input formats
5
                   8.00 : xml
                   5.00 : json
               1.50 : proc; processing modules
                   1.50 : stats; processing statistics
Q
               6.50 : out; write supported output formats
                   6.00 : xml
11
                   0.50 : text
12
               3.00 : mmi
13
                   3.00 : cmdline
14
```

And here the same with activities shown.

```
> timeflies -w -a prj-mighty-digester.fly work-log.fly
   Work package summary (all):
      24.00 : ALL
3
          24.00 : md; MightyDigester: digests inputs of all sorts
4
              13.00 : in; read supported input formats
                   8.00 : xml
6
                           - 2012-07-01 4.0; updated to new XSD
                           - 2012-07-03 4.0; adapted includes
                   5.00 : json
9
                           - 2012-07-02 5.0; first minimal implementation
               1.50 : proc; processing modules
11
                   1.50 : stats; processing statistics
12
                           - 2012-07-02 1.5; line counting
13
               6.50 : out; write supported output formats
14
                   6.00 : xml
15
                           - 2012-07-01 3.0; updated to new XSD
16
                           - 2012-07-03 3.0; normalised host node structure
17
                   0.50 : text
18
                           - 2012-07-03 0.5; don't use TAB any more
19
               3.00 : mmi
                   3.00 : cmdline
21
                          - 2012-07-01 1.0; XML options
                          - 2012-07-02 1.5; statistics options
23
                          - 2012-07-03 0.5; text and xml options
24
```

3 Reference

3.1 Command Line Options

Time filters

Summary filters
User filters
Show work packages
calculate work packages
check days
tally days
indentation

3.2 File Syntax

3.2.1 Source Comments and Persistent Comments

TimeFlies knows two kinds of comments: source comments and persistent comments.

Source comments are marked by a hash sign (#) and extend from it to the end of the line. *TimeFlies* ignores these comments and treats them as if they did not exist.

Persistent comments are marked by a semicolon (;) and extend to the end of the line (or a possibly following source comment in that line). A persistent comment is processed and will show up in the generated output. E.g. comments on leave or sick days will show up in the time at work output summaries. Comments on activities or work packages can show up in the work package outputs.

3.2.2 Time and Date Formats

Times and time durations can generally be given in [h]h:mm format or in decimals. Examples would be 8:30 or 8.5. Times use the 24-h-system. So 5:15 p.m. would therefore have to be written as either 17:15 or 17.25.

Dates must generally be written in *yyyy-mm-dd* format.

3.2.3 Work Packages

Syntax: work-package <wpid> [; <comment>]. The keyword work-package can be abbreviated as wp.

The fully qualified work package id wpid is a dot-delimited sequence of simple work package ids (tokens consisting of alphanumeric characters). It resembles a path from the root of the work package hierarchy. In an compound id a.b the id b appearing directly to the right of a means that work package b is an immediate sub work package of a. Work package hierarchies can therefore be given as sequences of work package definitions.

Alternatively (and more concise) a work package hierarchy can be given as hierarchically indented text (similar to Python indentation rules). In this case full work package ids are not necessary and simple ones suffice.

Illustrating this, the follwing example:

```
wp pro; project of some sort
   wp pro.aaa; part aaa
  wp pro.bbb; part bbb
  wp pro.bbb.xxx; detail xxx
   wp pro.bbb.yyy; detail yyy
   wp pro.ccc; part ccc
      is equivalent to:
   wp pro; project of some sort
       aaa; part aaa
2
       bbb; part bbb
3
          xxx; detail xxx
4
           yyy; detail yyy
       ccc; part ccc
```

This concise form of work package definition can also be applied partially. So the following is another form, equivalent to the above two:

```
wp pro; project of some sort
aaa; part aaa
bbb; part bbb
ccc; part ccc
wp pro.bbb
xxx; detail xxx
yyy; detail yyy
```

When defining a work package hierarchy using indentation, you must take care to not mix tab and space characters. I recommend using space characters exclusively. They are displayed the same way, no matter what tool you use to edit or view your files. If you really cannot stop yourself, *TimeFlies* will let you use tab characters. Never mix tabs and spaces, however, *TimeFlies* will not accept this.

To illustrate this tab/space subject matter, the following examples show these normally non-printable characters.

1. A good example, exclusively using space characters:

```
1 WP_Pro
2 UUUUUAAA
3 UUUUUBbb
4 UUUUUUUUUXXX
5 UUUUUUUUYYY
6 UUUUCCC
```

2. An acceptable example, exclusively using tab characters:

3. A mildly annoying example where the first work package hierarchy uses spaces and the second one uses tabs:

4. A bad example, rejected by *TimeFlies*. In line 4 both spaces and a tab character are used:

```
1 WPLPTO
2 ULULIABBB
3 ULULIBBB
4 ULULI →XXX
5 ULULULULULYYY
6 ULULICCC
```

This is what *TimeFlies* has to say about it:

```
1 > timeflies bad-wp-def.fly
2 bad-wp-def.fly:4: ERROR : indentation contains both spaces and tabs
```

5. Another bad example that TimeFlies will reject. Lines 2 through to 4 are indented with spaces, line 5 and 6 use tabs:

```
ı wp_pro
uuuuaaa
uuuubbb
uuuubbb
uuuuuuxxx
y dyyyy
uuuu
```

And TimeFlies says:

```
timeflies bad-wp-def.fly
bad-wp-def.fly:5: ERROR : work package indentation error
bad-wp-def.fly:6: ERROR : work package indentation error
```

3.2.4 Day blocks

```
Syntax: day <date> [<in> <out>]
```

A day block starts with a the keyword day followed by the day's date and optionally the arrival and leaving times at work. Either both times must be given or none at all. If they are not given, no time at work is assumed for that day. This is used e.g. for leave days or sick days. A day block ends at the next day keyword, i.e. at the beginning of a new day block.

3.2.5 Activities

```
Syntax: - <wpid> <time> [; <comment>]
```

An *activity* is a period of time spent working on a work package. An activity must appear in a day block. The work package id <wpid> must be a valid fully qualified work package id, i.e. a matching work package must have been defined before.

3.2.6 Time off Work

```
Syntax: off <time> [; <comment>]
```

Declare times off work in a day block, yet inside the time span of that day.

3.2.7 Sickness

```
Syntax: sick <time> [; <comment>]
```

Declare sick time in a day block, yet outside the time span of that day.

3.2.8 Block Sickness (Several Days)

```
Syntax: sick-days <first> <last> [; <comment>]
```

This is a short form to define an extended period of sickness, i.e. several days. It is defined by the first and last day of sickness.

3.2.9 Leave

Syntax: leave <time> [; <comment>]

Declare leave in a day block, yet outside the time span of that day. Use this for leave periods in order of hours.

3.2.10 Block Leave (Several Days)

```
Syntax: leave-days <first> <last> [; <comment>]
```

This is a short form to define an extended period of leave, i.e. several days. It is defined by the first and last day of leave taken.

3.2.11 Public Holidays

Syntax: public-holiday [; <comment>]. The keyword public-holiday can be abbreviated as phol.

The current day is marked as a public holiday, i.e. a day where the required time at work is null.

3.2.12 Required Work Hours

Syntax: must-hours (<day>=<hours>)* where <day> is one of mon, tue, wed, thu, fri, sat or sun.

This lets you define the times you need to work on the different days of the week. A working time arrangement consists of the hours of work for all days of a week. For one single working time arrangement, all hours have to be given in one single must-hours statement.

If a day is not mentioned in a must-hours statement, the hours for that day are assumed to be o. An empty must-hours statement (without any <day>=<hours>item) is perfectly valid. This could e.g. be used to declare a period of sabbatical.

To change the working time arrangements (e.g. to reflect going from full time to 80% or back), you use multiple must-hours statements.

The first following example defines a standard 40 hour working week (which is the default arrangement, also assumed for any day block with no applicable must-hours):

```
must-hours mon=8.0 tue=8.0 wed=8.0 thu=8.0 fri=8.0
```

This example defines an 80% working time week with Mondays off:

```
must-hours tue=8.0 wed=8.0 thu=8.0 fri=8.0
```

Or you work Thursdays and Fridays only half days:

```
must-hours mon=8.0 tue=8.0 wed=8.0 thu=4.0 fri=4.0
```

The last example shows multiple changes in working time arrangement:

```
day 2012-01-01
must-hours tue=8.0 wed=8.0 thu=8.0 fri=8.0

# ...

day 2012-06-01
must-hours mon=8.0 tue=8.0 wed=8.0 thu=4.0 fri=4.0

# ...

day 2012-09-01
must-hours mon=8.0 tue=8.0 wed=8.0 thu=8.0 fri=8.0

# ...

# ...

# ...

# ...

# ...
```

If a must-hours statement appears inside a day block, the given working times are applicable from the date of that day block onwards until one day prior to the date of the chronologically next day block with a must-hours statement. That must-hours statement will be applicable from then onwards.

If a must-hours statement appears outside a day block (before the very first day block in the input), then the given working times are applicable until one day prior to the chronologically first day block with a must-hours statement. That must-hours statement will be applicable from then onwards.

In above explanation of applicability the word *chronologically* is very important because day blocks in *TimeFlies* do not need to appear in chronological order in the input. The applicability of the must-hours statements is determined by the chronological order, though, which is not necessarily in the same order as the statements' order of appearance in the input file(s).

3.2.13 Importing Files

Syntax: import <file>.

The named file is imported. This means the file's content is processed in the same way as if it had appeared in the importing file instead of the import statement.

This allows you to e.g. split your daily logs by month or separate work package definitions from daily logs or share work package definitions amongst a group of users while keeping daily logs private.

One single work package definition (a single work-package statement in abbreviated hierarchical form using white space indentation) cannot be broken up across input file boundaries. To combine a work package hierarchy from multiple input files each input file must contain at least one complete work-package statement each.

Invalid example:

```
# File 1: looks good
   wp pro; project of some sort
2
       aaa; part aaa
3
       bbb; part bbb
4
   # File 2; bad, does not start with a work-package statement
           xxx; detail xxx
           yyy; detail yyy
3
       ccc; part ccc
4
       Correct form:
   # File 1: same as in above example
2
   wp pro; project of some sort
       aaa; part aaa
3
       bbb; part bbb
4
   # File 2: correct, starts with a work-package statement
   wp pro
       bbb
3
           xxx; detail xxx
           yyy; detail yyy
5
       ccc; part ccc
```