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Understanding backgrounds towards a first measurement of the top quark pair cross-section at ATLAS

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Top-quark pairs are expected to be produced copiously at the LHC, even at the lower beam energy and luminosity expected in the first years of running. Establishing the top-pair signal and measuring the production cross-section are important benchmarks for ATLAS, and will help understand the detector performance for events with high- p_T leptons, high jet multiplicity, missing transverse energy and b-jets. The prospects for these early top physics measurements will be shown, with a particular emphasis on the progress achieved with data so far.

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