

Activity: Real-World Modelling with Wireframes

A key step in the design process is to model how someone might use the product. For example, if the product is a mobile app, what will someone see on the home screen after they open the app? On what areas can the person tap? What screen will show up next?

People who design mobile apps and other interfaces, such as websites, often create wireframes to model the screens that they want to build. A wireframe is a sketch of one screen that shows where all the different elements, such as the headings, images, and buttons, will live.

In this activity, students model an existing website or mobile app by creating **wireframes**. Building wireframes for an existing website or mobile app allows students to focus on the technique, and helps reinforce the idea that websites and apps can be broken down into smaller components, first into separate screens and then into individual elements on the screen.

Activity Overview

Estimated Time: 1h

Materials for the teacher:

- Computer, Laptop, or Mobile Device
- Internet Access
- Projector and Screen

Materials for each student:

- Pencil
- 2 Browser Templates, 2 Tablet Templates, or 1 Phone Template depending on the type of device you or your students will be using
- Computer, Laptop, or Mobile Device (Optional)
- Internet Access (Optional)
- Self-Assessment Student Sheet (Optional)

Preparation:

- Choose one or more websites or mobile apps for students to wireframe.
- Set up the equipment, including the computer or laptop, projector, and screen to display examples.
- If students will be using computers, laptops, or mobile devices, ensure that they are available for the activity.
- Print out the wireframe templates as outlined below depending on the type of device you or your students will be using.
- Print out 1 [Self-Assessment Student Sheet](#) per student. (Optional)

Note to the teacher:

If using computers or laptops, print 2 copies of the browser template (with or without the grid) per student, which can be found at <http://sneakpeekit.com/download/sneakpeekit-browser/>.

If using tablets, print 2 copies of the tablet template (with or without the grid) per student, which can be downloaded at <http://sneakpeekit.com/download/sneakpeekit-tablet/>.

If using phones, print 1 copy of the phone template (with or without the grid) per student, which can be downloaded at <http://sneakpeekit.com/download/sneakpeekit-4-up-mobiles/>.

Warm-up: What is a wireframe? (10 minutes)

Using the projector, show students the following wireframe examples:

- Time Bank Wireframe: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/interactivemark/15033569833/>
- OnlyJames Wireframe Sketch: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jamesmowery/4155129641/>
- Prototyping a webshop: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/painz/4702327527/>

Facilitate a class discussion or ask students to discuss in small groups using the following prompts:

- Based on the wireframes, what is the purpose of each website or app?
- How would the actual websites or apps be different from their wireframes?
- What details are missing from the wireframes that would be on the websites or apps?

Activity: Build Your Wireframes (40 minutes)

Provide students with their own devices if available. Ensure that each student has a pencil and the appropriate wireframe templates as previously outlined.

Explain to students that their objective is to produce wireframes for an existing website or app. Use the projector to show the website or app that you've chosen. Optionally, provide students with a selection of websites or apps that they can view on their devices, and allow students to choose the website or app they'd like to wireframe.

For students with the browser and tablet templates, they must wireframe 2 screens: the website's homepage or home screen of the app, plus an additional screen that they can navigate to from the homepage or home screen.

Reflections: Value of Wireframes (10 minutes)

Give students an opportunity to share their wireframes. Facilitate a class discussion, or ask students to reflect individually or in small groups using the following prompts:

- Why would it be helpful to draw wireframes before building the actual website or app?

- Who would you show these wireframes to if you were designing this website or app?
- Based on your wireframes, what improvements would you suggest?

Assessment

Criteria	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding
Student shared one or more ideas about wireframes during the warm-up.			
Student produced a set of wireframes that reflected the overall layout and included key elements of the website or app.			
Student reflected on his or her wireframes either individually or in a group discussion.			

Extensions

Experiment with InVision

Have students create digital copies of their wireframes. One option is to scan or take pictures of their wireframes. With Invision, students can upload their wireframes, and make them interactive. Visit the Invision website for more information: <https://www.invisionapp.com/>

Self-Assessment Student Sheet

Give an example or provide evidence of how you demonstrated or accomplished each of the following statements during this activity. Examples and evidence can include sketches, written descriptions, and references to photos or videos.

Statement	Example or Evidence
At the beginning of the activity, I actively participated in the discussion about wireframes by sharing one or more ideas and/or listening to other students' ideas.	
At the end of the activity, I thought about how wireframes might be helpful in my design process and/or if I was designing the wireframe or app, what improvements I would make based on my wireframes.	