

1.



## Activity introduction

---

This activity will help you conduct a usability study of your low-fidelity prototype and record your observations from the study.

A usability study is key to understanding how real users experience and perceive your designs. The feedback you receive helps you measure how well your product meets the needs of users.

In this activity, you'll conduct a usability study for the portfolio project you started earlier in this course, focused on driving social good. As study participants complete tasks, record your observations using the note-taking spreadsheet template. Your observations should carefully summarize participants' behaviors, questions, and feedback as they interact with your designs.

You'll need to observe at least five participants as they review the low-fidelity prototype you made. Asking friends or family members to participate in your research study is fine for the purposes of this course!

By the end of this activity, you will have:

Observed five participants as they interact with your designs.

Recorded your observations, utilizing a note-taking spreadsheet template.

Summarized participants' behaviors, challenges, and feedback.

Here are two helpful considerations as you get started:

1. Evaluate the benefits and limitations of moderated versus unmoderated usability studies. Determine which of these types of usability study works best for the product you've designed and your research goals. Make sure your research plan reflects the type of usability study you'll conduct!

2. When taking notes, use the established color-coding guide to help organize your observations. This color-coding might also help evaluators determine how carefully your observations summarize user behaviors, questions, and feedback.

Use blue font for observations about how easy or difficult it was for participants to complete the assigned tasks.

Use red font for observations about participants' opinions on the product's usefulness.

Use green font for observations about participants' tone of voice or attitude while completing tasks.

Use black font for additional themes that you noticed or for suggestions at places where users got stuck.



## Step-by-step instructions

---

Step 1: Access the note-taking spreadsheet template and your research plan

To access the note-taking spreadsheet template, click this link and select "Use

Template." Link to template: [note taking spreadsheet template](#)<sup>[↗]</sup>.

OR, If you don't have a Google account, you can download the template directly from the attachment below.



[Google UX Design Certificate - Note taking spreadsheet \[Template\]](#)  
[XLSX File](#)

In addition, pull up your research plan from the [Plan a usability study](#)<sup>[↗]</sup> activity.

Step 2: Re-evaluate the prompts you wrote to guide users through your study

In the [Plan a usability study](#) activity, you created a research plan for your portfolio project. You also indicated how you intended to recruit participants and briefly outlined a sample script for the usability study sessions. Remember, the prompts in your research are the tasks that you're asking participants to complete.

You were instructed to save your research plan for later access. Take some time to reacquaint yourself with the research plan now and make any edits, if needed.

Step 3: Prepare your spreadsheet for note-taking

Anticipate observations you might encounter during your usability study, and record them in the Observations column (Column A) of your note-taking spreadsheet.

Categorize the observations you've anticipated using the color-coding conventions you've learned for the note-taking spreadsheet.

Leave additional rows for unanticipated observations and suggestions from your participants. Keep a black font color on these rows for now, like in the example below.

| Observations                                 |
|--|
| Sees uses for food tracking                  |
| Doesn't see uses for food tracking           |
| Easily finds recipes                         |
| Has a hard time knowing how to find a recipe |
| No problem adding items to list              |
| Feels frustrated adding items to list        |
| Speaks in a positive tone                    |
| Speaks in an indifferent tone                |
| Speaks in a frustrated tone                  |
| Speaks in an annoyed or impatient tone       |
| Speaks in a confident tone                   |
| Observations                                 |
| Observations                                 |

Step 4: Interview at least five participants

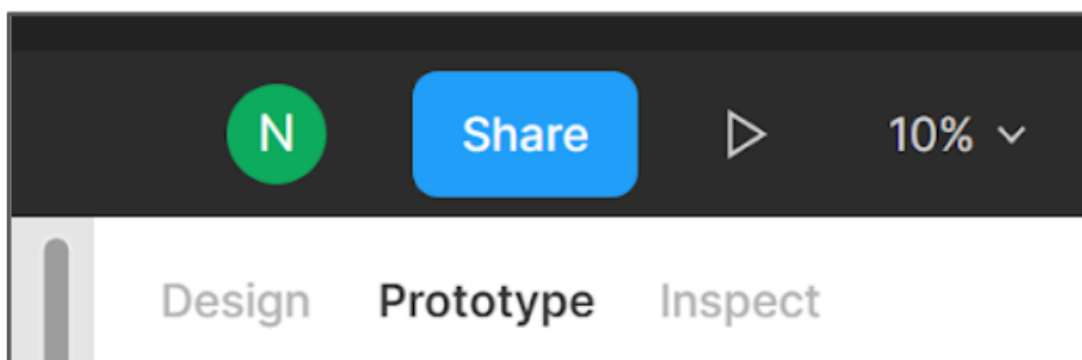
Find five people who agree to test your low-fidelity prototype. They will be your usability study participants. Aim for diversity in your participant pool, even if you are interviewing friends or family members.

Provide the research study participants with access to the prototype you created during the [Build a low-fidelity prototype for a mobile app](#) activity, where you turned your digital wireframes into a low-fidelity prototype. You were instructed to save that prototype for later access.

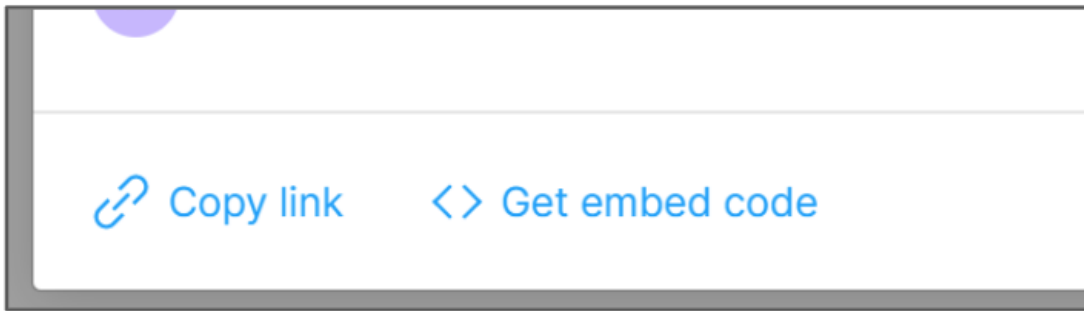
To access the shareable link:

In Figma:

Click Share in the top right corner of the screen.

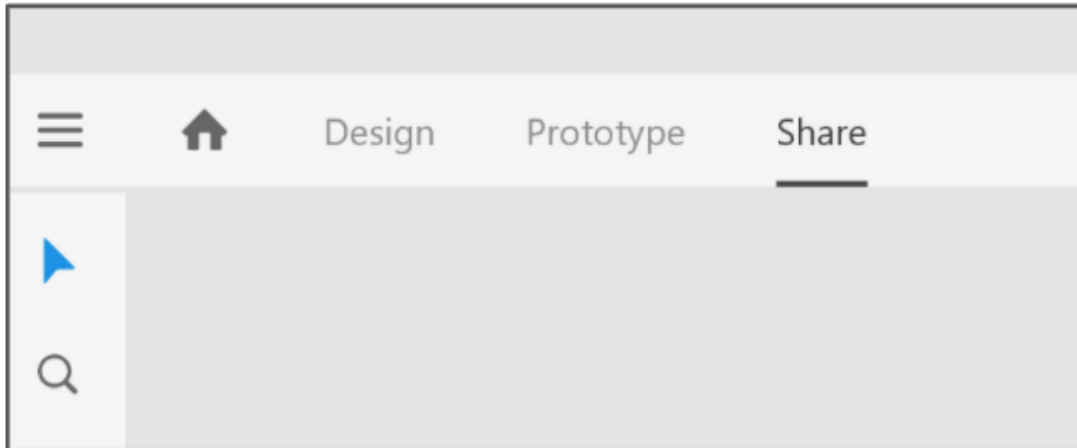


Then, click Copy Link, which will copy the link to your clipboard.

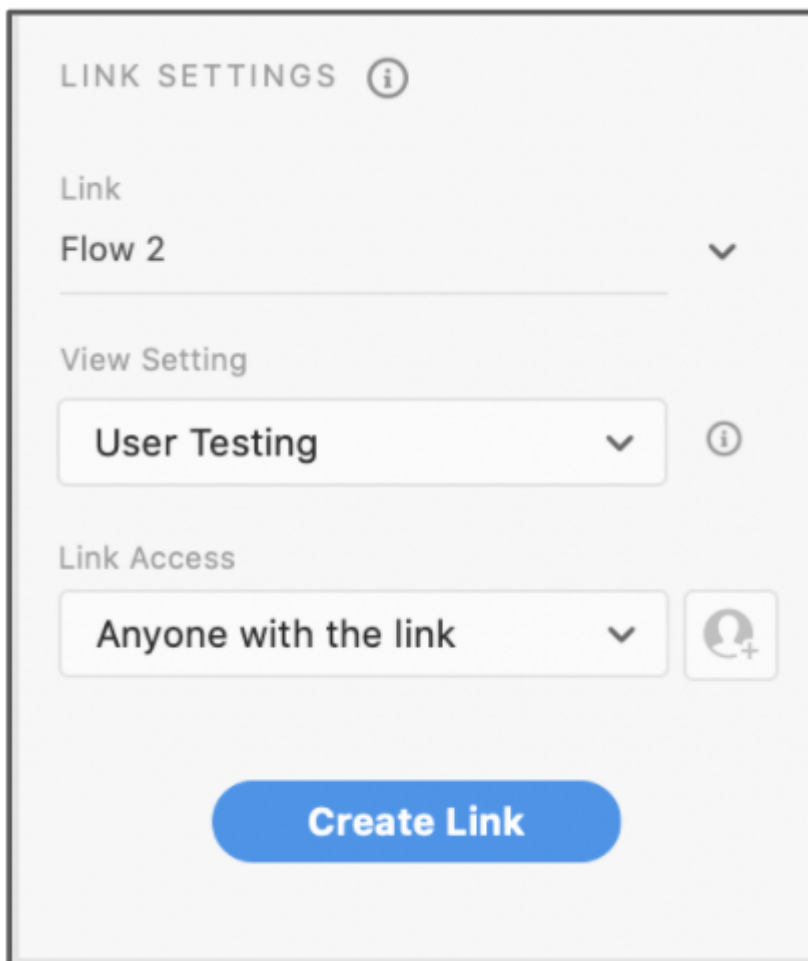


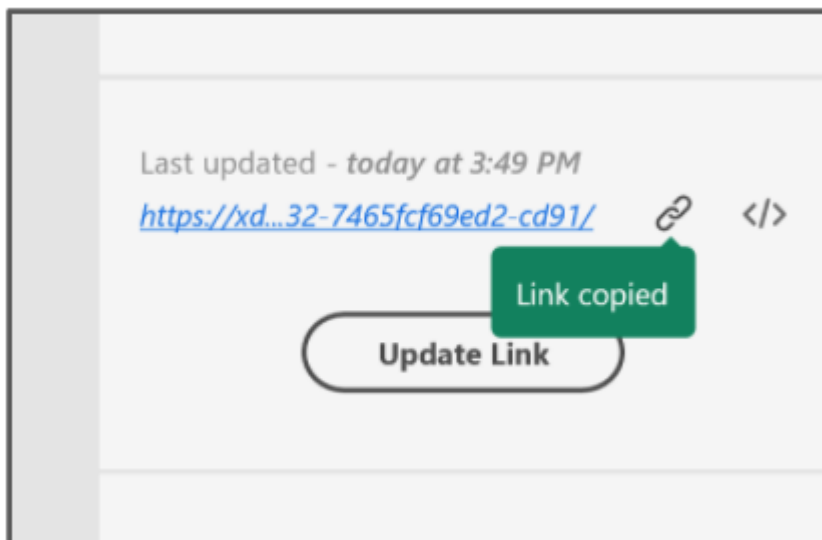
In Adobe XD:

Click Share in the top left corner of the screen.



Then, click the link icon next to the URL, which will copy the link to your clipboard.





### Step 5: Record your observations

It's time to conduct the usability study! Be sure to carefully observe participants' behaviors, questions, and comments. If a participant has questions about how your prototype functions, do not answer them until after the interview is complete. Inform the participant that you're not being rude and ignoring them, but that the moderator needs to observe how they would use the product alone, as if the participant was in the real world. Remember to listen and watch facial expressions for confusion, frustration, positive tone, and other reactions. Ask questions when you observe because different cultures and speech communities express confusion, frustration, and positive affect in specific ways with which you, as the researcher, may not be familiar.

As you observe the usability study, fill out the note-taking spreadsheet according to the guidelines you learned during previous exercises. When taking notes:

If a participant makes an observation that is already represented in the spreadsheet, type "1" in that participant's column, in the corresponding row of the existing observation.

If a participant makes a new observation, create a new row with that observation, and type "1" in that participant's column.

Leave the cell blank if the observation does not apply to a specific participant.

Color-code observations according to the conventions described above. Color-coding may help evaluators determine how carefully your observations summarize user behaviors, questions, and feedback.

Be attentive for notable quotes from participants, whether they are anticipated or unexpected.

As a guide, here is an example of a finished spreadsheet for the Food Saver app:

| Observations   | Participant A | Participant B | Participant C | Participant D | Participant E |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Sees uses for food tracking                                | 1             | 1             |               | 1             | 1             |
| Doesn't see uses for food tracking                         |               |               | 1             |               |               |
| Easily finds recipes                                       |               | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             |
| Has a hard time knowing how to find a recipe               | 1             |               |               |               |               |
| No problem adding items to list                            | 1             | 1             | 1             |               | 1             |
| Feels frustrated adding items to list                      |               |               |               | 1             |               |
| Speaks in a positive tone                                  | 1             | 1             |               | 1             | 1             |
| Speaks in an indifferent tone                              | 1             |               | 1             |               | 1             |
| Speaks in a frustrated tone                                |               |               | 1             |               |               |
| Speaks in an annoyed or impatient tone                     |               | 1             |               |               |               |
| Speaks in a confident tone                                 | 1             |               | 1             | 1             |               |
| Confused about names of sections                           |               | 1             | 1             |               |               |
| Didn't understand connection between "My Food" and recipes |               |               | 1             |               |               |
| Really excited about possibility of food tracking          |               |               |               | 1             |               |
| Wanted to purchase items on list                           |               |               |               |               | 1             |

### Step 6: Reflect on the completion of this activity

Be sure you've addressed the following elements of a completed spreadsheet note-taking template:

In the column for the participant, enter a 1 in the cell next to each observation if the observation is true for that participant. Leave the cell blank if it is false.

Keep an eye open for additional observations that you did not anticipate and add them as new rows to the spreadsheet. Are these additional observations true for any of the other participants? If so, be sure to note that with a 1 in their columns, too!

This usability study is essential for understanding how real users experience and perceive your designs. Consider how the feedback you receive here helps you measure how well your product meets your users' needs!

#### Step 7: Save your work

As you complete these activities, remember to save all of your work to your computer, a hard drive, or a Google Drive folder to make sure you have all the resources you'll want to showcase in your portfolio later.