

Introduction to Course 6

Introduction to Adobe XD

Optional - Empathize with users

📺 **Video:** Optional - Empathize with users and understand pain points  
4 min

📖 **Reading:** Optional - Learn more about empathizing with users  
20 min

💬 **Discussion Prompt:** Optional - Discuss the importance of considering user needs  
10 min

📖 **Reading:** Optional - Conduct interviews for empathy maps  
20 min

💬 **Discussion Prompt:** Optional - Share interview questions  
10 min

📖 **Reading:** Optional - Create empathy maps  
20 min

📝 **Practice Quiz:** Optional - Activity: Create an empathy map  
1 question

📖 **Reading:** Optional - Activity Exemplar: Create an empathy map  
20 min

📺 **Video:** Optional - Create personas  
2 min

📖 **Reading:** Optional - Learn more about personas  
10 min

📝 **Practice Quiz:** Optional - Activity: Create personas  
1 question

📖 **Reading:** Optional - Activity Exemplar: Create personas  
10 min

Optional - Define user needs

Optional - Define the problem

Week 1 review

## Optional - Conduct interviews for empathy maps

At this point in the certificate program, you know the importance of empathizing with users. As a UX designer, you'll always focus on the user and the experience they'll have with the product you're designing. One way to help put yourself in the shoes of the user is by creating an empathy map. As a reminder, **empathy maps** are easily understood charts that explain everything designers have learned about a type of user. This reading is about conducting interviews to help you create empathy maps, which you'll do in the next activity.



### Prepare for the interview

Whether you're conducting interviews in person or online, it's important to be prepared before you speak with real users. You want to make the most of your limited time together and learn as much as you can about their unique perspectives. Here are a few things you can do to prepare for interviews:

**Get written consent to record the interview.** Prior written consent is required to record an interview, so be sure to send the participant a consent form ahead of time if you're planning on recording. If the participant is a minor or unable to consent under applicable law, then written consent is required from the participant's parent or guardian. You can use this [consent form template](#) <sup>1</sup> for your work in this course.

Recordings can (and should!) be taken so all of the information from your interview is available in one place. Having this information ready will help you create empathy maps. To learn more about recording interviews, you can revisit the reading on [documenting user interviews](#) <sup>2</sup>.

**Script interview questions.** Develop a list of questions that you'll ask all of the users you interview. It's considered a best practice to keep interview questions fairly consistent across users, but this list of questions is just a guide. You can deviate from the questions you prepared, if necessary, to learn more about the user and their pain points.

**Collect supplies.** Create a checklist of items you'll need for the interview, such as a computer, a printed list of questions, or paper and a pencil. If you'll use new equipment or technology during the interview, make sure you know how it works in advance.

**Gather foundational research.** Since you're just beginning the design process for a new project, these interviews will be your first time interacting with potential users of the product you're designing.

It's helpful to gather foundational research on your own, before you speak with real users, to understand the issues users might be experiencing. To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do you need to know about users and their community to understand their experiences?
- What are the processes, practices, and emotions that people experience around the problem you are trying to solve? How have these things changed over time, and why?
- What are the problems that users still have not solved, as they relate to the product you're designing? What would solving those problems do for users and others?
- How will the product you are designing function within users' lives?

Answering these questions ahead of time will help guide you to gather useful information while conducting interviews.

**Research the users.** Take time to learn what you can about the people you'll interview. If the users you're preparing to interview provide their personal information before the interview, be sure to take note of it. This information might include their name, relevant experience with the product you're designing, or details about how they learned about the interview. You can use this information to extend the conversation during the interview and build a rapport.

**Practice.** It's always a good idea to practice delivering the questions you'll ask users before you conduct a real interview. This gives you time to make changes to the questions you're planning to ask and helps ensure that the interviews run smoothly. Practicing is also a good way to determine if the length of the interview is appropriate, or if you need to add or cut questions from your list. You can practice asking interview questions in front of a mirror or with a trusted colleague.



### Meet the participant

First impressions matter! As you meet users for the first time, at the start of an interview, you want the conversation to be set up for success. Here are a few things you can do when meeting interview participants:

**Build a rapport.** Building a good rapport is all about establishing a professional, but friendly, interaction. Making light conversation, like asking how the user's day has been, can help establish a relationship before the interview begins. Simple questions and welcoming gestures can put the user at ease, which will help them share their true feelings once the interview begins.

**Thank users for coming.** Before the interview begins, show gratitude to the people you're interviewing for taking the time to meet with you and share their perspectives. Thanking users is a part of establishing a good rapport and can help them feel like their opinions are valued.

**Gather basic details.** As you meet users, remember to ask about basic information that's relevant to the interview, such as their name or demographic details.



### Conduct the interview

Conducting interviews as a way to empathize with users is all about making the user feel comfortable and asking lots of questions. Here are a couple of things to keep in mind as you conduct interviews:

**Follow interview etiquette.** Speak in a clear and concise manner while asking questions, and remain professional no matter how users answer a question. Show that you are actively listening while users share their perspectives, such as nodding, making appropriate eye contact, or writing notes.

**Ask open-ended questions.** Avoid asking questions that would lead to a simple "yes" or "no" answer. Instead, ask questions that start with "why." For example, avoid asking "Do you like going to the library?" and instead ask "Why do you like or dislike going to the library?" This will allow for more detailed conversations and can reveal useful information to include in the product you're designing. If the participant does provide a short "yes" or "no" answer, you should ask a follow-up question to get them to share more.



### Take notes

Interviews tend to happen quickly. Without taking notes, recounting exactly what participants expressed can be nearly impossible! As you watch and listen to participants during the interview, write down as much as you can capture. A robust list of notes will be helpful when you create empathy maps, and when you come up with ideas to solve users' pain points. Here are a few best practices to help you take notes during interviews:

**Highlight compelling quotes.** The most obvious part of an interview is to take notes on what the user says. Interesting quotes are strong indicators about how users really think and feel. Including quotes in your empathy maps is a great way to feature a firsthand perspective from a real user, which can provide valuable insight when you begin your designs.

**Document observations about participants.** It's important to record not only what users say, but also their mood, expressions, body language, and behaviors. Pay special attention to outside factors, like a noise or distraction, that might skew interview responses. All of these observations will be important to consider when creating empathy maps.

**Consider recording interviews.** Ask participants if they will allow you to record their interview. If they consent, recorded interviews can be really helpful later, for revisiting parts of an interview that you might not remember or taking additional notes after the interview concludes. It's best to get this step out of the way before you meet to conduct the interview.



### End the interview

After you've asked all of the interview questions, give users a chance to share their final thoughts about any items discussed during the interview. Some participants might open up about their opinions and reveal insights that they didn't share earlier.

Also, remember to thank participants once more. You want participants to leave the interview feeling good about you, your future product, and the brand you might be representing.

In the next reading, you'll learn how to take the data you collected from your interviews and turn it into an empathy map.

