

Vocabulary Learning Applications

Task 1 / Competitor Research

Daniel Schreiner / UX Design Intro course / 18 Aug 2021



Quizlet

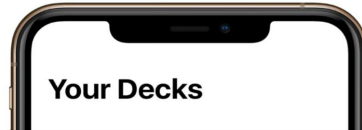


"Quizlet is the easiest way to study, practice and master whatever subject you're learning. Download the app today and join over 60 million students owning their classes with Quizlet."

Flash Cards

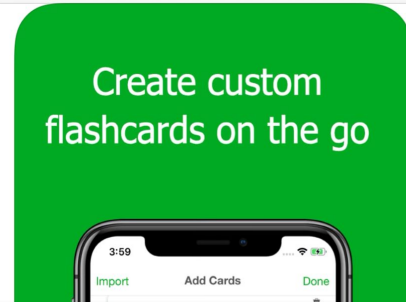
Study Smarter

With the #1 Flashcard App



"Try the easiest, sleekest and FASTEST flashcard maker available. Great for anyone studying for exams, practicing for homework or cramming for the GRE, SAT, or other major test."

flashcards.io



"Flashcards.io is the easiest way to memorize and master whatever you're learning. Our free flash cards maker is designed to help students memorize quickly and efficiently with spaced repetition."



Quizlet

pros

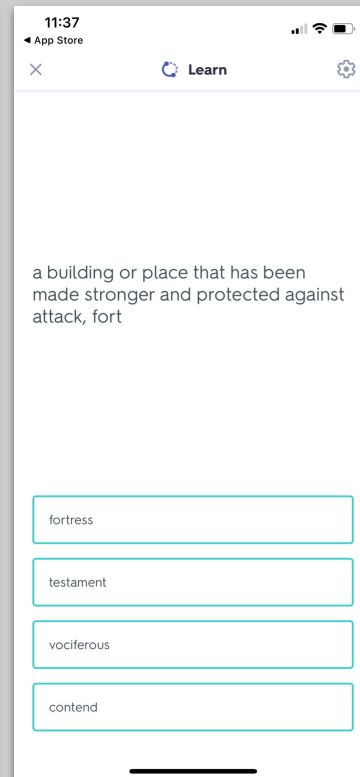
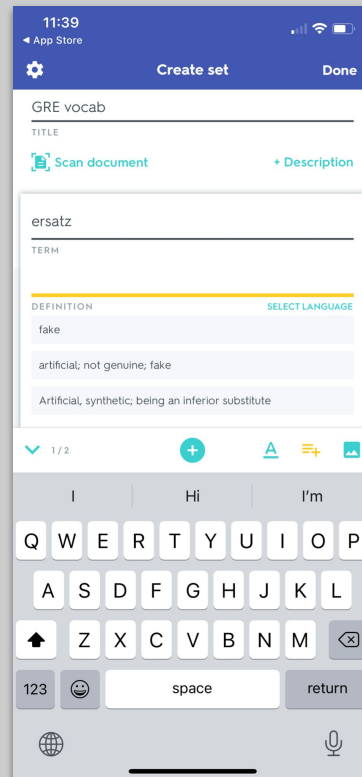
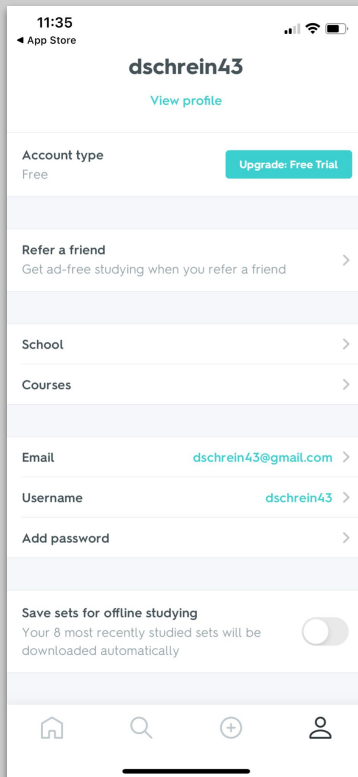
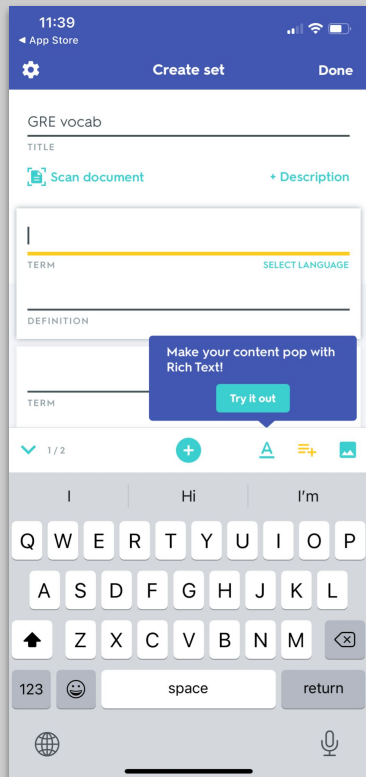
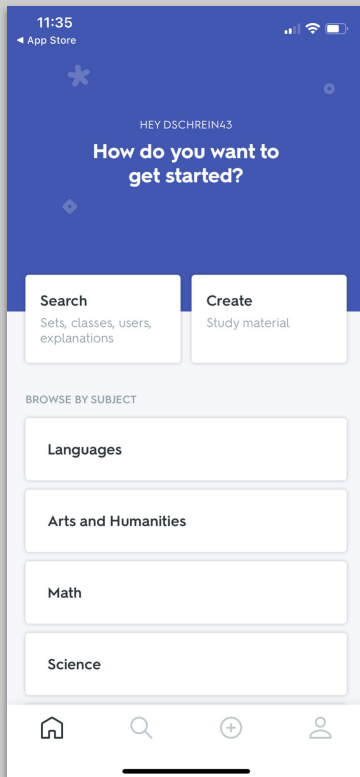
- ❑ Overall professional and pleasing design layouts, color choices, and font styles
- ❑ Well-executed and unobtrusive onboarding process:
 - ❑ initial onboarding page immediately personalizes your experience and goals, allowing you to browse available study materials by subject and/or create your own cards
 - ❑ blue-fill speech bubbles highlight the function of certain buttons without taking over the whole screen
 - ❑ bubbles are more sparse/selective
- ❑ Clearly defined admin area with cool/helpful features like getting ad-free studying when you refer a friend, and saving your sets for offline studying
- ❑ Offers actual dictionary-level definitions in search result format when you type in a term
- ❑ Generates multiple-choice-style questions to quiz vocabulary knowledge

cons

- ❑ Splash page with multiple swiped pages containing positive stats and statements about Quizlet is a bit overdone and potentially annoying for student users who just want a quick study tool
- ❑ Requires immediate sign up/log in before getting to use the app - large potential deterrent
- ❑ Sign up process is too long with multiple steps, pages, and required info (why date of birth?)
- ❑ Homepage/navigation is busy and confusing at a glance
- ❑ Pop-up pages persuading user to upgrade to Quizlet Plus occur too frequently, especially when it is made unclear that certain buttons/functions are only available to Quizlet Plus users
- ❑ Allows user to search and use study sets created by previous users, which may (ironically) negatively impact the user's learning process (i.e. memorization is aided by creating/typing words and definitions oneself)

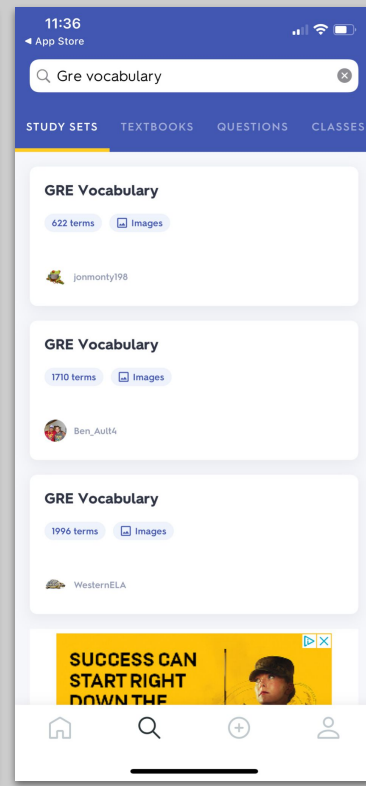
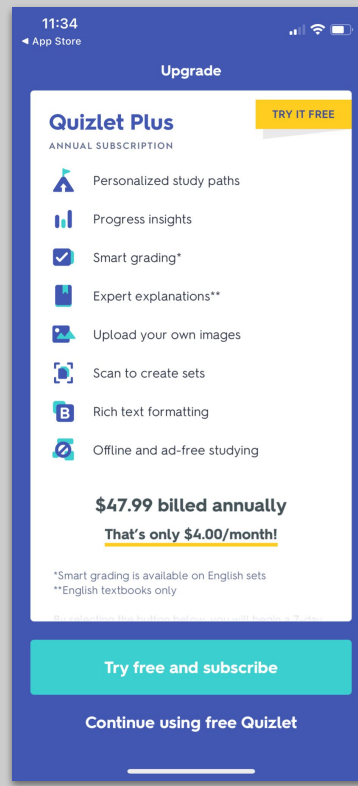
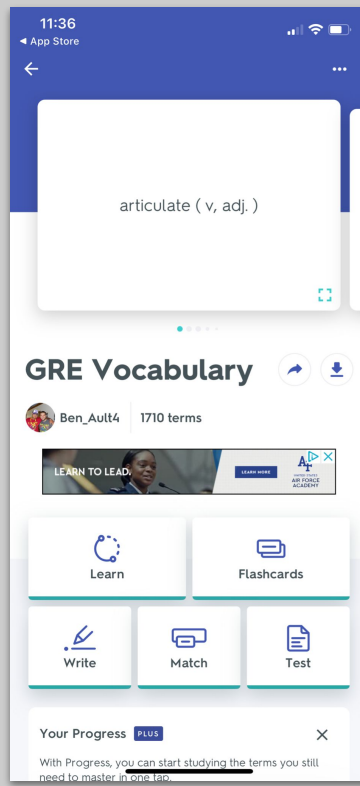
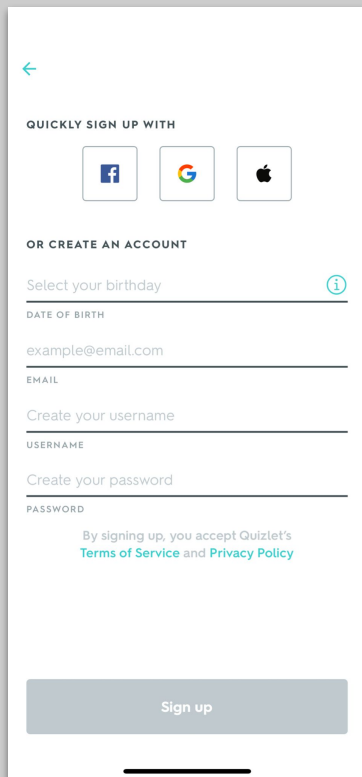
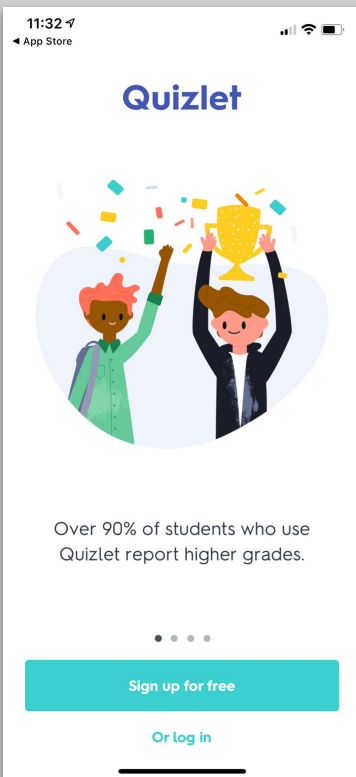


Quizlet - screenshots (pros)





Quizlet - screenshots (cons)





Quizlet - analysis

In my opinion, Quizlet, despite its sleek UI design and certain standout features, does not ultimately meet the goals of its users - students trying to quickly and efficiently study for exams using flashcard-style vocabulary learning. The app's pleasing and professional-looking interface cannot be denied, it's true, which is certainly a plus; however, the ease, efficiency, and intuitiveness of Quizlet's visual design is unfortunately undermined by cumbersome sign up/log in processes and off-putting upgrade advertisements that threaten to frustrate the user.

For example, the user is not able to even see the navigation page and core tasks of the app before it requires an extensive sign up flow (email, username, password, and even DOB) across multiple pages. For users stressed about an upcoming exam, Quizlet runs the risk of them simply abandoning the app and trying another that lets them begin creating flashcards right away. Furthermore, the user cannot even do half of Quizlet's advertised functions (like bolding/italicizing words in definitions and adding images) without being taken frequently to an "upgrade to Quizlet plus" page. Therefore, the user runs the risk of feeling duped into signing up and paying for an app that should offer more functionality on its free version.



Flash Cards

pros

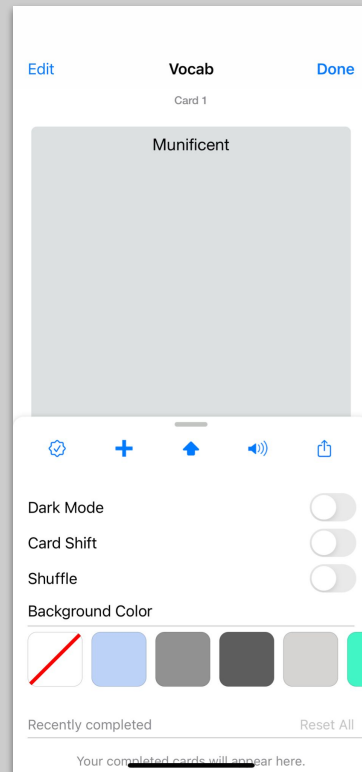
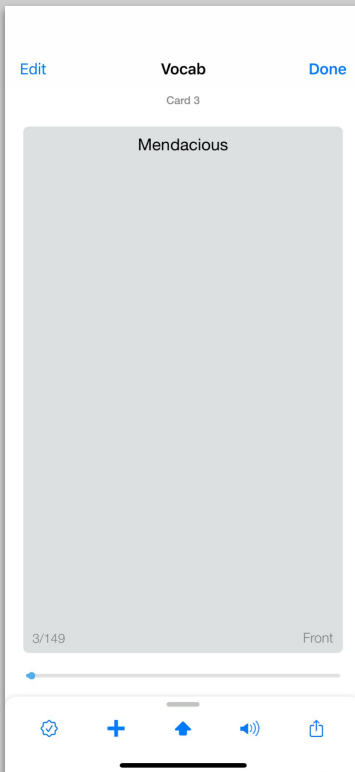
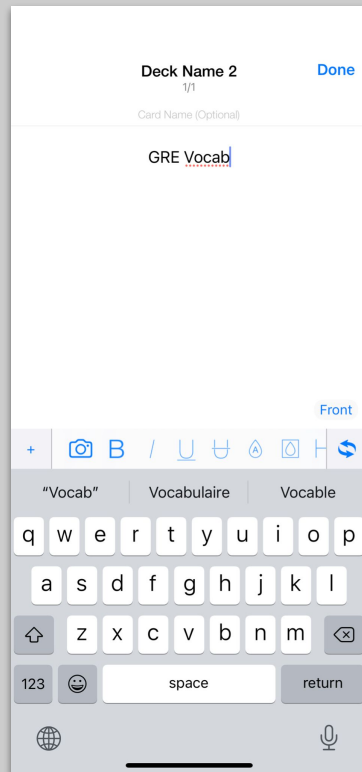
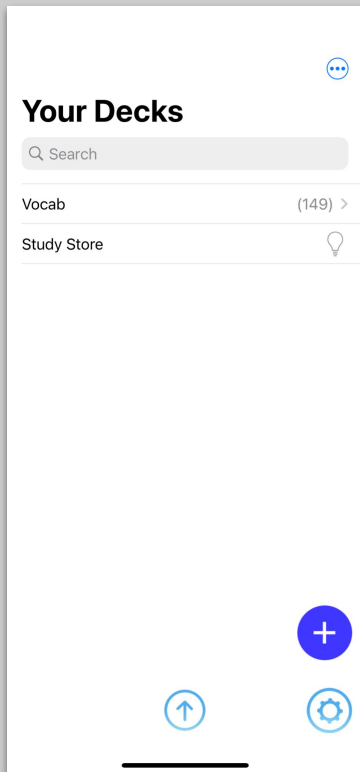
- ❑ Quick and utilitarian landing/navigation page allowing user to get started making flash cards immediately
- ❑ Minimal buttons and options avoid crowding; buttons themselves are simple and self-explanatory
- ❑ User inputs own terms and definitions without search engine function, which compels them to find, craft, and thus better retain their own definitions
- ❑ User can change background color of cards, shuffle cards, and share decks for free

cons

- ❑ UI is generally bland and uninspired overall
- ❑ Onboarding process is rather annoying: the app plods through each and every button's function, even those that are largely self-explanatory; each speech bubble suspends the entire screen so the user can't multitask
- ❑ Information architecture and layout of page elements is haphazard and sometimes glitchy
- ❑ Ad pop-ups take over the whole screen without warning and user has to wait five seconds to close
- ❑ Free version has limited space (only 5 decks)
- ❑ Speech function is restricted to the paid version, which is essential to users with accessibility needs

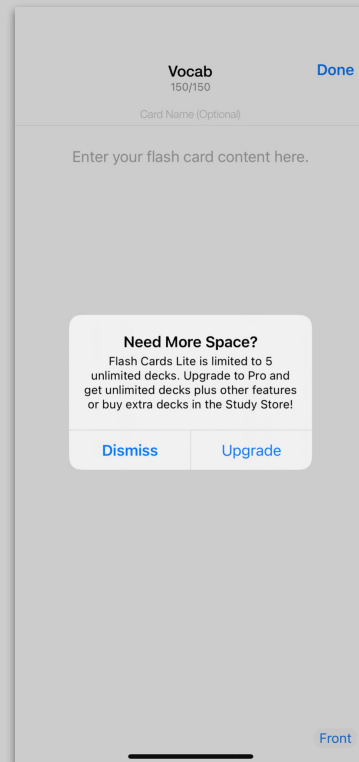
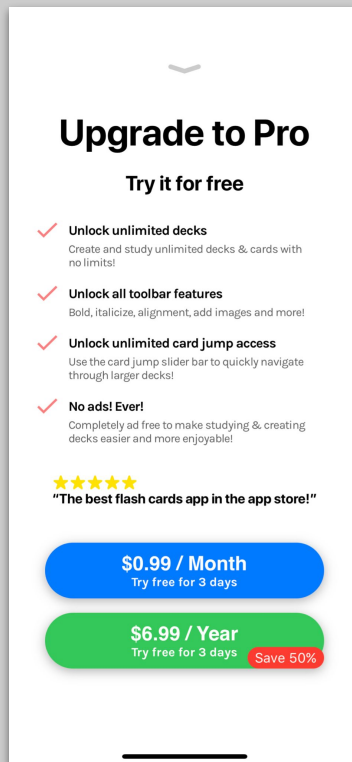
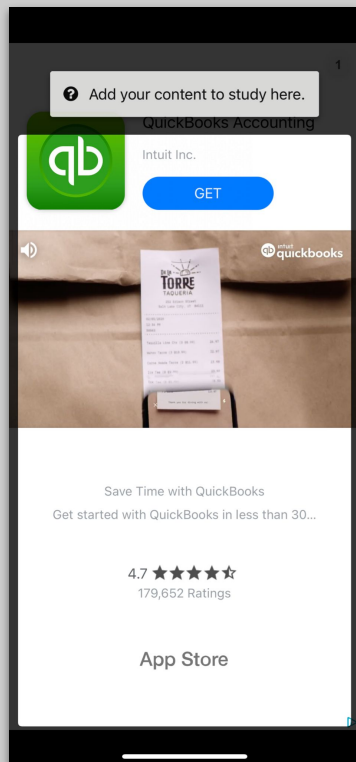
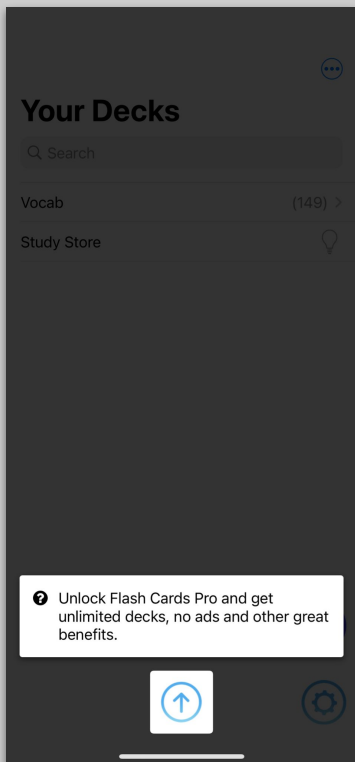


Flash Cards - screenshots (pros)





Flash Cards - screenshots (cons)

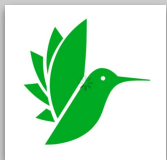




Flash Cards - analysis

In terms of “getting the job done” in the purest sense, I think Flash Cards does meet the goals of the user. The app is straightforward, easy, and quick to use for a student who just needs a fast and no-stress method of inputting vocab terms and definitions. There is no sign up/log in process up front, which I think is preferable, as the goal user will want to start using the app to complete core tasks as soon as possible - it is only later, *if* the user needs to use more than 5 decks provided, that Flash Cards presents the user with the option of upgrading to the paid version. There is no search engine function integrated with the app, which obliges the user to find their own definitions, which may actually help them think and thus retain the actual definitions. At the same time, however, it could be nice for the user to skip the step of having to look up terms’ definitions on the internet to save a little time.

Flash Cards’ weakest facets are undoubtedly its general UI, which is very bland and unappealing-looking, possibly increasing the user’s sense of boredom. The app feels unwieldy to use, from the cumbersome onboarding process to the glitchy ad pop-ups. But it is hard to find any major flaws as far as providing the user a utilitarian way of quickly and easily learning vocabulary.



flashcards.io

pros

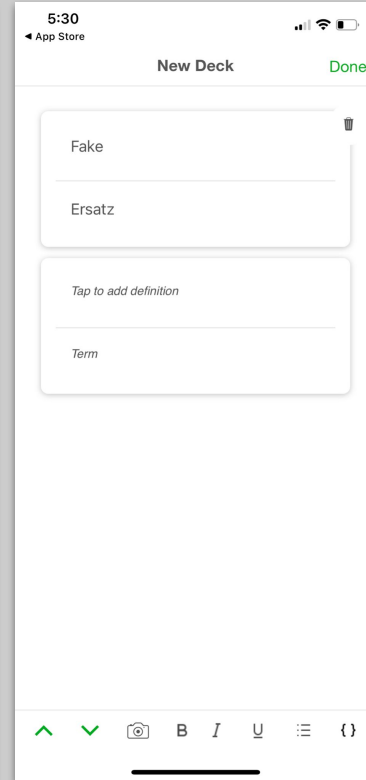
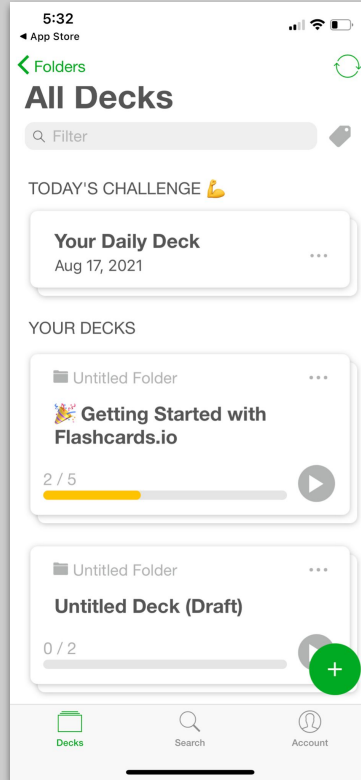
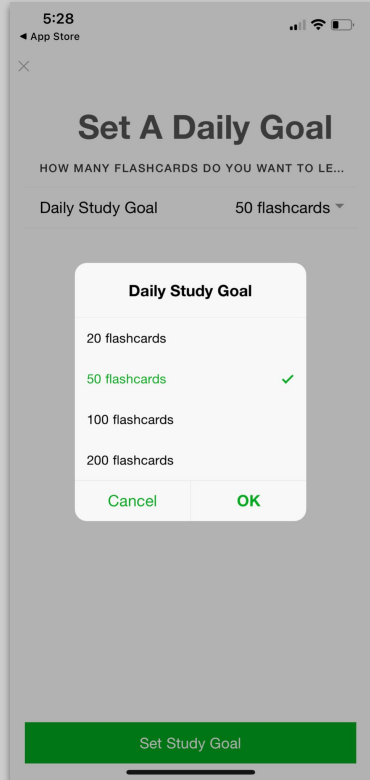
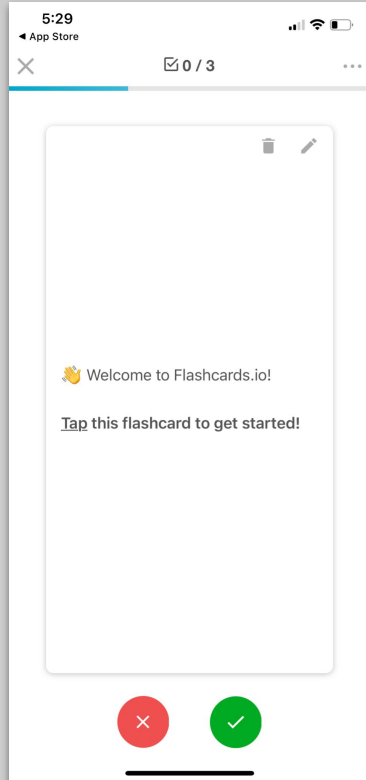
- ❑ UI strikes a good balance between being utilitarian/simple, yet not bland: color palette and logo is memorable and pleasing enough
- ❑ Onboarding process is straightforward with just a few tips presented on the body of the flashcards themselves, thus creating a smooth flow towards beginning to use the flashcards
- ❑ Landing/navigation page is simple and uncluttered, showing all saved decks and bars marking progress through each deck
- ❑ Contains a number of helpful and unique features not seen on other apps:
 - ❑ User can set daily study goals with number of cards per day
 - ❑ New flashcard creation is presented with multiple cards on a scroll-down screen, where every time you type one card, another blank card appears below
 - ❑ You can add photos from camera roll using iphone-style menu at the bottom
 - ❑ There is a "tips and tricks" link to a helpful Q&A document

cons

- ❑ Title of the app is not catchy or memorable
- ❑ Use of emojis throughout the app takes away from what could be a more professional look
- ❑ Some of the onboarding instruction statements are worded awkwardly and are hard to understand
- ❑ Search function draws from decks created by other users rather than integrating with a definition internet search engine, which seems lazy as far as creating/retaining user's own definitions
- ❑ Account creation and sign up/log in is almost nonexistent but for a "log in" button at the bottom of the admin page; it is unclear what benefits, if any, there are to creating an account

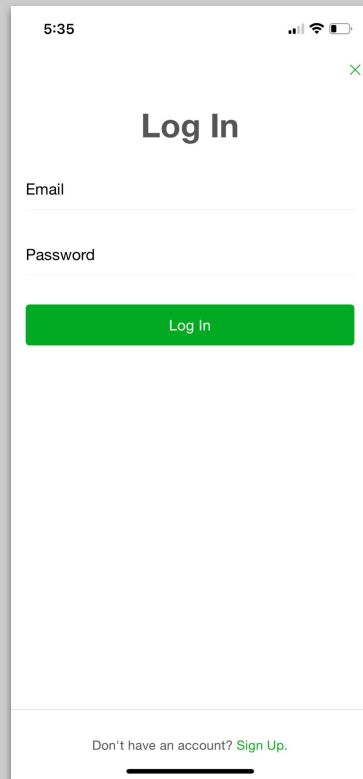
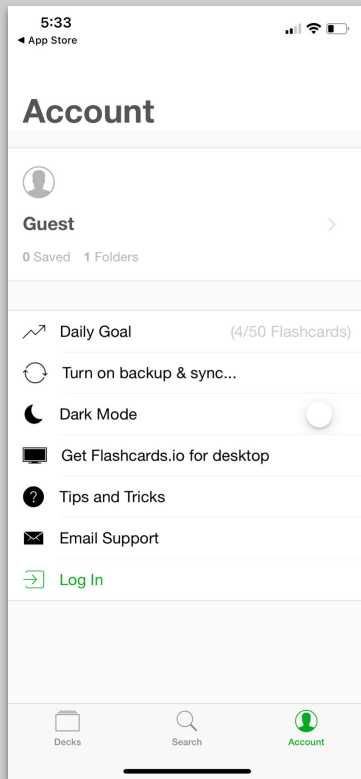
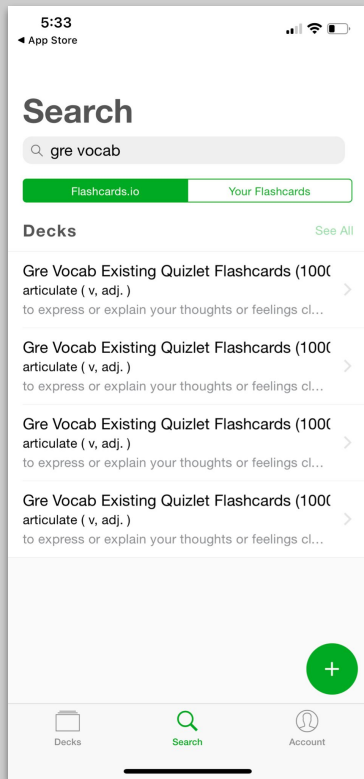
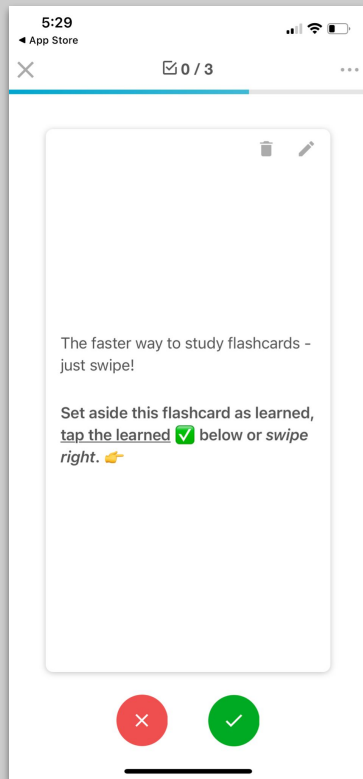


flashcards.io - screenshots (pros)





flashcards.io - screenshots (cons)





flashcards.io - analysis

flashcards.io strikes a great balance between appearance and functionality, simplicity and ingenuity of content, and in my opinion meets the user's goals quite effectively. The app uses a few simple branding choices, such as its vibrant green color and soft curved-square blocks, to unify its content; however, it still remains no-frills and utilitarian. The onboarding process is short, and although the awkward wording and tacky use of emojis are not ideal, the app communicates its core elements quickly, allowing the stressful student user to get started making cards. The landing page and navigation of flashcards.io is intuitive and well-designed, and the app contains a number of helpful features, including: "x" and "check" buttons at the bottom of each flashcard to keep track of which cards you remembered, "Your Daily Deck" challenges, options to add photos to cards to help with memory association, and a Q&A resource document link complete with an email to send questions to.

The chief downside to flashcards.io is its apparent lack of sign up/log in info, which de-incentivizes account creation at all from the user and perhaps makes it hard to save or personalize content. That, plus the absence of ads, puts into question flashcards.io's ability to generate revenue or loyalty of any kind. However, flashcards.io is overall very effective in helping its goal users learn vocabulary quickly and efficiently.

Concluding Assessment

If the goal of UX Design is to improve the utility, ease of use, and efficiency of a user's overall interaction with a product or service, ultimately aiding the user in completing core tasks and meeting their goals, then flashcards.io is the most successful of the three competitor apps I have researched. Its balance of appealing UI, intuitive interaction design, and extra helpful features best allow a stressed student to quickly create flash cards, organize cards into decks, and reinforce the memorization of new vocabulary.

Quizlet undoubtedly has the most sleek and professional look of the three apps, which gives it great potential; however, the monetizing/advertising aspects of this apps (i.e. account creation before revealing the app's core features and constant upgrade pop-ups) is off-putting and drawn out enough to seriously hinder the user's goals of creating flash cards quickly and studying efficiently.

Flash Cards, on the other hand, is the most bare-bones utilitarian of the three apps, which probably makes it the most quick to use, if not for the glitchy navigation and ad pop-ups.

If Quizlet's UI and definition search engine integration were merged with flashcards.io's intuitive design and extra features, I think we would be close to a perfect flash-card-style vocabulary learning app!