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Product Design Portfolio

December 2023



# Simplifying experience for investors to claim foreign tax credit

The screenshot shows a web browser window for <https://www.intuit.turbotax.com>. At the top, it displays "FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052" and "ST REFUND (in progress) \$235". Below this, there are tabs for "Wages & Income", "Deductions & Credits" (which is underlined), "Other Tax Situations", and "Federal Review". A green circular icon with a dollar sign and an arrow is prominently displayed. The main content area says "Looks like taking a credit puts more money back in your pocket" followed by the text "Because the credit gives you the best tax outcome, we've already applied it to your federal refund." It also states "Based on what you've told us so far, with the credit, your federal refund will stay at **\$3,052**". A note below it says "If you took the deduction instead, it would drop to **\$2,959**". At the bottom, there are buttons for "Take the deduction instead" and "Continue with my credit".

INTUIT

# Online brokerages have made investing more accessible to investors of all experience levels



Invest spare change



Unlimited commission-free  
trading



Hands off automated  
investing

## Problem statement

# Investors don't always understand the tax implications of their investments

- Investors have a lot of fear that they'll make mistakes in their return
- Self-doubt that they can file their return themselves and will have to rely on a CPA

## Use case

# Investors who have foreign investments don't realize they're eligible for a tax credit

- Automated robo-advisors invest on the user's behalf
- Individual investors curating their own portfolio with foreign investments

**In 2018, 970k customers tried to claim the foreign tax credit and we expect that population to grow**

**Reduce support inquiries**

Foreign tax credit was the number one investor topic that customers contacted our support channels for (25k contacts)

**Improve basic usability**

This experience was built in our legacy tech stack and was using old tax calculations that needed to be revisited

Objective

# I led the design for simplifying how investors claim the foreign tax credit

## My approach:

- Assess current experience
- Iterate on user flow
- Results

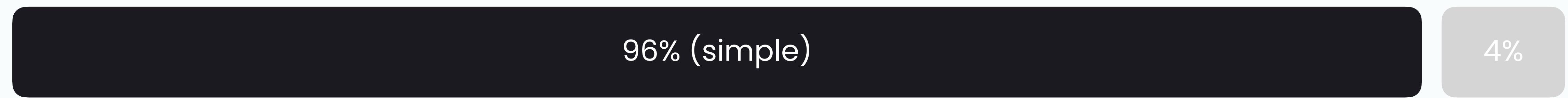


## **Asssess current experience**

Assess current experience

# I found that 96% of users paid less than \$300 in foreign taxes and have simple situations

I worked with a business analyst to analyze how customers move through the experience, and a tax expert to understand the tax rules and limitations



This group's foreign taxes paid is  
equal to their tax credit amount

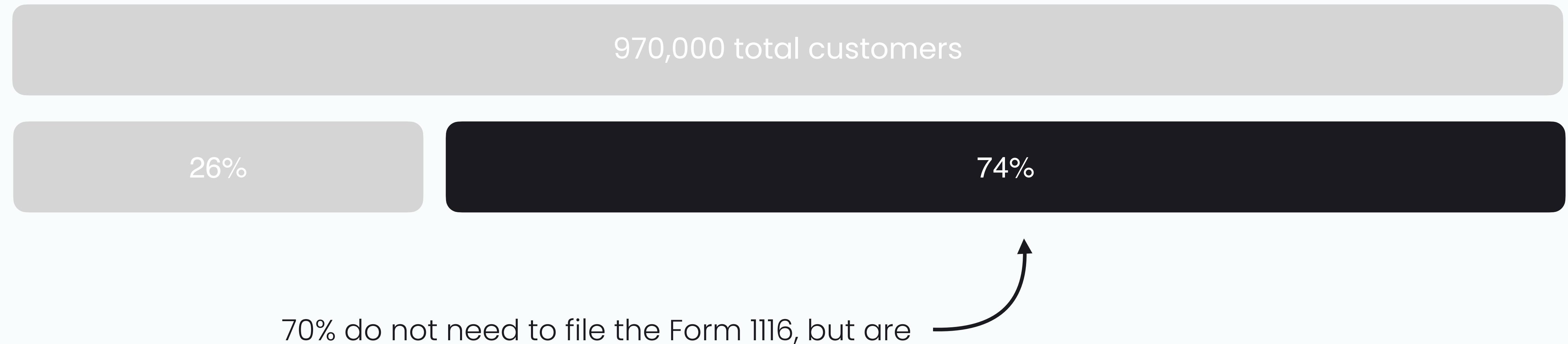
Assess current experience

**The remaining 4% who paid more than \$300 in foreign taxes have to attach the Form 1116, which is difficult to fill out**



Assess current experience

# A lot of tax filers with simple situations were getting lost and unintentionally filling out the Form 1116



Assess current experience

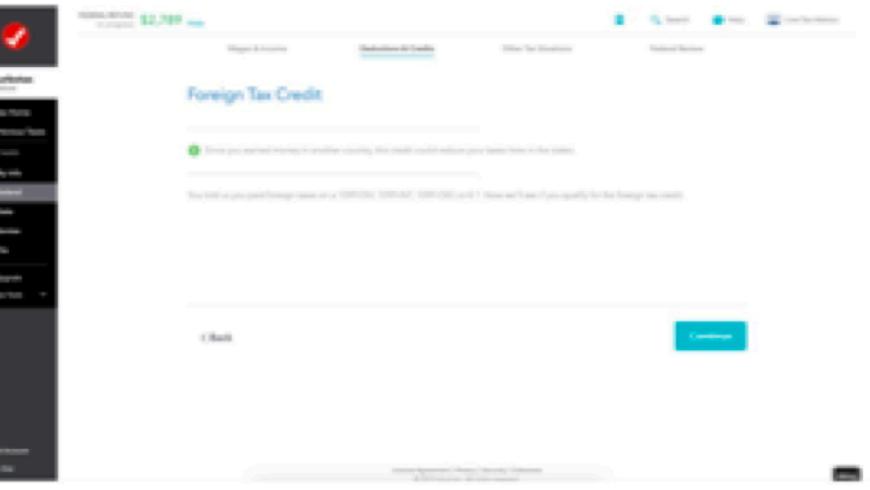
# I audited the experience and worked with a tax expert to understand the biggest pain points

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Confusing user flow consisting of 50+ screens |
| 2 | Difficult to understand tax jargon            |
| 3 | Uncertainty on how to claim the tax break     |

Confluence Spaces People Calendars Create Get Support Search

Evaluation:

Scenario 1: Customer starts fresh, we didn't add this item to their mystuff (no indication that they should go through this flow) - didn't end up having to file a Form 1116.

Customer is trying to...	Customer experiences...	Customer instead feels...	Recommendation
Determine whether or not they should claim the foreign tax credit	<p><b>Customer came in from an import experience</b></p>  <p>(While filling out 1099-INT, subtext to tell me to go to FTC)</p> <p><b>Foreign Tax Credit</b></p>  <p>(Gateway screen, after entering foreign tax income in 1099-INT)</p>	<p>1) Not sure how I ended up here</p> <p>I'm not sure why this credit is being recommended to me, I didn't make money in a different country (i.e. could have been selling stock in a different country, but didn't understand the implications)</p> <p>2) Feels repetitive</p> <p>I thought I already entered this information when I entered my 1099-INT, 1099-DIV form in wages and income?</p> <p>3) Should I upgrade?</p> <p>Upsell - I only earned ~\$10 in foreign interest, why do I need to upgrade to TurboTax Deluxe? Am I going to risk filing my taxes with errors, if I don't go through FTC?</p> <p>4) What was that thing you told me to fill out?</p> <p>I got to the DnC landing table, and I don't see anything about the "FTC" they previously told me about when I entered my 1099-INT. Does this mean I don't actually need to enter it anymore?</p> <p>5) I'm not sure if I qualify</p> <p>It's hard for me to understand exactly what the "gateway screen" is asking me. It's very taxxy and I only earned like \$20 in foreign interest.</p>	<p>Show off the benefit</p> <p>Once the user tells me about their income, make it clear what opportunity to maximize it.</p> <p>Contextual recommendation</p> <p>If I'm not entering anything from the previous step, entering my income directly in the body copy that tells us about your foreign income.</p> <p>Explain it (Simplification)</p> <p>The content on the gateway screen (variations) doesn't get into, or how I get there. I'm just trying to maximize my refund by upgrading to TurboTax that I can't afford.</p> <p>Calculate whether the upgrade is worth it</p> <p>If I've only earned like \$20 in foreign interest, then is it worth me upgrading to TurboTax? Recommend a simplified version that doesn't cost as much money. Do I need to file a Form 1116?</p> <p>Double check that deduction/credit is correct</p> <p>Don't make the user feel like they're missing out on their biggest tax break.</p>



# Iterate on user flow

Iterate on user flow

# The major point of confusion was when users were asked to make a decision they didn't need to make

The screenshot shows the TurboTax software interface. At the top, there are two refund amounts: "FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$655" and "CA REFUND (in progress) \$357". Below this, there are several navigation tabs: "Income & Expenses", "Deductions & Credits" (which is underlined, indicating it's the active tab), "Other Tax Situations", and "Federal Review". On the far left, there's a sidebar with a red circular icon containing a white checkmark. The sidebar menu includes "TurboTax LIVE Self-Employed", "Tax Home", "Previous Taxes", "2019 TAXES" (with sub-options "My Info", "Federal" which is highlighted in grey, "State", "Review", and "File"), and "Tax Tools". The main content area has a heading "Do You Want the Deduction or the Credit?". It explains that users can claim foreign taxes as an itemized deduction or a credit, and provides a link to "help you decide". At the bottom, there are two teal buttons: "Itemized Deduction" and "Take a Credit". A "Back" button is located at the bottom left.

Assess current experience

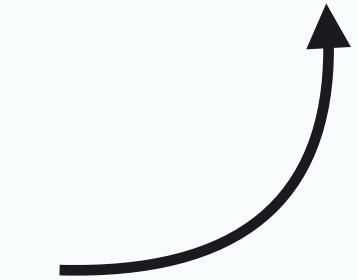
# **76% of our simple tax filers take the standard deduction and will have to take the credit**

931,200 customers (96% of total with simple tax situation)

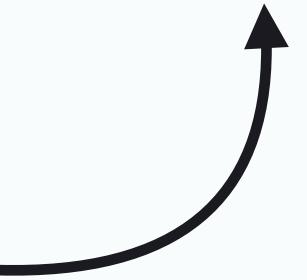
76% (standard deduction)

26% (itemize taxes)

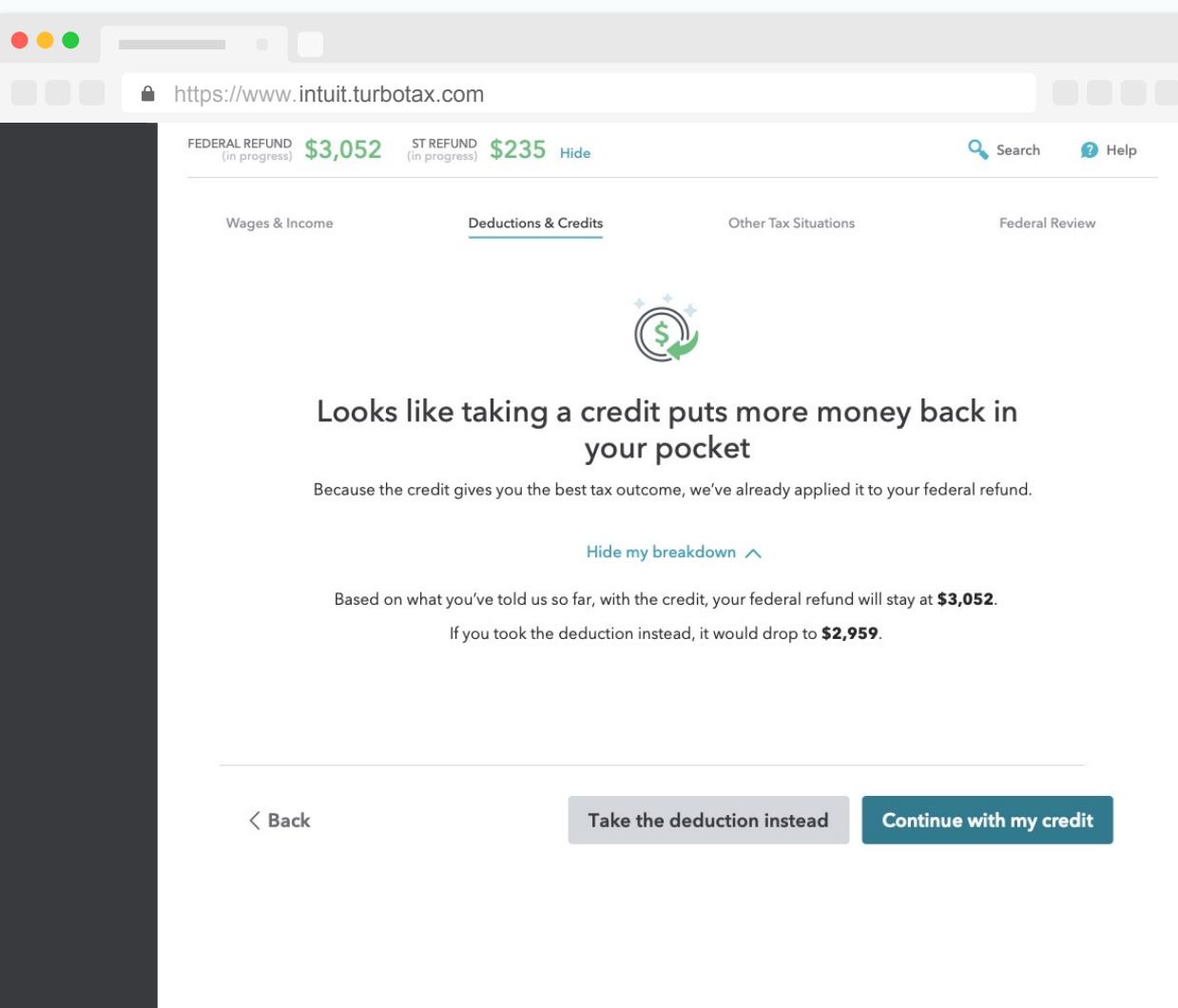
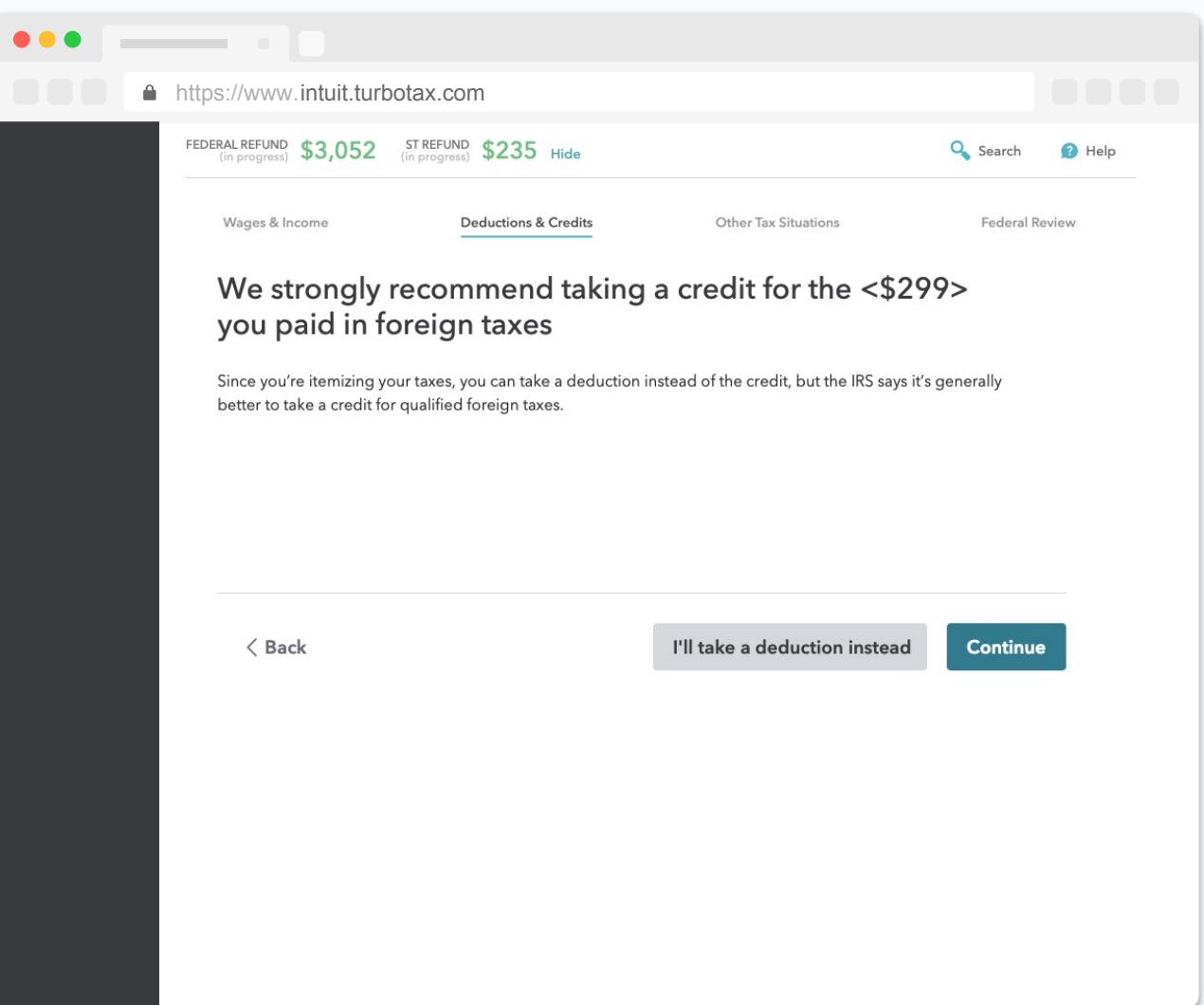
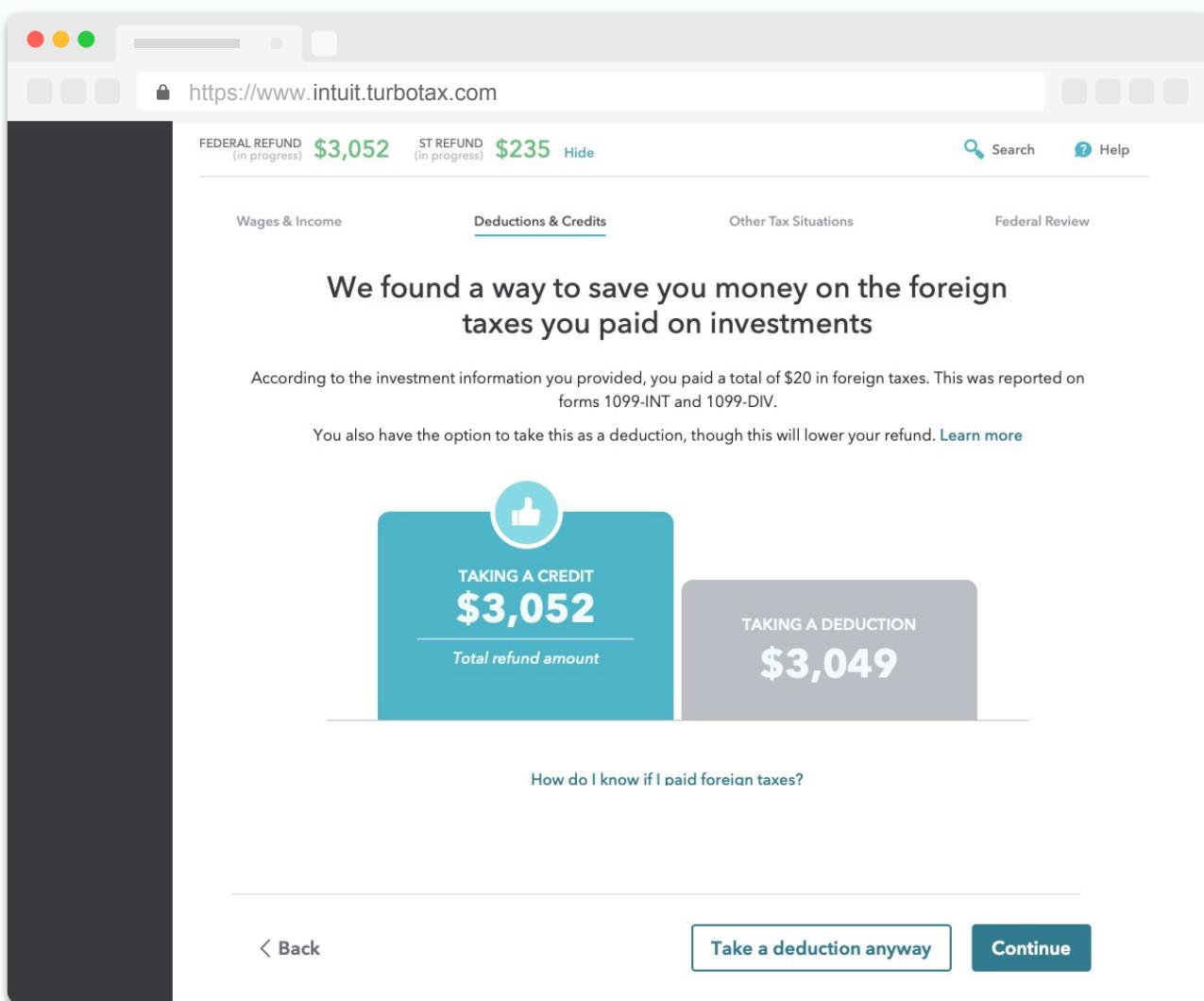
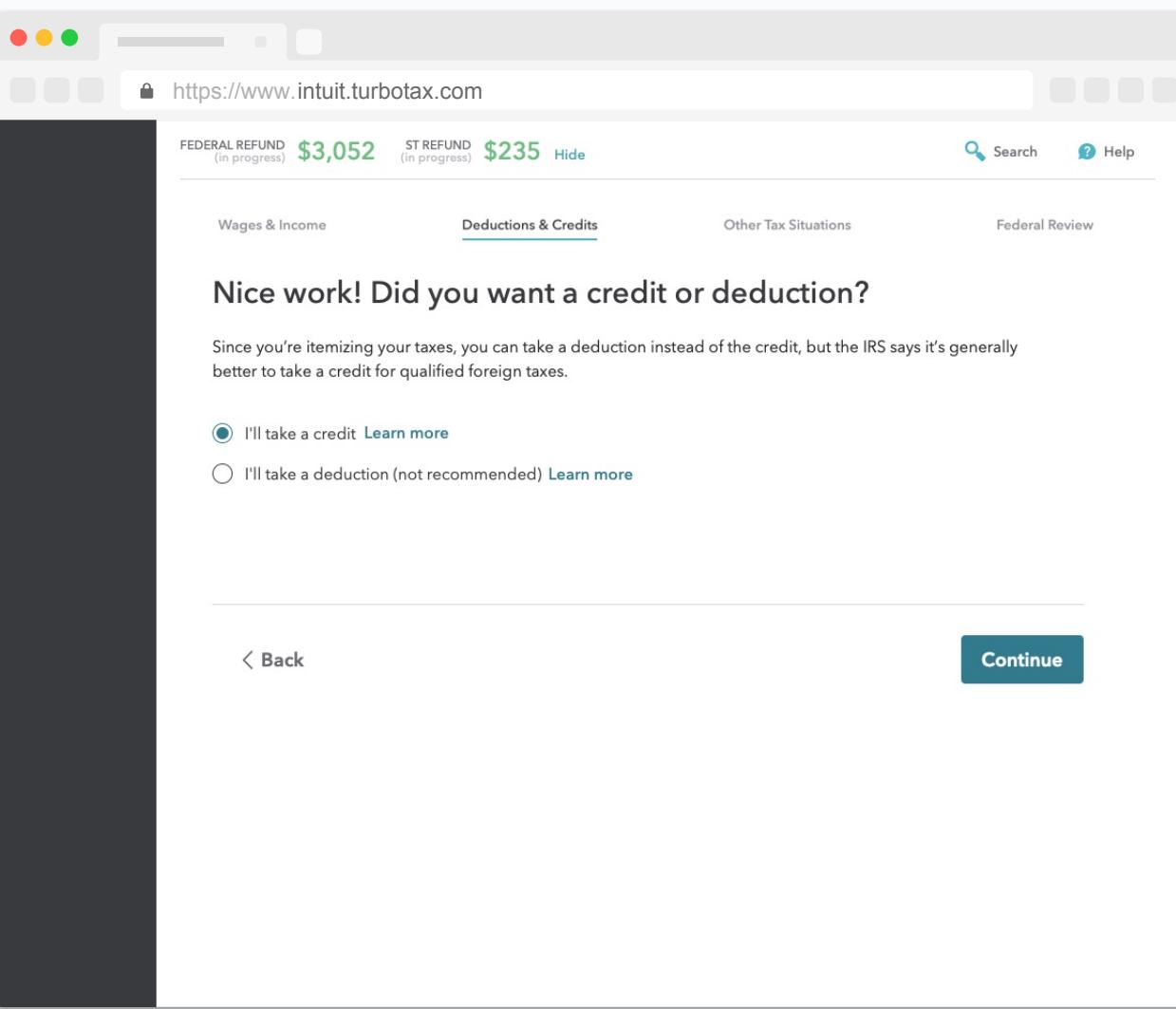
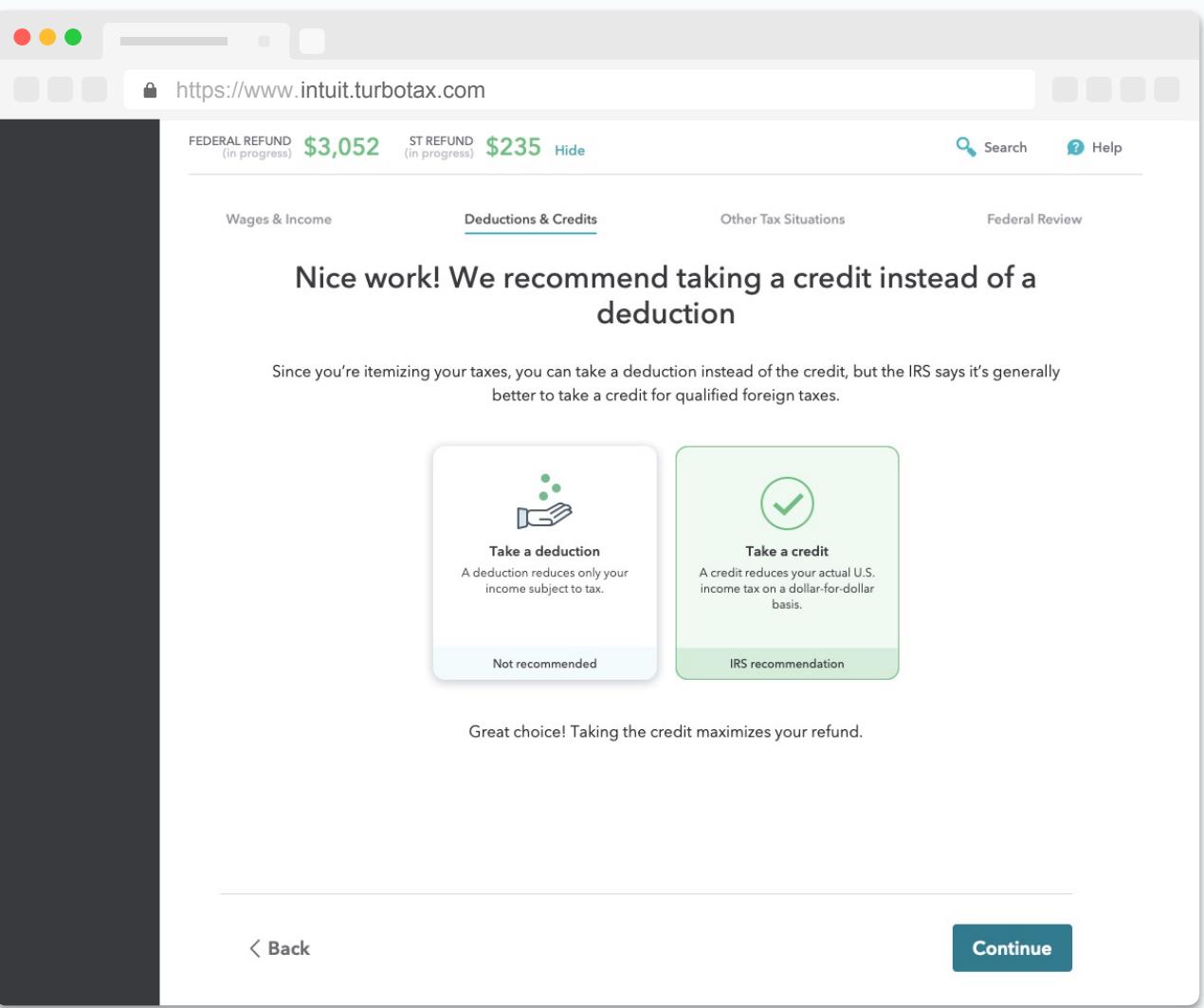
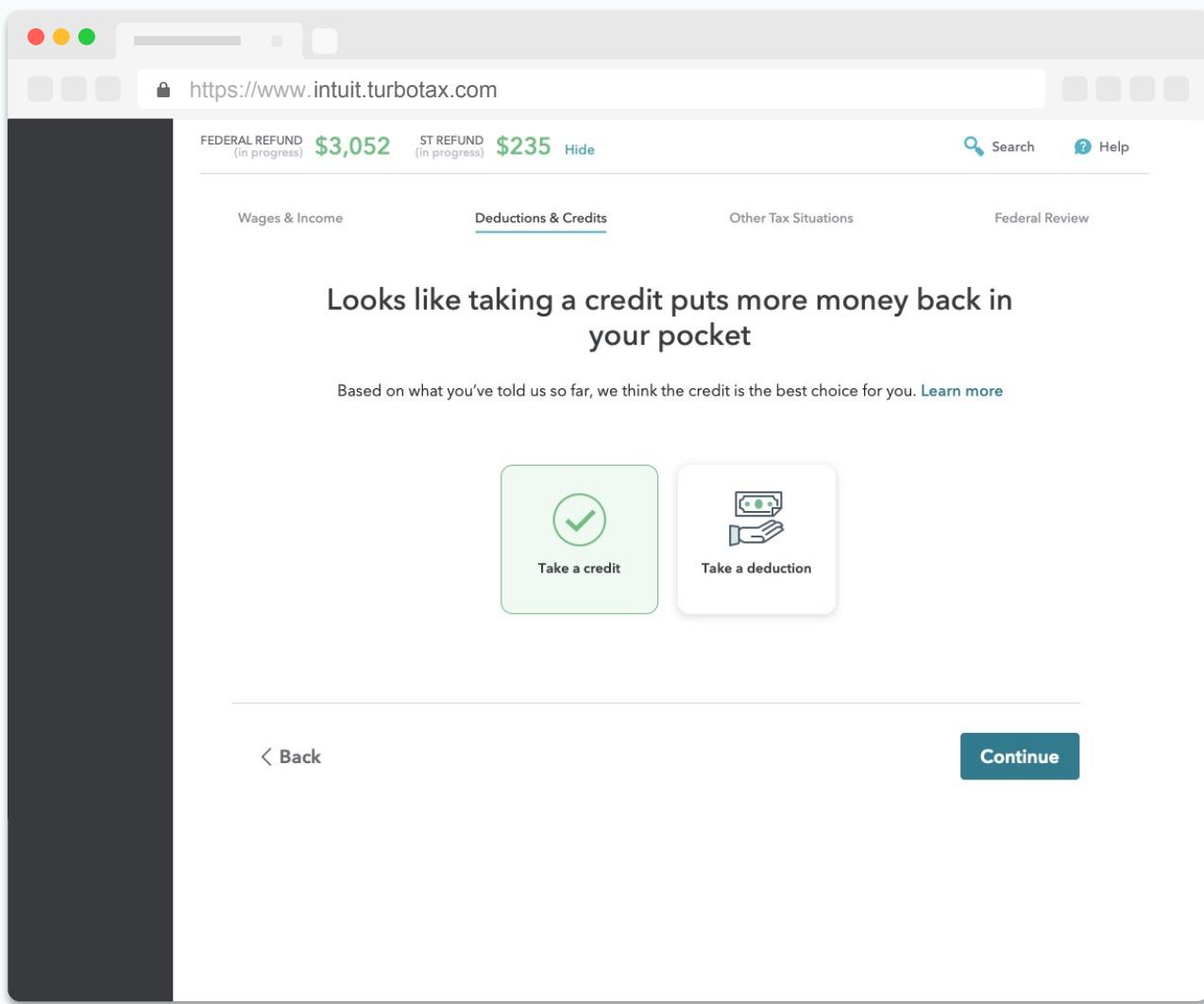
We can remove the decision for  
these users



And provide a recommendation  
for these users



## Iterate on user flow



## Iterate on user flow

The screenshot shows a web browser window for <https://www.intuit.turbotax.com>. At the top, it displays "FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052" and "ST REFUND (in progress) \$235". The main content area is titled "Deductions & Credits". It features a green circular icon with a dollar sign and arrows. Below it, the text "Looks like taking a credit puts more money back in your pocket" is displayed, followed by the note "Because the credit gives you the best tax outcome, we've already applied it to your federal refund." A "Hide my breakdown ▾" link is present. It also states "Based on what you've told us so far, with the credit, your federal refund will stay at **\$3,052**". If the deduction instead, it would drop to **\$2,959**". At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Take the deduction instead" (gray) and "Continue with my credit" (blue).

Guidance and recommendation that's easy to understand

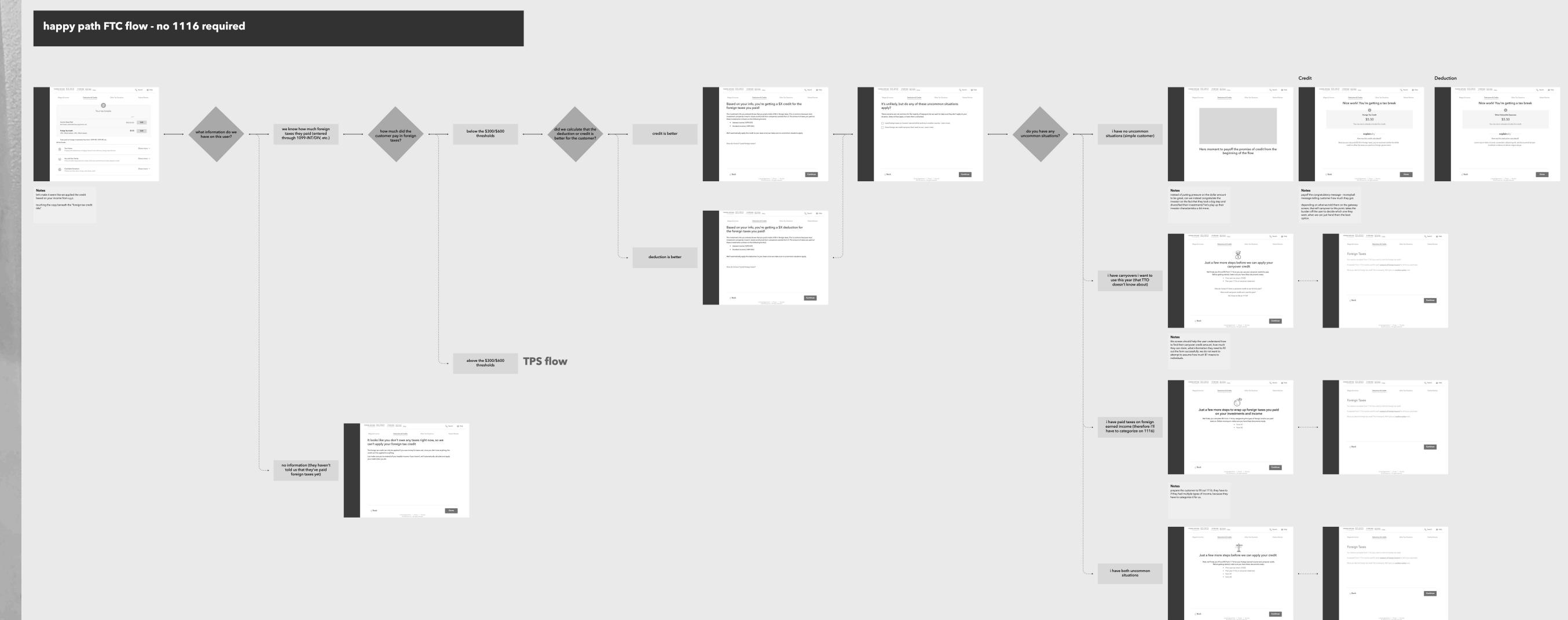
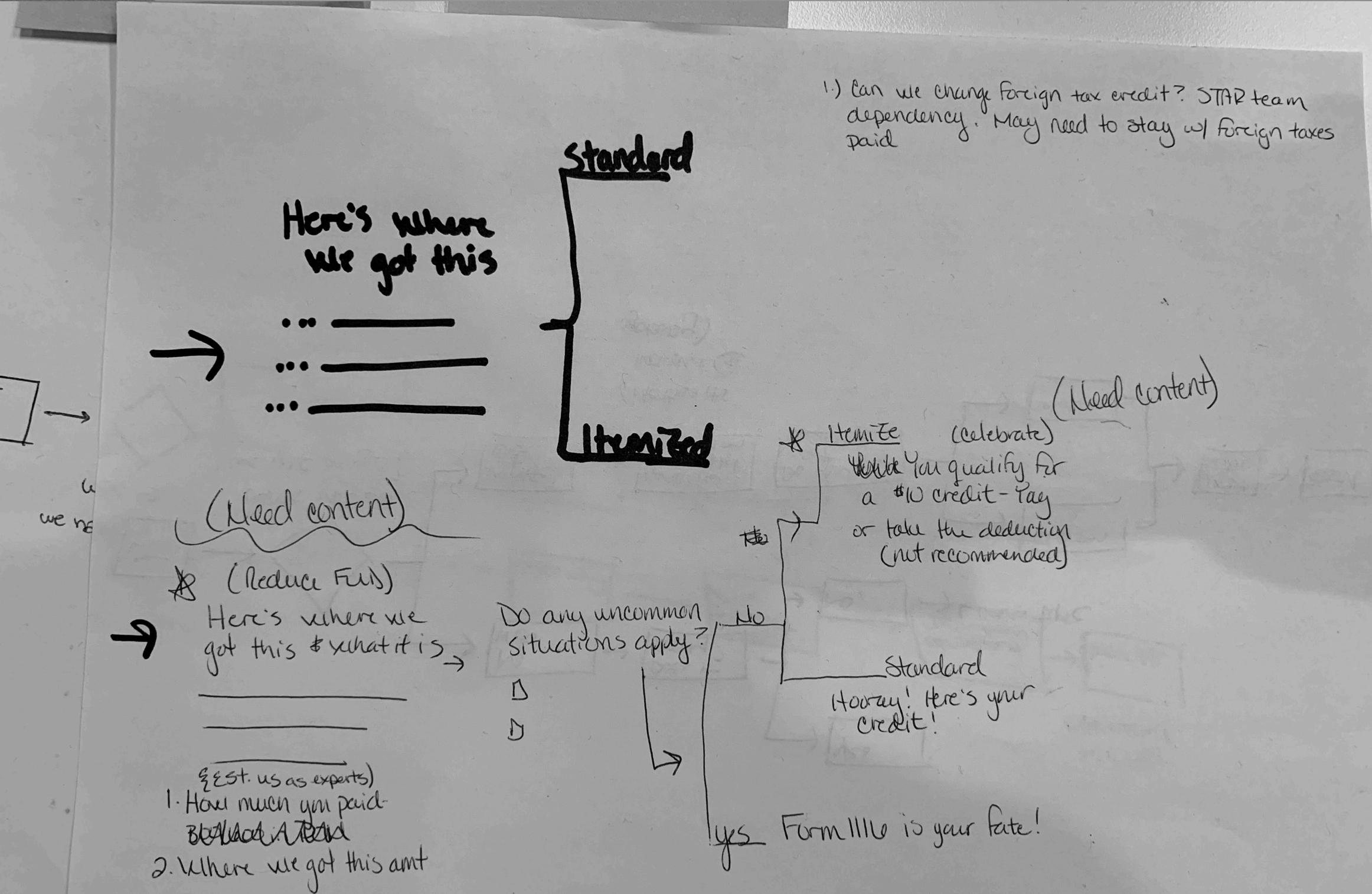
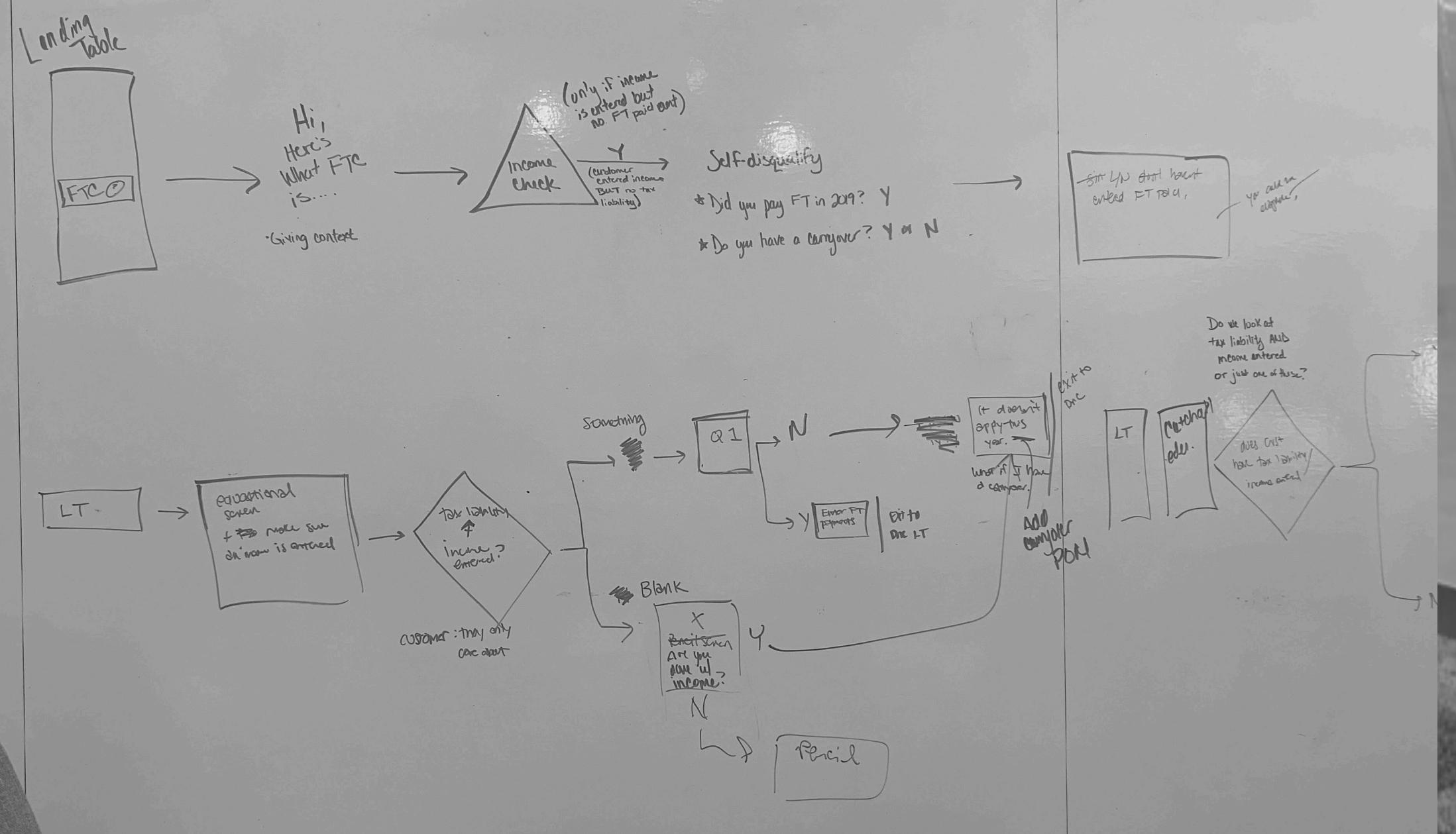
Breakdown that shows customers how their total refund will change

Customer control

Assess current experience

## **Simplified the experience by determining what information we actually need to collect**

- 1 Foreign taxes they paid
- 2 Whether they're itemizing or taking the standard deduction
- 3 If they have uncommon tax situations that demand more info



FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052 ST REFUND (in progress) \$235 Hide

Search Help

turbotax Premier

Tax Home My Info Federal State Review File Tax Tools Turbo

**Your tax breaks**

Income Taxes Paid W-2 taxes, estimated tax payments, etc. \$42,553.00 Edit

Foreign Tax Credit Needs review Review

All tax breaks

Your Home Property (real estate) taxes, mortgage interest, home refinance, energy improvements Show more ▾

You and Your Family Child and Other Dependent Tax Credits, Child care, Earned Income Credit, Adoption Credit Show more ▾

Charitable Donations Clothes and other items, money, miles driven, stock Show more ▾

Intuit Account Sign Out

This screenshot shows the Deductions & Credits section of the Turbotax software. At the top, it displays a summary of tax refunds and credits: 'FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052' and 'ST REFUND (in progress) \$235'. Below this, there's a heading 'Your tax breaks' with a sub-section for 'Income Taxes Paid' showing a total of '\$42,553.00'. A 'Review' button is available for the 'Foreign Tax Credit' section, which is noted as 'Needs review'. The sidebar on the left is titled 'Federal' and includes links for Tax Home, My Info, Federal, State, Review, File, Tax Tools, and Turbo.

FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052 ST REFUND (in progress) \$235 Hide

Search Help

turbotax Premier

Tax Home My Info Federal State Review File Tax Tools Turbo

**You're on track to get a boost from the Foreign Tax Credit**

We've already included this credit on your return.

Next, we'll make sure you don't have any uncommon situations that require more information.

How do I know if I paid foreign taxes?

< Back Continue

This screenshot continues from the previous one, showing a message: 'You're on track to get a boost from the Foreign Tax Credit'. It states that the credit has been included in the return and asks if there are any uncommon situations. A 'Continue' button is at the bottom right, and a 'Back' button is at the bottom left.

FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052 ST REFUND (in progress) \$235 Hide

Search Help

turbotax Premier

Tax Home My Info Federal State Review File Tax Tools Turbo

**We just need to check if you have any uncommon situations**

Select any that apply to you.

I paid foreign taxes on income I earned while working in another country. [Learn more](#)

I have foreign tax credit carryover that I want to use. [Learn more](#)

None of these apply.

< Back Continue

Intuit Account Sign Out

This screenshot shows a section titled 'We just need to check if you have any uncommon situations'. It lists three options for foreign tax situations with links to learn more. A 'Continue' button is at the bottom right, and a 'Back' button is at the bottom left.

We just need to check if you have any uncommon situations

Select any that apply to you.

I paid foreign taxes on income I earned while working in another country. [Learn more](#)

I have foreign tax credit carryover that I want to use. [Learn more](#)

None of these apply.

[Continue](#)

## Standard deduction

FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052 ST REFUND (in progress) \$235 Hide

Wages & Income Deductions & Credits Other Tax Situations Federal Review

Congrats, you're getting a tax break

Foreign Tax Credit  
\$5.50

We've already included this credit.

How was this credit calculated?

[Continue](#)

## Itemize taxes

FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052 ST REFUND (in progress) \$235 Hide

Wages & Income Deductions & Credits Other Tax Situations Federal Review

Looks like taking a credit puts more money back in your pocket

Because the credit gives you the best tax outcome, we've already applied it to your federal refund.

[Hide my breakdown ▾](#)

Based on what you've told us so far, with the credit, your federal refund will stay at **\$3,052**.  
If you took the deduction instead, it would drop to **\$2,959**.

[Take the deduction instead](#) [Continue with my credit](#)

FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052 ST REFUND (in progress) \$235 Hide

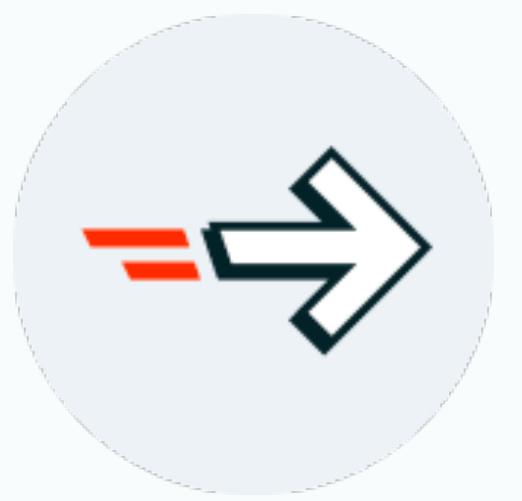
Wages & Income Deductions & Credits Other Tax Situations Federal Review

Got it, you

## Itemize taxes

The screenshot shows the Turbotax software interface. At the top, it displays "FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052" and "ST REFUND (in progress) \$235". The main content area features a green circular icon with a dollar sign and a green arrow pointing upwards. Below it, the text reads: "Looks like taking a credit puts more money back in your pocket". It continues: "Because the credit gives you the best tax outcome, we've already applied it to your federal refund." A link "Hide my breakdown ▾" is present. Below this, it states: "Based on what you've told us so far, with the credit, your federal refund will stay at \$3,052. If you took the deduction instead, it would drop to \$2,959." At the bottom, there are buttons for "Intuit Account" (with "Sign Out" option), "[Take the deduction instead](#)", and a prominent teal button "[Continue with my credit](#)".

The screenshot shows the Turbotax software interface. At the top, it displays "FEDERAL REFUND (in progress) \$3,052" and "ST REFUND (in progress) \$235". The main content area features a large green box containing the text "Got it, you're taking the deduction." and a large green dollar sign icon followed by "\$5.50". Below this, it says "Foreign Tax Credit" and "We've already included this credit." A link "How was this credit calculated?" is present. At the bottom, there are buttons for "[< Back](#)" and a teal button "[Continue](#)".



# Results

## Results

# Impact on tax season 2019

Success Metric	Result
Abandonment	Dropped from 2% down to 0.1%
Time spent on task	Reduced by 50%
Customers navigating through happy path	96% of customers are no longer getting lost filing Form 1116 Reduced the experience from 50 screens, to 5