

Observation Worksheet

Section 1: Context		Date:	Time:
Location: where are you completing the observation?			
User Role: describe the user's persona or situation (not name)			
Task Observed: what goal is the user is attempting to achieve?			

Section 2: Behavioural Script (What/Where/When)			
Action Sequence: make a numbered list of physical, observable movements. Use neutral verbs like "taps," "looks at," "hovers," or "types. Record only what they do, not what you think they are thinking.			
Pauses/Hesitations: describe moments a user slows down or pauses (when, not why).			

Section 3: Breakdowns & Workarounds			
Breakdowns: document any moments the user struggles or runs into friction.			
Workarounds: document the creative workarounds a user invents to get around barriers.			

POEMS Tags

People: list the primary user and anyone else nearby who might influence their behaviour.	
Objects: include the primary device (tablet/phone) and secondary items like furniture, pens, or instruction manuals.	
Environments: describe the physical space, including lighting, noise levels, and whether it is a private or public setting.	
Messages: what information is the user receiving? List digital pop-up alerts, labels, physical signs, or verbal instructions they are following.	
Services: what systems are running in the background? Consider things like Wi-Fi connectivity, login portals, or payment processing systems.	

Leave this blank until AFTER the observation is complete:

Part 5:
Interpretation Boundary

Assumptions I initially had: What did you expect to happen before you started observing? Did any cognitive biases affect your assumptions?	
What I observed instead: What actually happened during the observation?	

Part 6:
Remaining Questions and Future Next Steps

The "Why" Behind the Action: You saw what they did (the script), but why did they choose that path? If you could interview them, what is the one moment you would ask them to explain.	
Invisible Factors: What prior knowledge or past experiences might have influenced their behaviour today?	
Stress & Environment: How might their performance change in a higher-pressure or lower-pressure environment?	
Scaling the Insight: How would a different "User Role" (e.g., an expert vs. a complete novice) struggle with the same "Breakdown"?	
Design Hypotheses: What is one specific design change you want to test next to see if it reduces the "Notable Pauses" you recorded?	