

## Activity to Observe

Choose an activity that closely relates to the problem you are designing for so that it may shed light on useful insights. Be sure to choose an activity where you may communicate with the participant as they are doing the activity.

## Basic Information

Documenting basic information will be critical when you reference these sheets later.

## Observe Actions

Ask your subject to perform the activity as they normally would. Watch them do it, and ask them questions as they work. Imagine they are a Master, and you are an Apprentice, and they are teaching you something. Note down the basic process they follow, as well as anything that surprises you or that you find particularly interesting.

## Write Summary

Right after you finish, write down your reactions to the CI. Try not to replicate the previous field, but document larger observations that may not have been transcribed in the notes. From your initial reactions, what might you recommend doing next? Do you have new questions that need to be answered? Or are you ready to ideate?

<b>Contextual Inquiry</b>		Project	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Stakeholder Type:</b>	
<b>Task Under Observation</b> What are you observing and why is it relevant to the project? What is the goal behind the task?			
<b>Observations &amp; Information</b> What behavior did ask more about? What did you learn from that inquiry?			
<b>Post CI Thoughts</b> What are your initial reactions and thoughts following the contextual inquiry?			
<b>Version Control</b>	Iteration #:	Date:	Author:

## Why

Contextual Inquiry is one of the most powerful research tools because it allows you to observe a user and ask clarifying questions at the same time. It gives good insight into their mind and reveals mental models while also letting you interpret your own observations.

## What came before?

Directed Research Plan  
Initial Research Plan  
Contextual Inquiry  
Interview  
Domain Research

## What's next?

Observation  
Interview  
Domain Research  
Ideation  
Research Affinity Group  
Representation Models

## Tips

Don't structure your inquiry too much, beyond defining a task, see where the user takes you.

Try not to interrupt the user's flow, but don't be afraid to ask questions.

During the inquiry, it is impossible to know what is relevant, so take down as much as possible.

Conduct the inquiry in the place they normally do the activity in question.

Use a recording device if possible.

Be careful not to fall into the patterns of a normal interview.

Don't let the subject talk in abstract terms. Be specific and concrete.

Name:

Stakeholder Type:

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## Task Under Observation

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## Observations & Information

What behavior did ask more about? What did you learn from that inquiry?

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## Post CI Thoughts

What are your initial reactions and thoughts following the contextual inquiry?

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