

What?

How?

Why?

# What-How-Why Method

The What-How-Why method is a tool that you can use while observing people to help you dive into your observations and derive deeper levels of understanding. With the What-How-Why method, you start with concrete observations – the *What* – and from there move to higher levels of abstraction – asking *How* – and then finally you arrive at the *Why*—i.e., the emotional drivers behind people's behaviours. This method is extremely useful for you to analyse images that you might have taken while observing your users.

You should divide your observations into three sections: What, How and Why. You can print out our template on the next page and use it in your observation!

- 1 In *What*, note down the details of what is happening. What is the person doing? What is happening in the background? What is the person holding? Describe using *adjectives* and try to be as concrete as possible.
- 2 In *How*, describe how the person is doing what he or she is doing. For instance, is the person putting in a great deal of effort? Is the person frowning or smiling while doing the task? Does the person use many ad-hoc tools to make the task easier? Try to describe the emotional impact of performing the task.
- 3 Finally, in *Why*, try to interpret the scene. Based on the What and How observations, guess the emotional drivers behind the person you are observing. The person might be frowning while doing a task because she is concerned about hurting herself in the process – which means safety is a driver of her behaviours.

# What-How-Why Template

What

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Methods of using this template are taught in our online course [Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide](#). Make full use of this template and learn more about design thinking by signing up for it today.

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### ■□□ Beginner course

The world's leading companies, such as Apple, Google and Samsung, are already using the design thinking approach—because they know it's the way forward when it comes to innovation and product success. Through [Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide](#), you will deep dive into the five phases of this paradigm-shifting approach to problem-solving—empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. By receiving detailed guidance on problem-solving activities ranging from ideation techniques—such as brainstorming and using analogies—to ways of gathering feedback from your prototypes, you'll be able to download the other templates involved and effectively use them in your work. Get ready to unpack, explore, and master design thinking—using it to set yourself apart and unlock the next stage of your professional life.

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