



Guidelines for Usability Test Observers

Observers are welcome to attend any usability test. More eyes are always better! If you're not able to attend at the time of the test, a video recording will be available shortly after [in Dropbox](#). You can see when tests are being run by checking the [Usability Testing Calendar](#).

Guidelines for Live Attendance

If you choose to attend live, please adhere to the following guidelines to help us maintain the integrity of the test and to make sure the participants are as comfortable as possible:

- Please show up a few minutes early. Do not enter after the test has begun.
- Keep your camera off and your microphone muted. Only the test facilitator should have their camera and microphone on at all times.
- If there is a followup question that you want the facilitator to ask, send it to them in Slack, and they will ask it at the end of the current task or at the end of the session if there is time. In general, testing tasks will not be interrupted for questions to keep the participant focused and the session moving forward.

Things to think about while observing (either live or watching a recording)

While you are observing a session, take notes on what you see and hear. Your observations are welcome as we analyze the session for takeaways. In particular, take notes on the following and provide them to the facilitator at the end of the session:

- What are the **three most serious problems** you observed the participant encounter during the test? What issues kept the participant from completing testing tasks efficiently and effectively?
- It's easy to see and write down any number of things that you'd like us to fix when observing a test. But, fixes must be prioritized for limited development time. Of the issues you observed, which three caused the most serious issues for the participant?
- It's also easy to go for the low hanging fruit or those improvements that won't take very long because that feels like quick wins to us. But those often don't have the most impact for our users. When choosing your top three, which will have the biggest impact **for users**? "Focus ruthlessly on fixing the most serious problems first." **
- Do not comment on things you happened to see tangentially during the test. Only note issues that the user actually encountered. We know the app very well, and it's easy to spot other things we'd like to change. But, that's not the focus of these tests. Focus on the participant's specific experience in **this test**. Tangential observations can be pitched or issues can be created separately from the results of the test you are observing.
- Write down any questions you may have during the test or that you think of after and provide them to the facilitator to help us improve future tests.

** From *Don't Make Me Think, Revisited* by Steve Krug. Page 138. This is an excellent book if you're looking for more insight into Usability Testing.