Ages: 12-14

A prototype for a useful service

90 min · indoors · all year round



Prep:

- A4 paper - 8-10 sheets for screens
- Sticky notes
- Pencils and a marker
- Masking tape
- Timer

Step by step (~90 min):

1. Choose a small problem that genuinely annoys you: who takes out the rubbish, where the keys are or who is using the bathroom.
2. In one sentence, say what someone should be able to do: "find out in ten seconds whose turn it is today".
3. Draw the path from "opened it" to "done it". If it takes more than four steps, simplify it.
4. Draw the screens, one per sheet, using sticky notes for pop-up hints. Give someone outside the project a task aloud and stay quiet: helping them would invalidate the test.
5. Note three points where they get stuck and how long they take. Change one screen, then test it with a second person using the same task.

If it's not working: If the tester cannot understand the prototype, do not explain it straight away. Ask what they expected and change one screen or label after they have finished trying.

Playing together: A child aged 9-11 draws individual screens; a teenager aged 12-14 designs the user journey and runs the test; the adult or another participant tries the task without hints.

Make it your own: Design a book-sharing service, a way to sign up for a family chore or a way to find a lost item. Compare two versions of the first screen.

Let's talk:

- "What action did the user expect to find here?"
- "What is the smallest change that would remove the main sticking point?"
- "Which was harder: staying quiet or revising the design?"

Why try this:

Your teenager turns an everyday problem into a clear task, observes a user and tests an improvement. Rather than arguing over the best idea, they get to try it out in practice.