Why Research Matters Before You Design

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⏰ 3 min read

What Does Research Mean in Design?

When designers start a project, they don't just jump straight into drawing or building. First, they spend time finding out about the **problem** they're trying to solve. This is called **research**. They ask questions like: Who needs this? What already exists? What went wrong before? What do people actually want?

Research is like being a detective. You gather clues before you solve the mystery. Without doing this homework, designers might waste time and money creating something nobody wants or something that doesn't work properly.

Understanding the Real Problem

Many people think they know what a problem is, but they're sometimes wrong. **Research helps designers understand the real problem**, not just what they think the problem is.

Think of it like: If your friend says their bike is "broken," you might assume the chain snapped. But if you actually look, maybe the tyres are flat, or the brakes are stuck. You need to investigate before you fix it.

A designer might be asked to create a new **water bottle**. They could just design a pretty bottle. But if they research, they might discover that **80% of people** lose their bottles because they're hard to spot in backpacks. This research tells them the real problem isn't about looks—it's about making bottles easy to find.

Learning from What Already Exists

Before inventing something new, designers look at what **already exists**. They study similar products to see what works well and what doesn't. This saves them from making the same mistakes others made.

Think of it like: Before writing a story, you might read other stories to see which ones people love and why. You learn what makes a good story without starting from zero.

Designers also research their **audience**—the people who will use their creation. Different people have different needs. Kids need different things than grandparents. People in cold countries need different things than people in hot countries.

Saving Time and Money

Research takes time at the start, but it saves huge amounts of time and money later. If a designer builds a prototype (a test version) without researching, and it turns out nobody wants it, that's wasted work.

Good research means fewer mistakes, better designs, and happier users. It's the smartest way to start any design project.

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