



Innovation skills and Growth mindset

THE 5 WHYs



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Project number: 2022-1-DE02-KA220-YOU 000085086

THE 5 WHYS

The Five Whys technique is a powerful design thinking exercise for identifying the root cause of a problem.

Design thinking is a human-centred, iterative problem-solving approach emphasizing empathy, collaboration, and experimentation. It has five key stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

The “5 whys” method is an iterative approach to uncovering the root of a problem. It encourages you to dig deeper into surface-level problems in order to figure out the underlying issue.

How to do it:

Clearly define the problem you want to address.

Ask “why” the problem exists and record the answer.

Continue asking “why” four more times, using the previous response as the basis for the next question.

Review answers to identify patterns or common themes.

Use these insights to inform your ideation and solution development.

Example:

The car won’t start

FIRST WHY: The battery is dead.

SECOND WHY: The alternator isn’t working.

THIRD WHY: The alternator belt has broken.

FOURTH WHY: The alternator belt was old and was never replaced.

FIFTH WHY: The car hadn’t been properly maintained and serviced.

Your turn: define the problem or issue you want to solve, and start answering the first WHY.

Continue answering all whys, and do not forget to record your own answers.

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