

# How Is Cognitive Testing Different From Usability Testing?

Usability testing is another type of one-on-one testing that is useful during the report development process. The process is similar, but the purpose of usability testing is different in that the focus is on learning whether your audience can easily and effectively **use** the information in your report to make a decision. The entire interview is devoted to observing and assessing how participants perform the task for which the report is intended. It is often necessary to conduct usability testing in addition to cognitive testing, as a report that is easy to understand is not necessarily easy to use.

Usability testing goes beyond asking audience members how they would use the information or asking them questions to make sure they understand the information. It is designed to determine how well people can synthesize information across the entire report and apply that information to their own situation. For example, to test the usability of a report on doctor quality, you could provide the report to participants and ask them to imagine that they are choosing a doctor for themselves. With this task in mind, participants are likely to be in a better position to evaluate the usefulness of the report and to say what they found lacking.

Another important aspect of usability testing is assessing the navigability of your report. You can often investigate navigational issues simply by asking people where they would find a particular piece of information and observing how much difficulty they have in doing so.

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Also in "The Purpose and Process of Cognitive Testing"

[Why Is Cognitive Testing Useful?](#)

[How Is Cognitive Testing Conducted?](#)

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[Recommending Reading on Cognitive Testing](#)

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