

Pre-Workshop Worksheet

What This Workshop Is

This is a one-day, hands-on workshop on prototyping with AI — specifically, on developing the rhythm of working with Claude while keeping your judgment, taste, and observations in the lead. You'll prototype a response to a design problem using Claude as a generative partner — and practice the rhythm of pushing back when it goes generic, sycophantic, or wrong.

Pre-work time: ~45 min, ideally split across two sittings. Done by the day before.

Part 1: Choose Your Problem (5 min)

Read all three problem statements (below) before choosing. Pick the one you're most curious about — curiosity will carry you through a long prototyping day.

Problem 1: The Late-Night Self-Check-In

The moment: It's 1:20 AM. A traveler's flight was delayed four hours. They've just rolled a suitcase up to an unfamiliar door in an unfamiliar neighborhood — an Airbnb, a boutique hotel with no night desk, a serviced apartment. They have a code, a set of instructions they half-read earlier, and a dying phone. The moment is the three minutes between arriving at the door and successfully being inside with the lights on.

Users: Solo travelers, business travelers, families with sleeping kids, international guests dealing with language and roaming. Shared traits: tired, low-bandwidth, running on reserve patience.

Surfaces: This moment spans physical (signage, lockbox, door, entryway), digital (app, SMS, email with the code buried in it), and service (host availability, emergency support). You can prototype across modalities.

Think about failure states — what happens when the code doesn't work at 1:20 AM?

Problem 2: Planning a Milestone Birthday at a Remote Location

The moment: It's 11 weeks before a 40th birthday weekend at a rented house in a remote location (mountain cabin, beach house, desert Airbnb). The host is sitting on their couch with a spreadsheet, an Airbnb confirmation, and a group text that's been going for two weeks. Eight people said "definitely!" Three have gone quiet. Two need to know flight costs before committing. The moment is the 2 minutes of trying to figure out whether to book the bigger house or downsize, and whether to push a deadline.

Users: Hosts planning milestone birthdays (30, 40, 50, 60) for themselves or a close friend/partner. Usually doing this for the first time. Carrying both logistical load and emotional load — they want it to feel meaningful, not stressful.

Surfaces: The group text, RSVP tools, the rental platform, payment-splitting apps, the spreadsheet, the calendar, follow-up DMs, a hypothetical "soft commit" mechanism.

Think about aligning social etiquette with ease of admin.

Problem 3: The Travel Planning / Shopping-Gap Moment

The moment: A traveler is two weeks out from their multi-climate trip. They've made a packing list. Looking at it, they realize they don't own a warm-enough jacket for the cold leg, their hiking shoes are worn out, and the one nice outfit they own doesn't fit anymore. The moment is the 2 minutes of looking at the list and deciding: buy new stuff, borrow, rent, make do, or restructure the trip itself.

Users: Travelers facing a wardrobe gap before a meaningful trip. Common for people who haven't traveled in a while, are returning to climates they don't normally encounter, or whose lives have changed (new body, new role, new season of life). Decision involves money, time, sustainability concerns, and identity ("do I want to be the kind of person who owns a parka?").

Surfaces: The packing list, e-commerce sites, rental services (Rent the Runway, gear-rental sites for outdoor equipment), borrowing networks (friends, family), thrift and secondhand options, the calendar (will it arrive in time?), returns logistics for a trip-end date, the closet itself, sustainability considerations, a partner or friend's wardrobe.

Consider options that aren't just "buy" — generate ideas across owning, borrowing, renting, and not-needing.

My chosen problem: 1 2 3

Why I chose it (one sentence):

Part 2: Research (20-30 min)

Do not do this with Claude. The goal is to arrive at the workshop with **your own point of view**, something to steer the AI with when it inevitably gives you something generic.

Pick one of the following, depending on the problem:

- **Recall it.** Have you, or someone close to you, lived through this exact moment? Sit with it for a few minutes. Jot down the memory, noting the details, feelings and outcomes you experienced.
- **Observe it.** If the moment is happening near you in the next few days (a friend planning a birthday, your own packing for a trip), pay attention. Take notes in your phone.
- **Interview it.** Spend 10 minutes asking one person who has lived this moment to walk you through it slowly. Don't ask "what would have helped." Ask what they did, what they thought, what they felt, and what they remember.

Then write a **150-word description** of the moment with specific details from your research. Fill out the three detail questions, and note what Claude will ask you at the beginning of your prototyping session.

My 150-word moment description:

One detail in this moment that most people would miss:

One thing that's harder about this moment than it looks:

One assumption I have about this moment that I'm not sure is true:

Claude will want to know:

What are we designing? (the problem, the surface, the scope)

Who's the user and what's their context? (constraints, anxieties, goals)

What does success look like?

Where should we start? (which artifact first — flow, single screen, component?)

Part 3: Set Up Your Tools (10 min)

You must bring your own laptop. A computer monitor will be provided.

Before the workshop, please make sure to have:

Claude access:

- You'll need a Claude Max plan (\$140 CAD) available at claude.ai.
- Download and install the Claude Desktop client.
- Sign in once before the day to confirm it's working.

Workspace:

- Make a working folder on your desktop to hold all the course files. You will point Claude here for working.
- Download these two files:
 - Go to <https://github.com/mary13/pair-design-agent-skill>
Click the green <> Code button, download the ZIP, and save it in your working folder.
 - Go to <https://github.com/mary13/explorer-archive>
Click the green <> Code button, download the ZIP, and save it in your working folder.

Working tools:

- One design tool, such as Figma, Miro or similar, or paper and pen.

Questions Before the Workshop?

If anything in this brief is unclear, or if you're stuck on choosing a problem, reach out! We'd like help you frame it well in advance than have you spend the opening hour second-guessing.

Contact:

ryan@021.events

See you on the day. Don't forget your laptop charger!