KECUDO

KECUDO APP DESIGN SERIES · CLASS 1

The Basic Elements of App Design

PREMIUM I EDITION

UX & UI principles, layout, type, color, components and accessibility, with one app designed from problem to tested screen.



2026 EDITION · CREATOR SERIES

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Chapter One · Part I

What Makes a Good App?

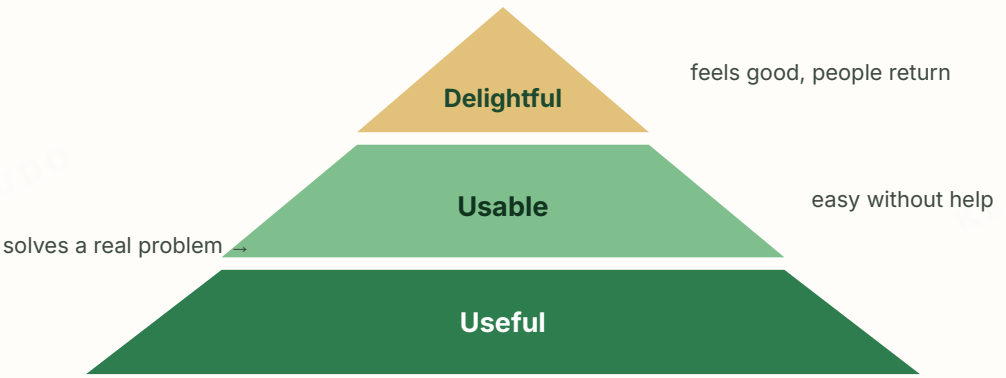
FOUNDATION

People open an app for a few seconds at a time, often while doing something else. An app earns its place on the home screen only when it solves a real problem with very little effort. This chapter gives you three simple tests for any app, and shows you how to start every project with the problem instead of the screen.

1.1 Useful, usable, delightful: the three tests

Useful means the app solves a problem people really have. **Usable** means they can do it without help or mistakes. **Delightful** means it feels good enough that they come back. The order matters. A beautiful app that solves nothing fails, and a useful app that confuses people never gets the chance to delight them.

FIG 1.1 · The three tests, built from the bottom up



1.2 Problem first: the problem statement

Before drawing a screen, write one sentence: *[User] needs a way to [need] because [insight].* If you can't write it, you aren't ready to design yet.

POCKET PANTRY **Problem statement.** Busy parents need a way to plan the week's dinners and shop in one trip, because deciding what to cook at 6 pm leads to takeout and wasted groceries.

1.3 What great apps get right

App	One core job	What keeps people coming back
Google Maps	Get me there	The search box is the first thing you see
Duolingo	Learn a language daily	Short lessons and a daily streak
Spotify	Play the right music	Personal playlists that feel made for you

All three do one job very well, get you to value within seconds and give you a reason to return. These are the qualities to copy, not their colors or layouts.

1.4 Why most apps fail

- **No real problem.** The team built what it liked, not what users needed.
- **Too much at once.** Ten half-finished features instead of one great one.
- **Confusing first minutes.** People leave before they find the value.
- **No reason to return.** The app works once and is forgotten.

> **Kecudo Note.** Keep your problem statement at the top of every design file. When the team argues about a feature, ask one question: does this help solve the problem in that sentence?

Key takeaways

- Test every idea in order: useful → usable → delightful.
- Write the problem statement before opening a design tool.
- Great apps do one core job and get you to value fast.

Chapter Two · Part I

Users & Their Needs

FOUNDATION

The most common mistake in app design is assuming that users think like the designer. They don't. They have different goals, different habits and much less patience. Good design starts by learning what real people do today, why they do it and where it hurts.

2.1 Behaviors over demographics

"Women aged 30–45" tells you almost nothing about what to design. "Cooks four nights a week, shops on Saturday and plans meals on the bus" tells you a lot. Describe users by what they *do*, not just who they are.

2.2 Personas that actually help

A persona is a one-page portrait of a typical user, built from research. It has a name, context, goals, frustrations and a real quote. A persona invented in a meeting is just a guess with a face on it.

POCKET PANTRY **Maya, 36, nurse, two kids.** Works rotating shifts and shops 2–3 times a week. **Goals:** decide the week's dinners in under 10 minutes, shop once. **Frustrations:** recipes lost in screenshots, forgotten items. **Quote:** "I don't need more recipes. I need dinner decided."

2.3 Jobs-to-be-done

People "hire" an app to get a job done. Write each job as: *When [situation], I want to [motivation], so I can [outcome].*

JOB When it's Sunday evening and the week looks busy, I want to decide dinners quickly, so I can shop once and stop worrying.

Chapter Three · Part I

UX vs. UI

FOUNDATION

UX and UI are often used as if they mean the same thing. They don't. User experience (UX) is how the whole product works and feels, from first download to the hundredth use. The user interface (UI) is the part people see and touch: screens, buttons, text and color.

3.1 Definitions and overlap

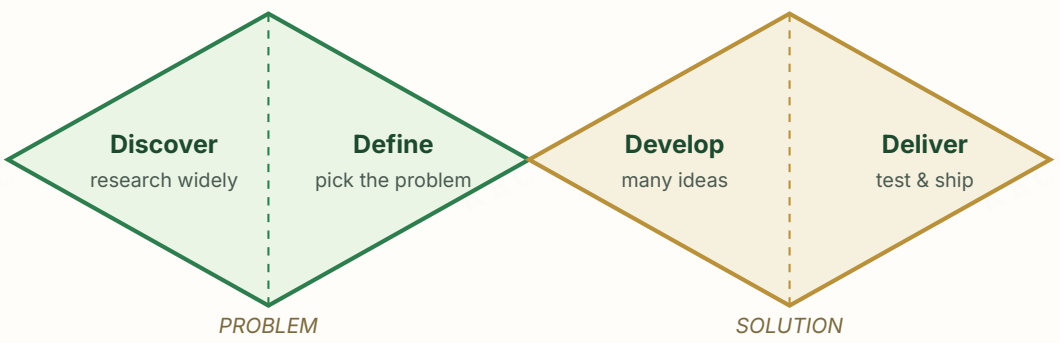
Think of a restaurant. The **UX** is the whole visit: booking, being seated, waiting, eating and paying. The **UI** is the menu, the table and the plates. A beautiful menu can't save a 45-minute wait, and a great kitchen suffers if nobody can read the menu.

	UX	UI
Main question	Does this solve the problem smoothly?	Is this screen clear and attractive?
Typical outputs	Research, flows, wireframes	Visual designs, components, icons
Checked by	Usability tests, metrics	Design reviews, contrast checks

3.2 The design process

The **double diamond** describes how good teams work. First they **diverge** (open up to learn widely), then they **converge** (narrow down to a decision). They do this twice: once to find the right problem and once to find the right solution.

FIG 3.1 · The double diamond



Self-assessment

Test Yourself

25 questions, five parts. Each answer locks and explains itself; your score is in the top bar.

Part A · Basics

1. Which test should a new app pass first?

- **A** Delightful: it feels fun
- **B** Useful: it solves a real problem
- **C** Beautiful: it looks modern
- **D** Viral: people share it

2. A good persona is based on...

- **A** The founder's opinions
- **B** Age and income only
- **C** Competitors' adverts
- **D** Real user research

3. Which of these is UI work?

- **A** Choosing button style and color
- **B** Mapping the whole user journey
- **C** Planning user interviews
- **D** Choosing a business model

4. Hick's law says that...

- **A** Bigger targets are faster to tap
- **B** Users remember 7 items
- **C** More choices mean slower decisions
- **D** Bright colors attract taps

5. Which spacing value breaks an 8-pt system?

- **A** 8 pt
- **B** 16 pt
- **C** 13 pt
- **D** 24 pt

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Thank you for learning with Kecudo.

NEXT IN THE SERIES

Class 2 · App Structures

Information architecture, navigation, user flows, onboarding, design systems and usability testing, as Pocket Pantry grows from one screen to a complete app.