# Introducing participants to a usability testing session

Who?  
Typically a session introduction is delivered by the testing moderator.

Sample:

1. Include a ‘welcome’ and ‘thank you’

**example**:

* Hi, and welcome everyone. My name is Katie Clover. Thank you for agreeing to help us with our project.
* *Include a brief statement about your role at the organization (or testing firm).*
* We appreciate your being here to help us create a more useful site/app/feature for everyone.
* Have any of you participated in a focus group or usability test before?   
  *(Get some movement going by having participants raise hands or name a test study they’ve been in before.)*

1. Explain (reiterate) why they have been invited

**example:** Today we’ll be showing you a prototype of a new experience and asking for your feedback

* We call this a usability study. That just means we want to find out if something is easy to use.
* This prototype is a rough mock up that is not yet built *(or…* We’re getting ready to make some changes to our website so we want to evaluate what we already have.)
* The reason we’re showing you this is to get feedback before the team builds the real version (*or…* next version)
* It is not actually hooked up to any backend systems, and some parts of it are not fully functional

1. Put users at ease about their role as participant.

**examples:**

* Remember we’re testing our product and its ease of use, we’re not testing you!
* You’ve already got an “A” just for showing up and helping us out.
* Don’t worry about breaking anything ☺

1. Provide an overview of the upcoming session. Let users know what you’ll be looking for, what you hope to gain from the sessions.

**example:** This morning we’ll be asking you to use a couple different parts of our website. We’ll ask you to sit at a computer with one of our friendly facilitators. They’ll make sure you know where to start and help if you get stuck.

1. Provide more guidance and reassurance

**examples:**

* Please think out loud as you use the prototype *(website/application/feature, etc.)*
* use the prototype as you would at home or another familiar settings
* Point out anything you like
* If you ask questions, the facilitator might respond with some form of “Well, what do you think it should do?” This might get a little annoying—so we apologize in advance. ☺
* Definitely point out what you don’t like and why.
* There is no correct or incorrect way to do things, just do what you think you should be able to do in the way that you would like to do it
* If you feel stuck, please let us know and we can talk about how you would expect to be able to proceed
* Also, let us know if you think of any improvements or missing functionality  
  *(optional question for tech savvy or expert testers)*
* If you would like to stop at any point or take a break, please let us know.

**examples:**

* IF TESTER DIDN'T DESIGN THE PROTOTYPE: I am just the person conducting the test so feel free to speak your mind
* The facilitator will point you towards 3 items to use/test.   
  After that we’ll take a 15 minute break and then I’ll introduce our final exercises.

1. Announce the start

**examples:**

* Any questions? Great, let’s get started.
* Is it okay if we begin?
* We’re off and running- one of our friendly facilitators will lead you to your computer.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

If audio or video will be recorded, be sure participants are told prior to agreeing their agreeing to participate. Remind participants about the recordings in your intro/welcome and that they are for research purposes only.

Remind participants their names will not be attached to the final data—and ensure that is the case.

Avoid calling the session a ‘test’. Try not to use the words test or testing except in the context of ‘this is not a test” or “we are testing our website for ease of use, we are *not* testing *you*.”

Don’t ask for visual design suggestions. A user may volunteer that they think the menu would be easier to find it was lower on the page—that’s fine, but remember you’re trying to identify issues not get visual design suggestions from the participant.

Tell the participant you are interested in her or her feedback, not what they think others will say.