

Questions for Product Analysis

Before you begin a design, you need to understand what the client needs. One way to do this is to analyse existing products. Here are some of the questions that you might ask when carrying out a product analysis. You should use these as a starting point for your investigation.

A	Aesthetics	<p>What colour is the product?</p> <p>What shape is the product?</p> <p>What texture does the surface have? Smooth or rough? Are any edges sharp or rounded?</p> <p>Does the product look attractive? Why?</p> <p>Is it well made? Does it have a good quality finish?</p>
C	Cost	<p>What is the retail cost (the price you would pay for it in a shop)?</p> <p>Does it seem good value for money? Why?</p> <p>Does the price reflect any social or moral considerations (e.g. Fair Trade)?</p> <p>How much do you think it would cost to make the product?</p>
C	Customer & Market	<p>Who might use the product?</p> <p>Who else, other than the user, might be affected by the product?</p> <p>Where will the product be used?</p> <p>What market is the product aimed at?</p> <p>What other similar products might it have to compete with?</p>
E	Environment	<p>Are recycled materials used in the product? How do you know?</p> <p>Could the materials used be recycled?</p> <p>How is the product packaged? (Is cardboard or plastic used? Why? Are there alternative options which would be kinder to the environment?)</p> <p>What type of power source does it use? (Batteries? Mains electricity? Fossil fuel?)</p>
S	Safety	<p>What safety issues have been considered when the product was designed?</p> <p>Are there any other safety issues which need to be considered?</p> <p>Does the product meet recognised safety standards and regulations? How do you know?</p>
S	Size	<p>What size is the product? How long, wide and tall is it? (Hint: use dimensions in mm)</p> <p>Is the product comfortable to use? Are its proportions appropriate for its use?</p> <p>How has the designer considered human factors (ergonomics) in the product's design?</p> <p>If the size was increased or decreased, would it work or look better?</p>
F	Function	<p>What will the product be used for?</p> <p>How does the product have to perform? How is it tested? How well does it work?</p> <p>Is maintenance needed? Is it planned for in the design and during the products use?</p> <p>What market or client quality standards does the product meet? How do you know?</p> <p>How could it be improved to work better?</p>
M	Materials & Manufacturing	<p>What materials or components is the product made from? Would different materials or components work or look better?</p> <p>How many products does the manufacturer need to make?</p> <p>Is the product mass produced, batch manufactured or made as a one-off?</p> <p>Which manufacturing processes were used to make the product?</p> <p>How were the parts of the product joined together?</p>