

Go-along

Accompany a person during an everyday activity in their own setting, like shopping or getting around their neighborhood, and talk about what happens in the moment.

In Spanish

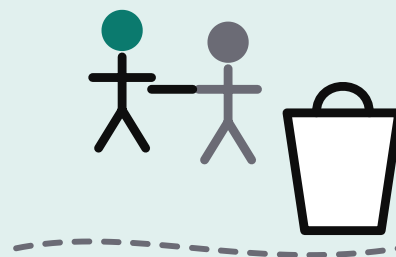
Acompañamiento

Origin

Kusenbach (2003), in urban sociology

Output

Notes and observations of an activity seen in its real context



What it's for

It combines observing and asking: you see what the person does and hear why, right as it happens.

Key elements

On their turf

The activity and the place belong to the person, not to the study.

Ask along the way

About what is happening now, not about what happened another day.

Let the person lead

You come along; they choose the route and the pace.

How it's done

1



Agree on the outing. Which activity, where and for how long.

2



Go along and talk. Observe, ask, and take notes or photos with permission.

3



Review afterward. Sort notes and key moments as soon as possible.

Applications in design

✓ When to use it

To understand decisions that depend on place: shopping, getting around or finding your way.

✗ Avoid

Turning it into a tour led by you: let the person set the route.

👁 Don't fall for it

Your presence changes what they do: keep that in mind when interpreting.

Connections

Related to

■ Ethnography

■ Contextual inquiry

■ Shadowing

Authors and works

2003

Margarethe Kusenbach

Proposed the go-along to capture how people experience their surroundings as they move through them.

Sources

Original sources

- Kusenbach, M. (2003). Street phenomenology: The go-along as ethnographic research tool. *Ethnography*, 4(3), 455–485. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1177/146613810343007\)](https://doi.org/10.1177/146613810343007)

Last reviewed: October 22, 2026