Troubleshooting

One thing I can guarantee is that you will have to do some troubleshooting. Honestly, I have never had to do extensive research in this area beyond finding a relevant YouTube video. There are so many amazing content creators that can confidently walk you through basic troubleshooting!

However, I would suggest creating local resources in case you aren't able to solve basic issues yourself. These might include your local Maker groups, companies in the area that maintain or sell 3D printers, and blog/forums.

Basic Troubleshooting Guide

Common question/problem	**Check**
Why isn't my print sticking to the bed?	Check bed leveling/nozzle height and make sure the build surface is clean. Oils and dust can reduce adhesion.
Why is the bottom of my print wider or squished?	The nozzle may be too close to the build plate, producing "elephant's foot." Adjust first-layer/nozzle height or slicer compensation.
Why is my printer jamming?	Inspect and clean the extruder/hot end; buildup can contribute to jams.
Why did my model print poorly even though the file looked fine?	The mesh may contain holes, intersecting geometry, or other errors that prevent the slicer from interpreting it correctly.
Should I start changing lots of slicer settings?	Not initially. Start with established printer/material presets, then modify one variable at a time.
Why does the same filament behave differently from another spool?	Printing requirements can vary by manufacturer and sometimes even by color. Follow manufacturer settings first.
Why does my part keep breaking in one direction?	Print orientation affects structural strength because FFF parts are built layer by layer.
Why does my print need	Overhangs and bridges may need temporary

Common question/problem	Check
supports?	support material to prevent deformation during printing.
Why is the supported surface rough?	Surfaces printed above supports can have a rougher finish; orientation can sometimes reduce the need for supports.
Where should I go if I still can't solve the problem?	Use manufacturer documentation, maker communities, or AT-specific resources such as Makers Making Change's "Ask an Expert."

Note. Table generated with assistance from ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2026) based on Deveson (2025), Prusa Research (n.d.), Simpson and Taliaferro (2021), RESNA Maker SIG (2025), Slegers et al. (2023), and MakerBot (2024).

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