

Sprint Planning Checklist

A sprint planning checklist for running a focused, well-prepared agile sprint planning meeting.

Prepare the backlog

- ☐ Refine and prioritize the backlog before the meeting.
- ☐ Confirm top stories meet the definition of ready.
- ☐ Write clear acceptance criteria for each candidate story.
- ☐ Split stories that are too large to finish in one sprint.
- ☐ Attach designs, specs or links the team will need.
Remove blockers before planning rather than during it.
- ☐ Order the backlog so the most valuable work is on top.

Confirm capacity

- ☐ Note who is available and for how much of the sprint.
- ☐ Subtract holidays, time off and known meetings.
- ☐ Account for support, on-call and maintenance duties.
- ☐ Review the team's recent velocity as a guide.
- ☐ Agree the sprint length and start and end dates.
- ☐ Set a realistic capacity rather than a stretch target.

Set the sprint goal

- ☐ Have the product owner state the objective for the sprint.
- ☐ Phrase the goal as a single, clear outcome.
- ☐ Connect the goal to the wider product roadmap.
- ☐ Confirm the whole team understands and agrees with it.
- ☐ Use the goal to guide what work makes the cut.
- ☐ Write the goal somewhere visible throughout the sprint.

Select and estimate stories

- ☐ Pull stories from the top of the backlog toward the goal.
- ☐ Discuss each story so the team shares an understanding.
- ☐ Estimate effort with points or a consistent method.
- ☐ Stop adding work once capacity is reached.
- ☐ Confirm acceptance criteria are clear for selected stories.
- ☐ Leave a small buffer for unplanned work.

Break down tasks

- ☐ Decompose each story into concrete tasks.
- ☐ Keep tasks small enough to finish within a day or two.
- ☐ Identify the skills each task needs.
- ☐ Note any spikes or research the team must do first.
- ☐ Sequence tasks so work can start immediately.
- ☐ Make sure no story is owned by one person alone.

Identify dependencies and risks

- ☐ Flag dependencies on other teams or external work.
- ☐ Identify technical unknowns that could slow the sprint.
- ☐ Note stories blocked until something else is done.
- ☐ Agree mitigation or a fallback for each major risk.
- ☐ Assign owners to chase down external dependencies.
- ☐ Decide what to cut first if the sprint runs short.

Commit and communicate

- ☐ Confirm the team agrees the plan is achievable.
- ☐ Record the committed stories and the sprint goal.
- ☐ Update the sprint board with stories and tasks.
- ☐ Share the plan with stakeholders outside the team.
- ☐ Schedule the daily standup and the sprint review.
- ☐ Close the meeting with a clear next action for everyone.