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.