

The Scrum cycle

Deliver in short, fixed cycles, and after each one inspect and adapt.



Our own drawing of the Scrum Guide's events (Schwaber and Sutherland, 2020).

WHAT IT IS

Scrum is a framework by **Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland**, set out in the free Scrum Guide (2020, Creative Commons); our summary. The **product owner** orders the product backlog for value. The **developers** plan the sprint in a sprint backlog and build a usable increment. The **scrum master** helps the team use Scrum. None is the project manager. Work counts only when it meets the **definition of done**, the checklist for finished work.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Planning: a sprint goal, and the items to reach it.
- 02 Daily scrum: 15 minutes on progress to the goal.
- 03 Review: show the increment; adapt the backlog.
- 04 Retrospective: pick one way to work better.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online. A supplier's team of five builds the resident screens in two-week sprints.

The city's business analyst is product owner and orders the backlog; reviews show working screens to service-desk staff. The project manager is not the scrum master: she keeps the gates, the contract and the steering group.

In the exam: Name the accountabilities and events in your own words, and show where the project manager's role sits beside them.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, with a platform supplier and several teams building groups of services.

The teams' sprints end on the same day, so reviews and dependencies line up. The project manager agrees one definition of done with the supplier, with accessibility checks, and keeps the gates and contracts.

In the exam: Explain how Scrum fitted your governance: who was product owner, one definition of done across suppliers, and what stayed with the board.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.5.4: time boxing (p. 112); only the current iteration in detail (4.5.4.1); 4.5.10: sprint planning (p. 136)	Guide: sprints or iterations in adaptive schedules (p. 55); glossary: sprint. Exam outline: Process tasks 3, 8	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §2.5.2: sprints, a daily scrum; §3.5.3 gates in step with the cycles. PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) 1a; 2b (product owner)

Sources: Schwaber & Sutherland, The 2020 Scrum Guide™; IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.5.4 etc.: its competence elements); PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; APM = Association for Project Management. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects. Levels (this series' labels): Mid-level = moderately complex projects (IPMA Level C, PMI's PMP®); Senior = complex projects and people (IPMA Level B, APM's Chartered Project Professional).

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