

# UX Design – Creating Scenarios and Storyboards Techniques

- Scenarios & Storyboards in the User-Centered Design (UCD) Process
- Creating Scenarios
- Storyboards to Visualize Scenarios

One of the things that separates humans from all other species is our ability to enjoy a good story. (You don't find mice sitting around a campfire recounting their recent life-threatening encounter with the farmer's wife.) We love to hear stories and we worship those among us who can tell the best ones.

In the fact-filled workplace, we don't think of stories as being a critical skill. Yet stories can inspire. They can illuminate. They can help us empathize with those we're designing for.

A **scenario** is a narrative describing a day in the life of a persona, including how a product fits into their life. A **storyboard** presents the user's story in a visual way — similar to a movie or comic.

Using these tools product designers understand how people interact with a product in real life, giving designers a clear sense of what's really important to users.

It also helps in creating **User journey maps** which is visualization of the process that a person goes through in order to accomplish a goal.

# What are User Scenarios?

To ideate toward accurate pictures of your users, their world and how your solution might solve their problems best, you begin by doing user research. Then, you create personas to represent your target users and reflect realistic situations.

So, to have the ingredients for a user scenario, you first must clearly define the following factors:

**Who, What, When, Where and Why?**

1. **Background** – **who** are your users (including their knowledge base and skillset/s)?
2. **Motivations** – **what** goals do they want to achieve?
3. **Tasks** – **what** must they do to reach those goals?
4. **Context of use** – **how** will they encounter your design?
  - i. **Environment** – **where** will they try to use it?
  - ii. **Challenges** – **when** they try to use it, **what** can get in their way (e.g., signal loss)?

## What is a storyboard?

Applied to UX, storyboarding allows us to walk through the user journey.

According to the Nielsen Norman Group, *“The persona or role that corresponds to that scenario is clearly specified at the top of the storyboard. The steps can be sketches, illustrations, or photos. Depending on the purpose of the storyboard and on its audience, these images can be quick, low-fidelity sketches or elaborate drawings. The caption describes the user’s actions, environment, emotional state, device, and so on. Because the image is the primary content in a storyboard, captions are concise and don’t typically exceed two bullet points.”*

# Creating Scenarios

1. **Provide the context of:**
  - **Who** – details of the persona.
  - **What** their goals are.
  - **When** they might perform tasks (including obstacles).
  - **Where** they might do these (including obstacles).
  - **Why** they want to do things, must perform subtasks, etc.
2. **Focus on the bigger picture but keep to the point** – include the circumstances leading up to the interaction, the factors that impact the user's world and that might influence how they interact with a solution (e.g., cultural context) and anything they may need before encountering or using the solution (e.g., information).
3. **Make the scenario understandable for people who don't have technical backgrounds** – so everyone, including stakeholders, can get on board with elements they can easily relate to and can stay open-minded about necessary processes, etc.
4. **Keep user scenarios tightly centered on the users themselves** – ensure any ideas about design features stay grounded in the reality of the *users'* context.

Example: Alex, an IT consultant of age 33, enjoys planning trips abroad but booking flights become the low point of his experience.

He often ends up with unexpected or poorly explained charges during the checkout. The menus tend to offer too many information to read or options to choose from. And Alex is unlikely to pay for extras but feels as though they are forced upon him with certain apps.

## Note:

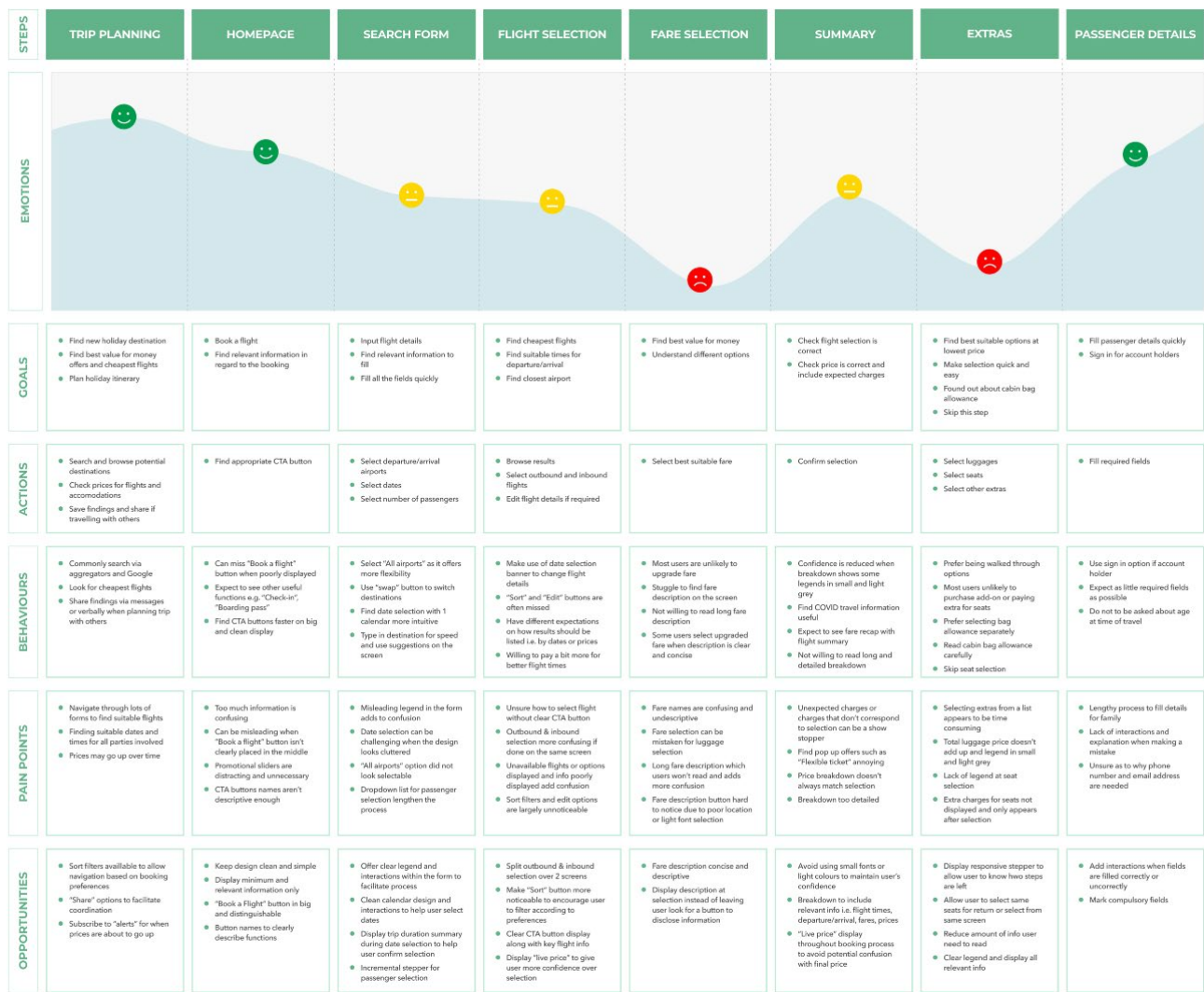
*People are diverse. Be careful not to assume that all users, including users with disabilities, use your product the same way.*

*People use different interaction techniques, different adaptive strategies, and different assistive technology configurations (specially used to help disabled people: audio books, Speech-recognition software).*

*People have different experiences, different expectations, and different preferences.*

*Different scenarios can be created for different user groups.*

# User Journey Map example:



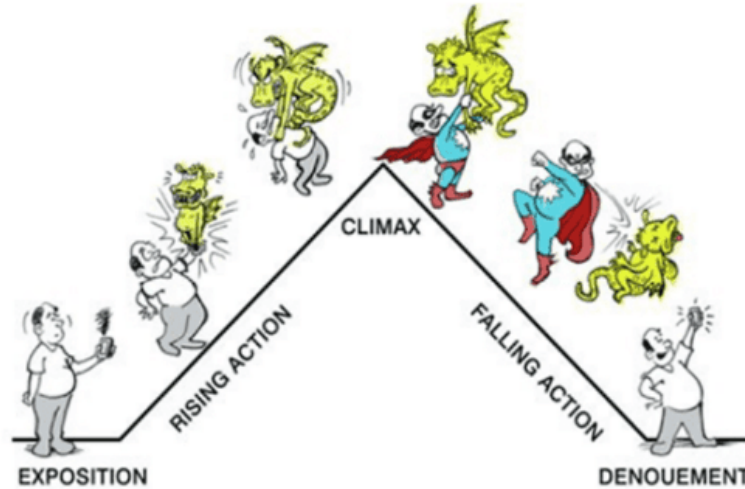
Complex User Journey Map



Simple User Journey Map

# Creating Storyboard

1. **Build a strong narrative:** The narrative in the story should **focus on a goal the character** is trying to achieve. Your story should be structured and should have an obvious beginning, middle, and end.



Gustav Freytag's five part pyramid of creating strong narratives

2. **Design a clear outcome:** Make sure your storyboard leaves the audience with no doubt about the outcome of the story.
3. **Elements:** Each story should have following elements: **Character** (persona), **Scene** (Scenarios), **Plot** (starts with trigger and concludes with solution (if you are presenting one) or problem (if you are using storyboard to highlight a problem) and **Strong Narrative**.

# Storyboarding: step-by-step guide:

1. **Pen down your ideas:** Use paper/whiteboard and pen for initial idea.
2. **Start with plain text and arrows:** Break story into individual scenarios. It should include situation information, character's decision and the outcome of it (benefit/problem)

Tom lives alone. He's suffering from depression having just lost his job.

Tom's friend Susan has noticed that something is wrong with Tom, but she's not sure how to reach out to him.

Susan downloads Heartline app onto her phone and adds Tom.

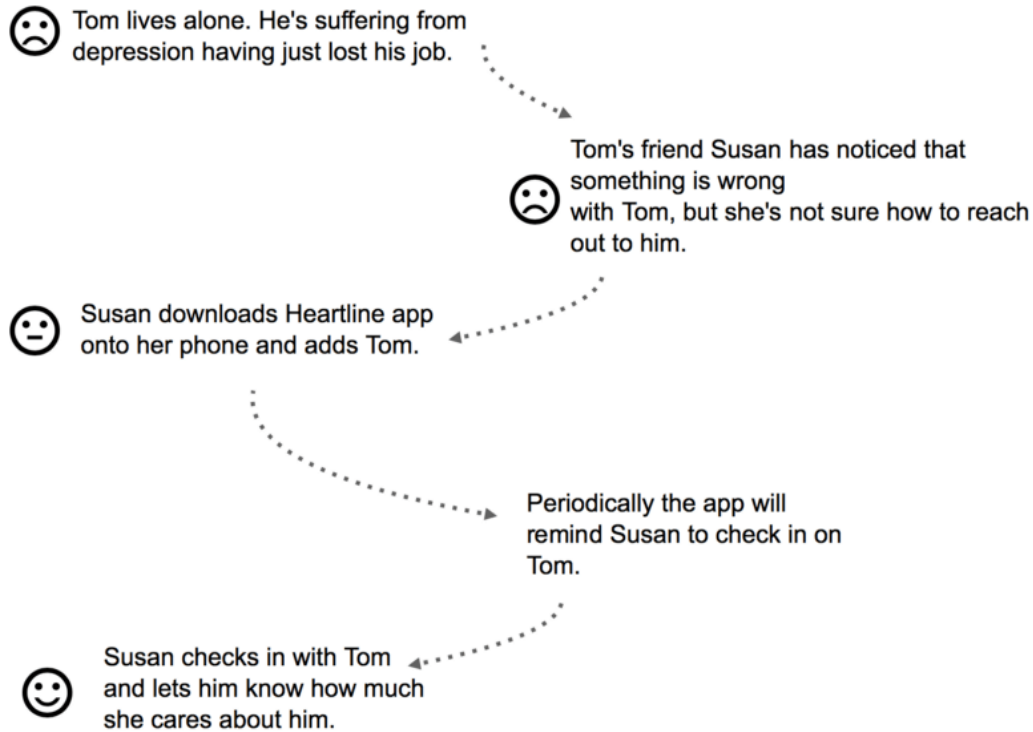
Periodically the app will remind Susan to check in on Tom.

Susan checks in with Tom and lets him know how much she cares about him.

3. **Add emotion into the story (empathize):** Add what the character feels at each step. You may use simple emoticons as well for simple mood of character.



# Storyboarding: step-by-step guide:



*Same sequence of scenarios with emoticons added.*

4. **Visualize each step into a frame:** Make a rough **sketch** in each frame of the scenario (like a thumbnail) to tell the story. Empathize each moment, you can show a character's thought using thought bubbles and add caption below to describe the moment in brief under each frame.
- Basic format of a storyboard shall include: **Title/Project name, Persona, Scenario (problem statement or solution in short), Page number**

# Storyboard Template

PERSONA:

PAGE #

USER STORY/SCENARIO:

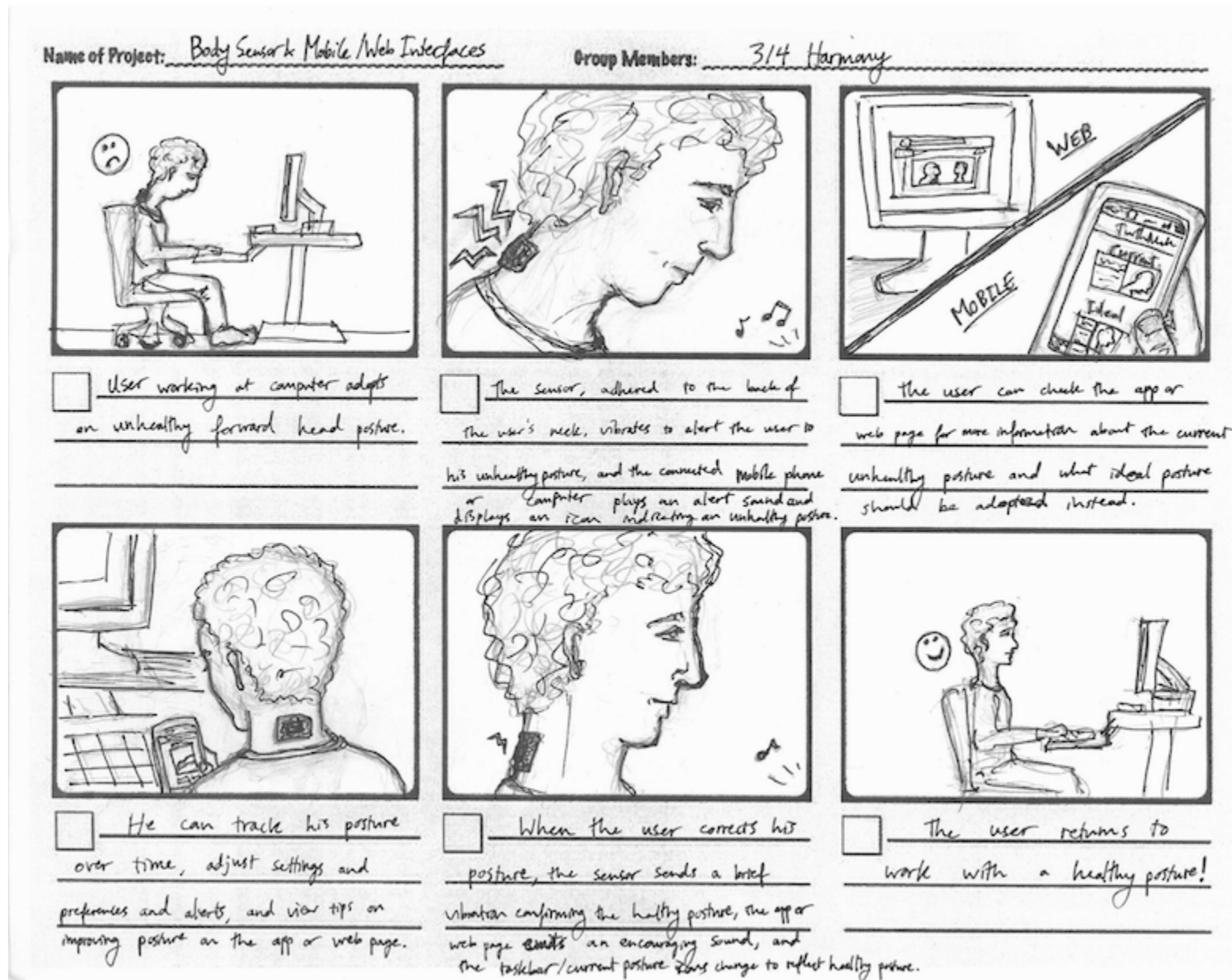
PROJECT/TEAM:

DATE:

STORYBOARD [NNGROUP.COM](http://nngroup.com)

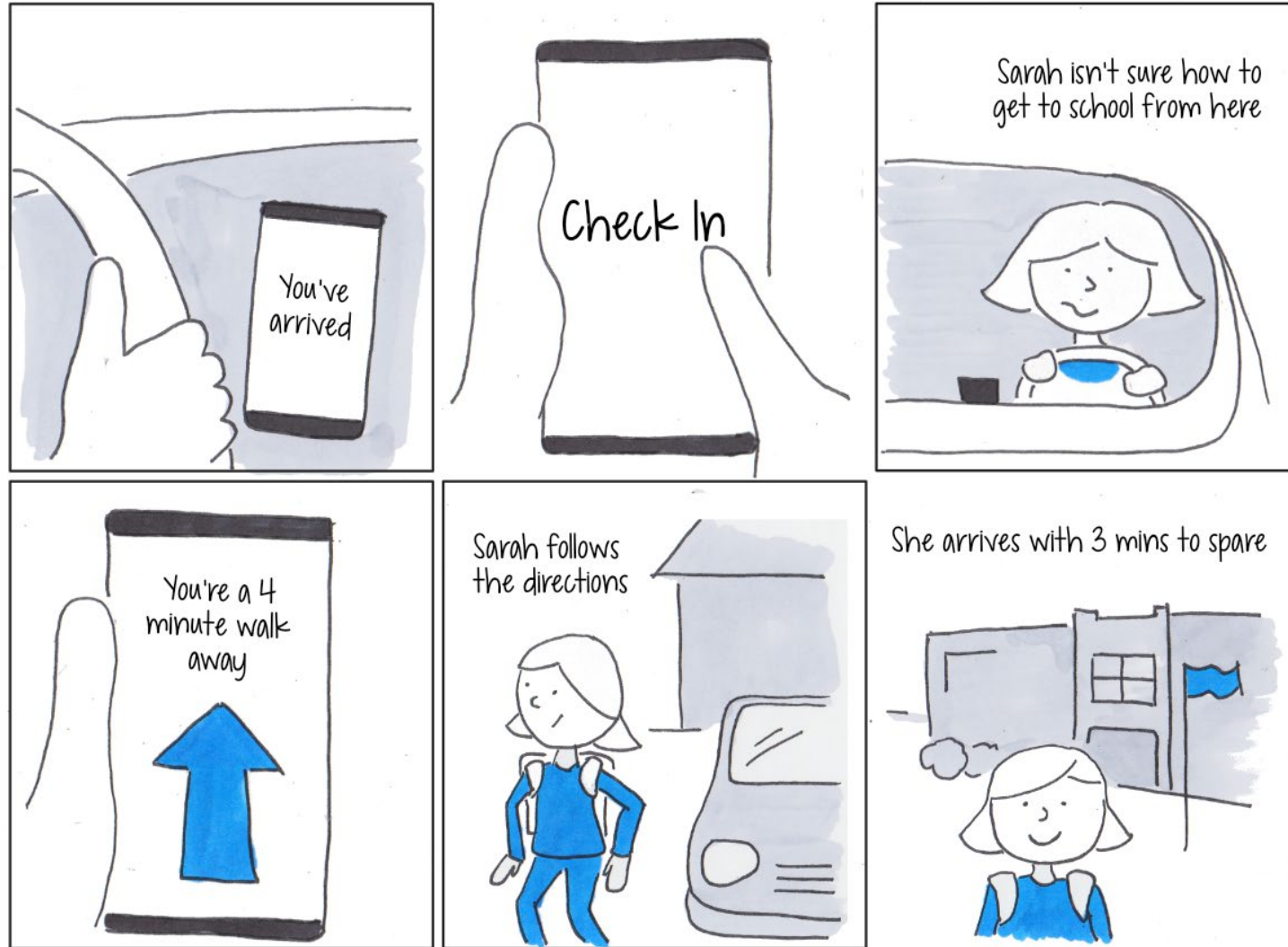
# Storyboard Examples

Low - fidelity



# Storyboard Examples

Medium - fidelity





# Storyboard Examples



**Guest Journey**

High-fidelity

Next...

# UX Design – Analyzing User Data Techniques