

Definitions

- **Work:** According to PMBOK, work refers to “*work products or deliverables that are the result of effort and not the effort itself*”.

That is, “work” defines the end result of any activity.

The work remains constant even though the amount of effort needed to get there might inflate/deflate.

- **Deliverable:** PMBOK says that a deliverable is “*any unique and verifiable product, result, or capability to perform a service that is required to be produced to complete a process, phase, or project*”.

Deliverables will vary from project to project and client to client.

- **Work package:** According to PERT (which developed the WBS), a work package is “*the work required to complete a specific job or process, such as a report, a design, a documentation requirement or portion thereof, a piece of hardware, or a service.*”

PMBOK has a simpler definition: “*a work package is a deliverable at the lowest level of the WBS.*”

Work Breakdown Structure vs Project Schedule vs Project Plan

One common source of confusion for beginners is the difference between the work breakdown structure, project schedule, and project plan.

While these three things often describe the same thing - what is to be achieved in the project - they vary greatly in scope and details.

- **Work breakdown structure** describes the deliverables needed to complete the project, i.e. the “*what*” of the project. It doesn’t include timelines or resources. The goal of the WBS is to give the project team a hyper-focused idea of what they need to achieve.
- **Project schedule** describes the project’s deliverables as well as their deadlines and resource requirements. Think of it as the “*what*”, “*when*”, and “*who*” of the project.
- **Project plan** is an expansive document covering virtually every aspect of the project and its management. It includes details on how the project will be executed, managed, and controlled. It usually has several constituent plans governing communications, risk management, change management, etc.