

## Domain Storytelling Cheat Sheet by Jacob Duijzer

### Domain Storytelling

A domain story visualize **who** (actor) **does what** (activity) **with what** (work objects) **with whom** (other actors).

The **actors** are the **subjects** of the sentences, they appear **once per domain story**.

Avoid making implicit assumptions or drawing premature conclusions.

### Tips

Invite real experts—people from the trenches—and not proxies who know the domain from hearsay.

When the story seems to be finished, tell the story from the beginning and try to get agreement: Did we miss something? Is something obviously wrong? Do all domain experts agree with the story?

### The Pictographic Language

**Actors** Domain stories are told from an actor's perspective. It can be a person, a group of people, or a software system. Usually **labeled with their role or function**.

**Work Objects** Actors create, work with, and exchange work objects (documents, physical things and digital objects). They also exchange information about work objects. **Labeled with a term from the domain language**.

**Activities** Activities are shown as arrows and **labeled with verbs from the domain language**.

**Sequence Numbers** A story has multiple sentences, told one after the other. Keep the order by adding a sequence number.

**Annotations** The pictographic sentences are complemented by textual annotations. Annotate information about variations, or the goal of an activity. Explain terms from the domain language.

### A Typical Journey

COARSE-GRAINED Explore a New Domain  
PURE  
AS-IS

FINE-GRAINED Drill Down into  
PURE Subdomains

FINE-GRAINED Introduce New Software  
DIGITALIZED  
TO-BE

### Story Size (rule of thumb)

Flip chart 10 sentences

Large whiteboard 15 sentences

Digital tools 20 sentences

### Granularity

Describes the level of detail, which can vary from story to story. Aim for a consistence level of detail. Mixing might be confusing and indicative of a larger problem.

COARSE-GRAINED

FINE-GRAINED

### Point in Time

As-Is The current situation, often called the *problem space*, the intent of modeling is to improve something bad or solve a problem.

To-Be Possible improved situations can also be explored with domain stories, describe the *solution space*.

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### Domain Purity

PURE	Domain stories without software systems, helpful for building new software systems. Understanding of the domain without the complexity of existing software. Talk about how things would be done if all activities were motivated only by the domain.
DIGITALIZED	When the domain model is hidden within (badly modelled) software systems. Can be used to visualize and talk about the mess.

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### Workshop Duration

COARSE- or FINE-GRAINED AS-IS	30-45 minutes
TO-BE	longer
Recommended	60-90 minutes or 2-3 domain stories
Remote	Set a timer for a short modeling session (around 45 minutes) followed by a break.

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