

Story Point Guidelines

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Following is a general guideline that helps in understanding how to assign story points for estimation of user stories:

1. As a team, identify one user story which is well understood (functionally and technically) by the entire team. Usually it should be a medium size of what the team expects to be (meaning they know that there can be other user stories which can be more (or less) complex or time consuming than that is identified)
2. Assign 3 or 5 story points to this story as a reference point (this includes the QA work as well)
3. While estimating the next story, the team estimates by keeping the reference story in their mind and do a relative estimation if it is more/much more/less/much lesser than the reference story (refer image below)
4. The objective of story point estimation is not to estimate in hours but to initiate discussion and to make sure that everyone in the team has common understanding of the story. eg if a team member has given 3 story points and another has give 8 story points then they should have a discussion on why the former thought is less and later thought its more. This discussion will uncover the unknown for each other to be on same page. The importance is not in how many story points eventually will we assign but the importance is of the discussion that would happen to uncover unknowns and in building common understanding of the story
5. All the team member should participate in the estimating a story irrespective of their core skills. eg a backend developer should participate in estimating for front end and vice versa. Over a period of time all the team members establish a common understanding and be able to question and discuss each other on a nature of work to be done
6. Use planning poker for estimation where the estimates from all the team members are revealed at the same time for an unbiased opinion
7. More the unknowns in the story more the story points get inflated due to the risk that unknowns add. This is related to completion of DoR. If the stories meet DoR then it is easy to estimate.
8. When there are unknowns involved in a story, the team makes an assumption based on the likelihood of what may happen or the worst that may happen, in order to estimate appropriately
9. We do not change the story points during the sprint if we realise that that original estimates are more or less than estimates. We learn from that and use that learning while estimating next time.

Note:

1. Number of hours to complete the story is one of the considerations and not the only factor to estimate a story. (Refer the image)
2. Story points also encapsulates the time that the development team spends on various SCRUM/Non SCRUM meetings during a sprint which otherwise gets ignored if stories are estimated only in development efforts. We cannot say if sprint is 10 days long and there are 5 developers then the team can pick up stories which are worth 50 person days of development effort as they will be spending time in other activities which is hard to estimate. Over a period of time, story pointing helps in normalising this aspect
3. Story points estimated by one team is not comparable to what other teams are estimating. It is a common understanding with in a team which developed over a period of time.

It is fun to do story estimation. It may seem an impossible thing to achieve in initial sprints but you will be amazed to see the results over a period of time.

Once the team consistently start estimating stories and we start learning how many story points we can burn/complete in a sprint that determines the team **capacity/velocity** (the speed at which the team can burn stories per sprint)

SCRUM FRAMEWORK - EVENTS

Estimation : Story Points

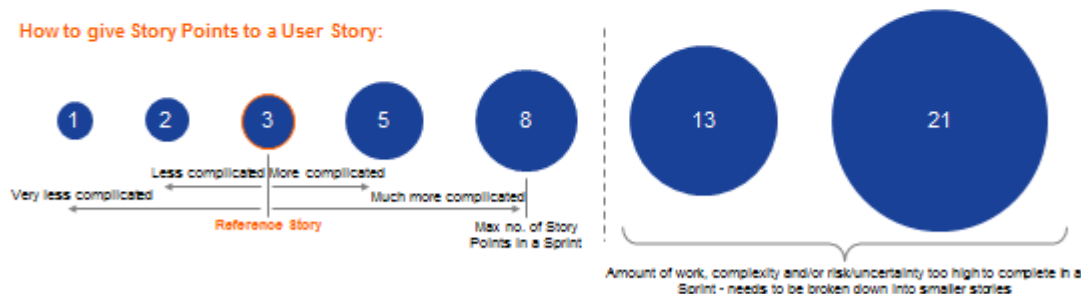
Story Points: Represents the effort to develop a user story and includes everything that can affect the Team's effort:

- The **amount of work** to do
- The **complexity** of the work
- Any **risk** or **uncertainty** in doing the work

When estimating Story Points, the three factors above in combination are taken into consideration.

Number of Story Points per User Story: The Fibonacci sequence is used for estimating story points. (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, and so on), rather than a linear sequence. This to easily distinguish between a 5 and 8, rather than 5 and 6.

How to give Story Points to a User Story:



Who assigns Story Points to a User Story: The team jointly agrees on how many Story Points will be given to a story using different voting tools (e.g. Planning Poker) and by relative estimation using the "Reference Story". The Agile Coach ensures that the process is being adhered and that everyone contributes to the estimation of a story.

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