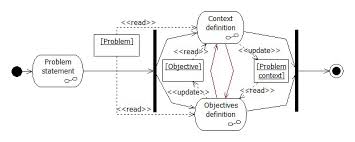
DEFINE THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

* A problem statement is a description of an issue to be addressed or a condition to be improved upon. It identifies the gap between the current problem and goal. The problem statement should be designed to address the Five WS. The first condition of [solving a problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Problem_management) is understanding the problem, which can be done by way of a problem statement.
* Problem statements are used by most businesses and organizations to execute [process](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Process_architecture) [improvement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continual_improvement_process) projects.
* Broadly, a problem is an obstacle that exists between an intended objective and the current performance. A researchable problem therefore is problem over which data can be collected, organized and analysed.



Purpose

* The main purpose of the problem statement is to identify and explain the problem. This includes describing the existing environment, where the problem occurs, and what impacts it has. Additionally, the problem statement is used to explain what the expected environment looks like.
* Another important function of the problem statement is to be used as a communication device. A problem statement helps with obtaining buy-in from those involved in the project. Before the project begins, the stakeholders verify the problem and goals are accurately described in the problem statement.
* The problem statement is referenced throughout the project to establish focus within the project team and verify they stay on track. At the end of the project, it is revisited to confirm the implemented solution indeed solves the problem. A well-defined problem statement can also aid in performing root-cause analysis to understand why the problem occurred and ensure measures can be taken to prevent it from happening in the future.
* It is important to note that the problem statement does *not* define the solution or methods of reaching the solution. The problem statement simply recognizes the gap between the problem and goal.

Defining the problem

* The process of defining the problem is often a group effort. It starts with meeting with the stakeholders, customers, and/or users affected by the issue (if possible) and learning about their pain points. Since people often struggle with effectively communicating their issues, particularly to someone outside of the process, it is helpful to ask a series of "why" questions until the underlying reasoning is identified. This method, known as the five whys, helps drill down to the core problem as many of the experienced frustrations could be mere symptoms of the actual problem. Asking these additional questions as well as paraphrasing what the stakeholder had said demonstrates a degree of empathy and understanding of the problem.