Class Diagram

Dos and Don't:

Class diagrams are the backbone of nearly all OO methods. The trouble is that they are so rich that they can be overwhelming to use. Here are a few tips:

- Don't try to use all the various notations on offer. Start with simple stuff: classes associations, attributes, and generalization. Introduce other notations when you need them.
- Sort out which perspective you are drawing the models from. If you are in analysis, draw conceptual models. When working with software, concentrate on specification models. Draw implementation models only when you are illustrating a particular implementation technique.
- Don't draw models for everything, concentrate on key areas. It is better to have a few diagrams that you use and keep up to date than forgotten, out-of-date models. Designing is an incremental process and class diagrams are updated as the system gets built. Hence, do not try to capture and freeze the class diagrams in the first iteration.
- Classes in a class diagram should be descriptive and must be named after business entities. Using business entities as names ensures greater readability of the diagram.
- elationships between classes may not be apparent in the first iteration. Revise and refine your class diagrams to determine possible relationships during each iteration.

The biggest danger with class diagrams is that you can get bogged down in implementation details far too early. To combat this use the conceptual or specification perspective. If you get these problems, you may find CRC cards to be extremely useful.
The exact format of the card can be customized to the preferences of the group, but minimal required information if the name of the class, it's responsibilities and the collaborators.

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