

Instructional Design Storyboard Examples: Patterns, Strengths, and Pitfalls

- Storyboard: screen-by-screen blueprint of a course before production
- Aligns instructional designers, SMEs, and developers early in workflow
- We cover three common patterns: text-based, visual, and hybrid storyboards
- Focus on strengths, common pitfalls, and guidance for selecting the right approach



The Storyboard's Role and Stakeholder Map



- Shared blueprint aligning instructional designers, SMEs, and developers



- Early planning tool prevents costly rework during production



- Clarifies stakeholder perspectives before development begins

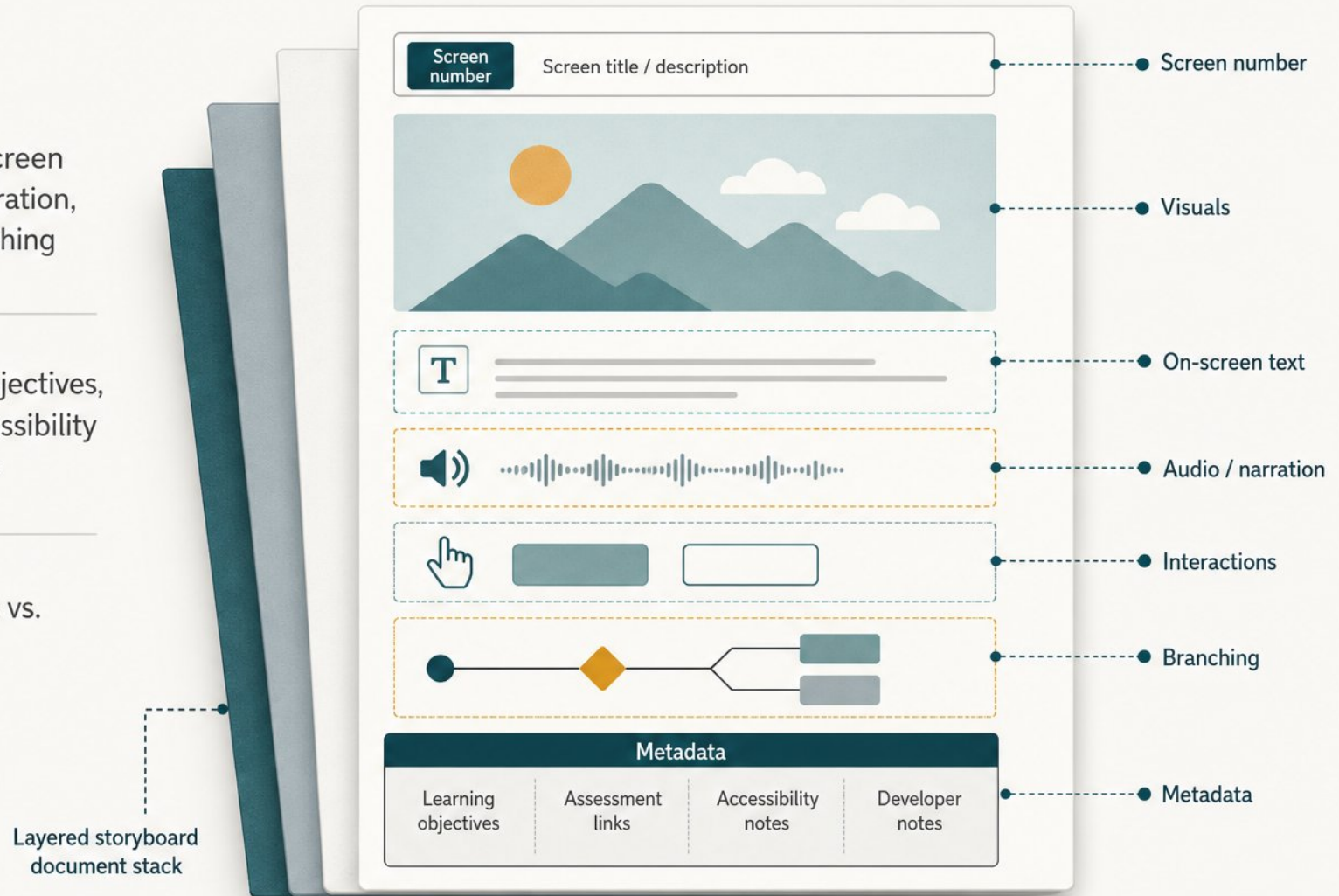


- Ensures scope control and reduces mid-build surprises



Core Storyboard Components and Fields

- - Screen number, on-screen text, visuals, audio/narration, interactions, and branching
- - Metadata: learning objectives, assessment links, accessibility notes, developer notes
- - Minimum viable fields vs. enhanced fields for complex training



Pattern 1: Text-Based Storyboards



- Word docs, Google Docs, or spreadsheets detail each screen



- One row or block per screen: script, visuals, interactions



- Best for content accuracy, SME review, and compliance



- Strengths: precision, rapid drafting, accessible to reviewers

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Normal text		B	<i>I</i>	<u>U</u>	☰	☰	☰
Screen	Script / Text	Visuals		Interactions			
	Welcome to the module. In this lesson, you will learn the key concepts and how to apply them in practice. I			_____ _____ _____			
	_____			_____ _____ _____			
	_____			_____ _____ _____			



Pattern 2: Visual and Wireframe Storyboards



- PowerPoint, Google Slides, Figma, and authoring tool mockups



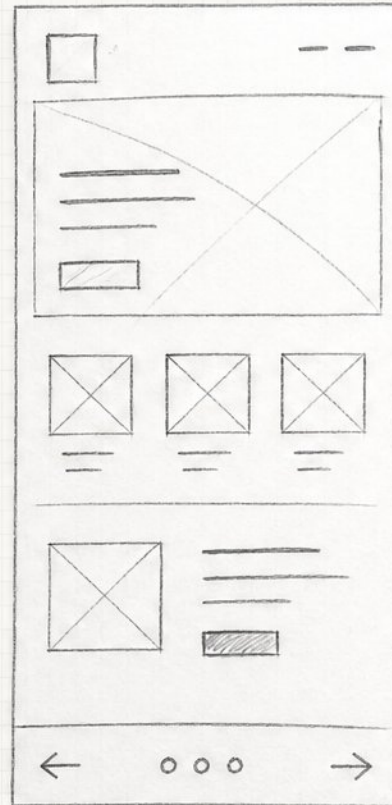
- Best for stakeholder visualization, branding approval, and interactive designs



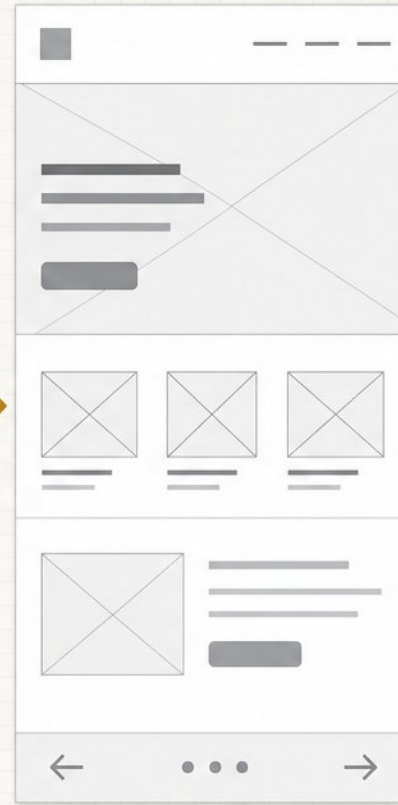
- Strengths: fast alignment on look and feel, better UX preview



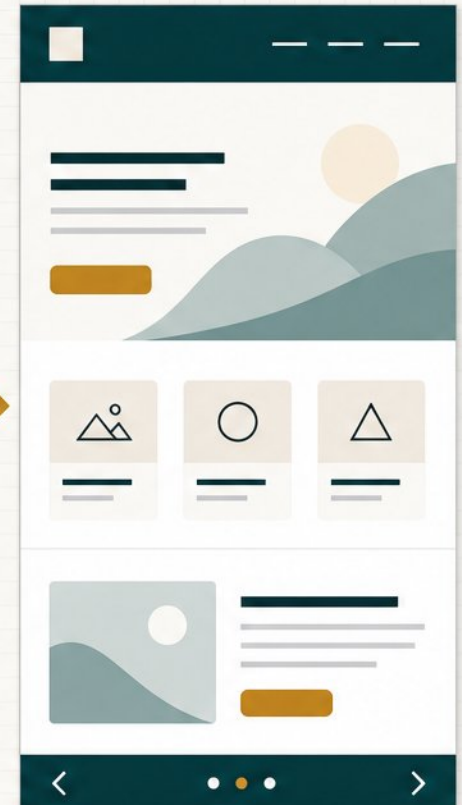
- Includes layout, images, and navigational elements



Rough Sketch

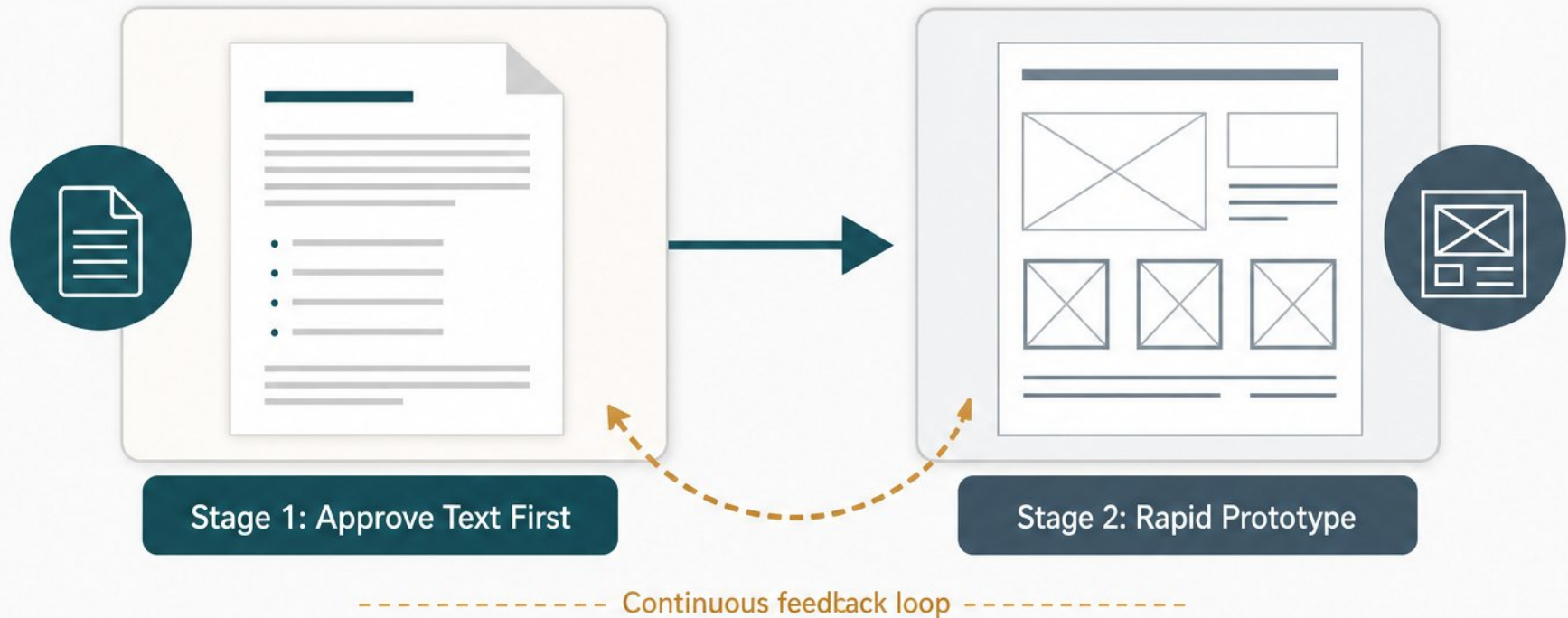


Wireframe



Polished Mockup

Pattern 3: Hybrid and Rapid-Prototype Approaches



- Two-stage hybrid: approve text first, then wireframes



- Rapid prototypes in authoring tools test interactions early



- Balances speed, fidelity, and stakeholder needs



- Most corporate projects use this combined approach

Worked Example: Scenario-Based Training



Text-based storyboards map characters, choices, and branching logic



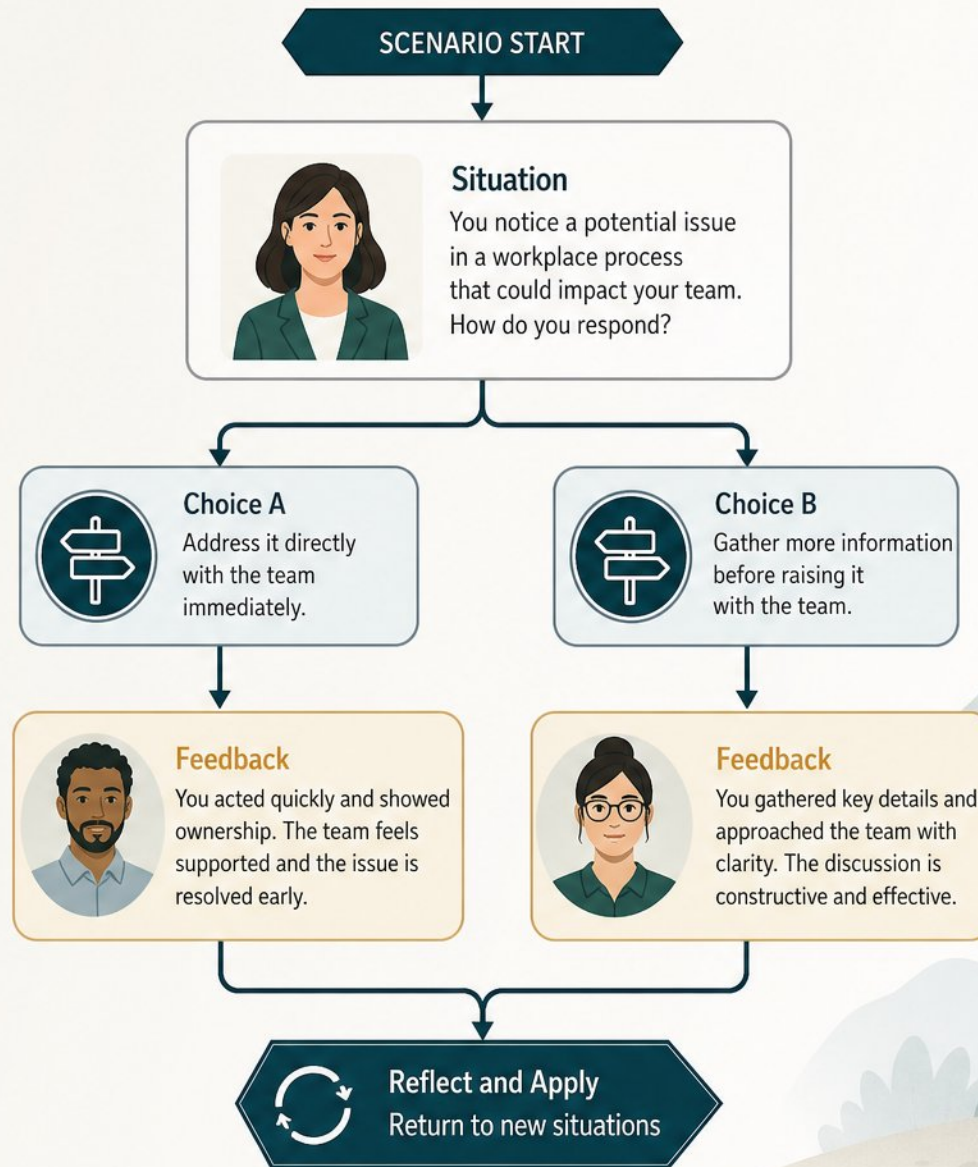
Action mapping aligns story choices with on-the-job behaviors



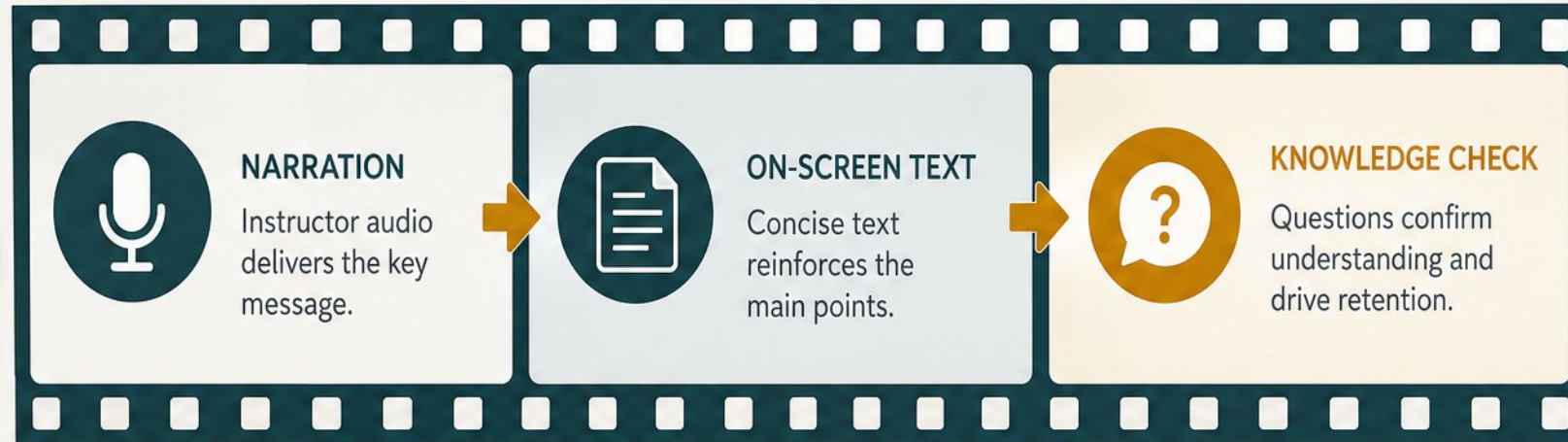
Visual mockups refine look, feel, and learner immersion



Use real SME examples and realistic consequences in feedback



Worked Example: Compliance and Linear Content



- ✓ Text-based outlines: precision for legal accuracy and SME review
- ✓ Structure: narration, concise on-screen text, then knowledge checks
- ✓ Avoid audio redundancy: narration should not mirror on-screen text
- ✓ Prevent cognitive overload: chunk content, avoid lengthy scripts
- ✓ Follow Davis's rule: about 300 words per page max for retention

Common Pitfalls in Storyboarding



- Content overload increases cognitive load and causes learner fatigue



- Screen text, audio, or visuals that conflict or duplicate one another



- Unclear developer notes and missing interaction details



- No template, leading to inconsistent layouts and broken navigation



- Misalignment: interactions or assessments that don't match learning objectives



Avoiding Pitfalls Through Review and Alignment



- Review against checklists for content, flow, media, and navigation



- Use structured questions to focus SME feedback



- Ensure every element maps back to a learning objective



- Catch issues early to prevent costly rework during production



REVIEW AGAINST CHECKLISTS

- Content
- Flow
- Media
- Navigation



STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

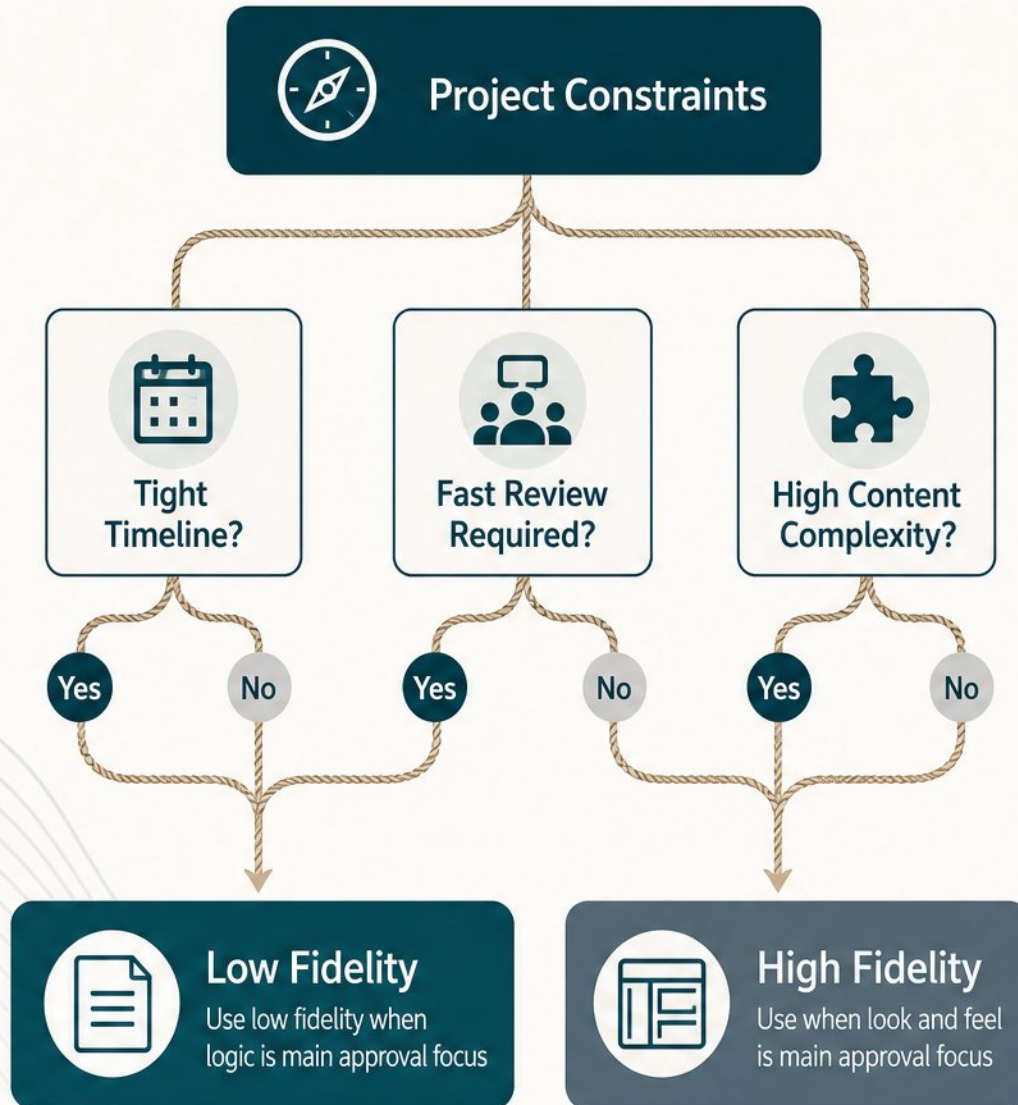
- Is the objective clear?
- Is the content accurate?
- Is the flow logical?
- Are examples relevant?



MAP TO LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Every element should support at least one learning objective.

Choosing the Right Pattern



- **Match format to content:** written for complex logic, visual for look and feel response



- **Written:** fast SME review, high content accuracy



- **Visual:** alignment on look, feel, branching



- Use low fidelity when logic is main approval focus



Tools and Templates

- Word, PowerPoint, Google Slides, spreadsheets
- Figma, Miro, Storyline, Rise, dedicated platforms
- Choose based on team, fidelity, and review needs
- Balance ease, cost, and integration with workflow



Hands-On Evaluation Practice



- Evaluate storyboard completeness against component criteria



- Check alignment between objectives, content, and assessment



- Diagnose weaknesses using a shared rubric



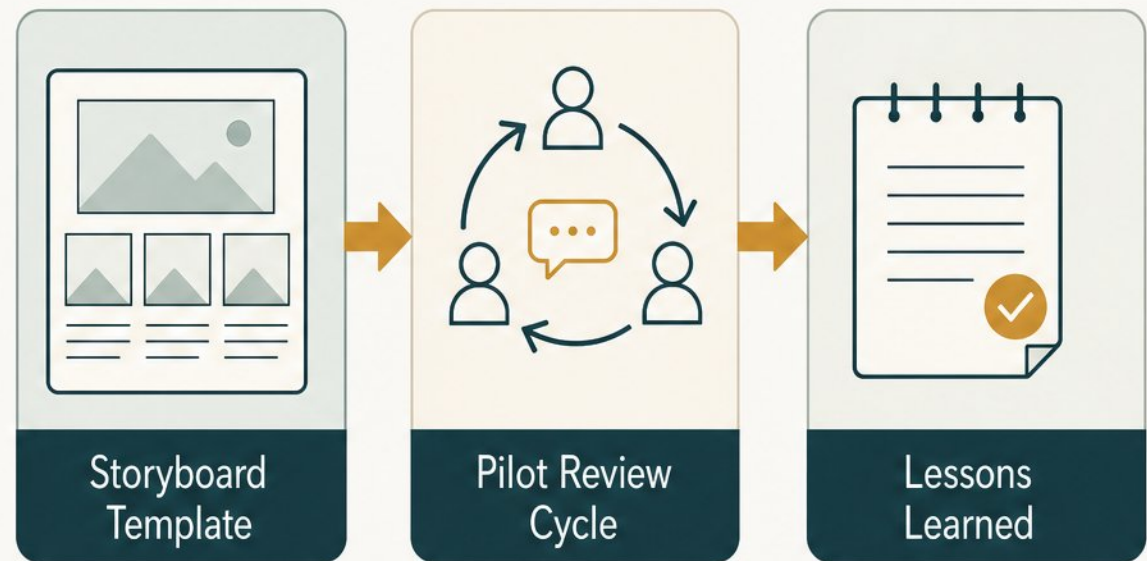
- Propose targeted, low-complexity revisions



Key Takeaways and Action Plan



- Start with objectives to guide pattern selection and alignment
- Match fidelity to stakeholders, tooling, and your timeline
- Build structured reviews and feedback loops into your process
- Pilot one template, run a review, and document lessons learned



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