

Technical Writing Process:

Stages, Roles, and Deliverables

- Course covers a repeatable technical writing process, not ad hoc drafting
- For technical writers, developers, and documentation leads
- Gain shared vocabulary, stage-by-stage deliverables, and clear ownership



Why a Defined Process Matters

- - Unstructured docs cause drift, wasted expert time, and avoidable support tickets
- - A defined process cuts review cycles, clarifies ownership, and speeds onboarding
- - Documentation is a product asset needing goals, metrics, and governance



Core Concepts and Shared Vocabulary



Stage: distinct phase with defined entry and exit criteria



Deliverable: output of an activity, e.g., plans, drafts, published docs



Review: structured evaluation for accuracy, clarity, and consistency



Sign-off: formal approval that authorizes publication



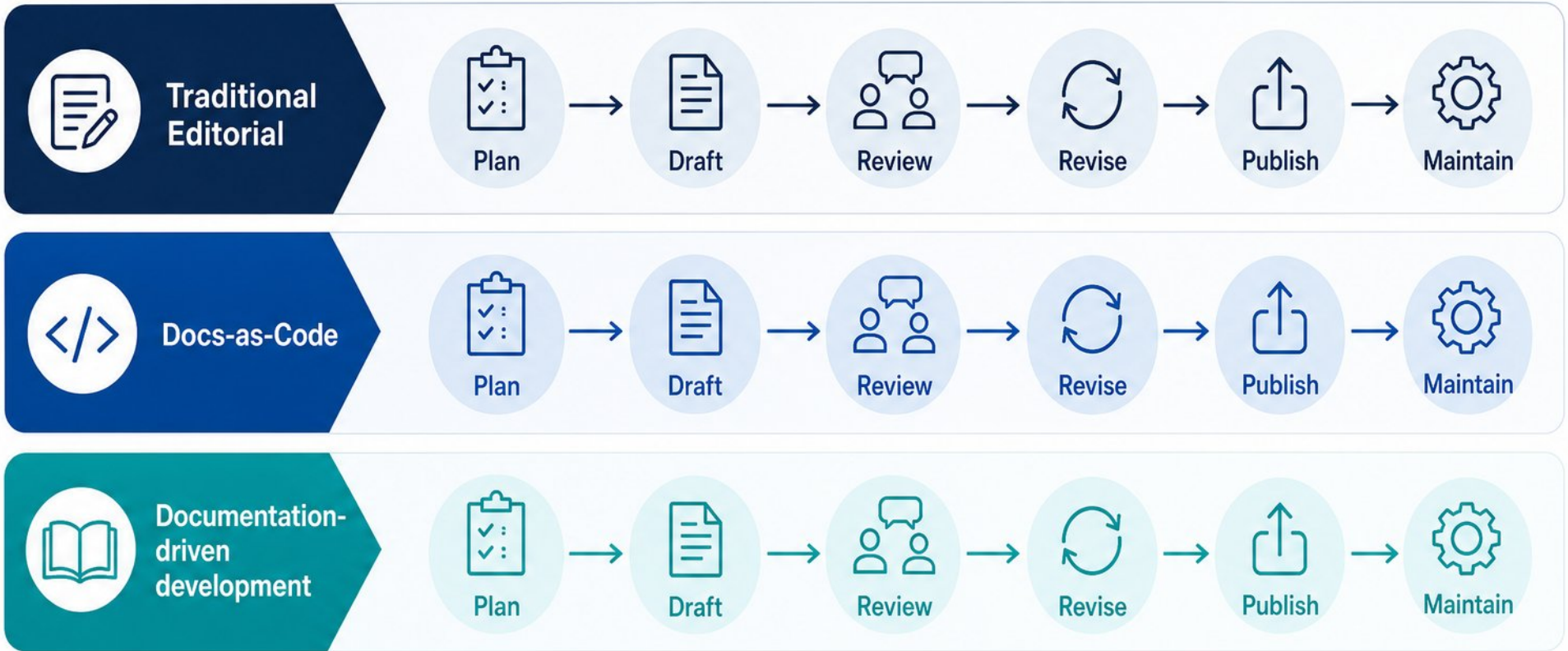
Source of truth: single, authoritative reference for content



Separate creation from review and publication to prevent conflicts



Common Models and Stage Frameworks



- Plan, draft, review, revise, publish, maintain: the core lifecycle
- Traditional docs: linear, editorial-first, manual publishing
- Docs-as-Code: Git-based, CI/CD publishing, docs live with code
- Documentation-driven development: docs written before code
- Choose by team size, release cadence, audience, and tooling

Stage 1: Planning and Audience Analysis



- Define goals, scope, success criteria, and audience profiles



- Analyze user roles, tasks, and context before choosing structure and tone



- Test the product and talk to SMEs early



- Output: documentation plan, content plan, or task analysis





ROLE



TASKS



CONTEXT



DOCUMENTATION GOAL CHECKLIST

- ✓

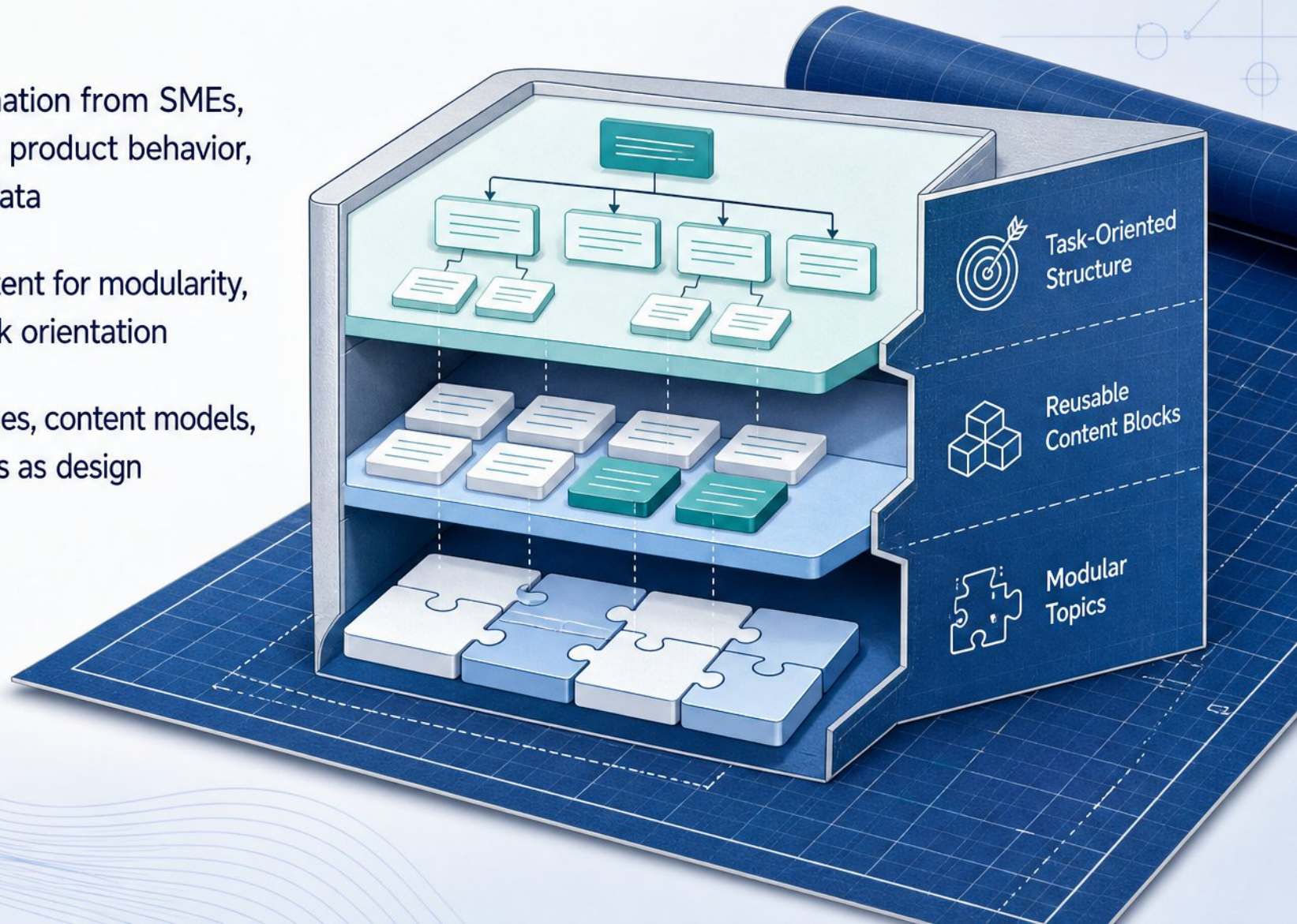
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Stage 2:

Research, Content Design, and Outlining

- Gather information from SMEs, specifications, product behavior, and support data
- Structure content for modularity, reuse, and task orientation
- Produce outlines, content models, and topic maps as design deliverables



Working with SMEs Without Losing Time



- Prepare targeted questions; test the product first



- Use SMEs as validators, not primary drafters



- Make review requests specific and time-boxed



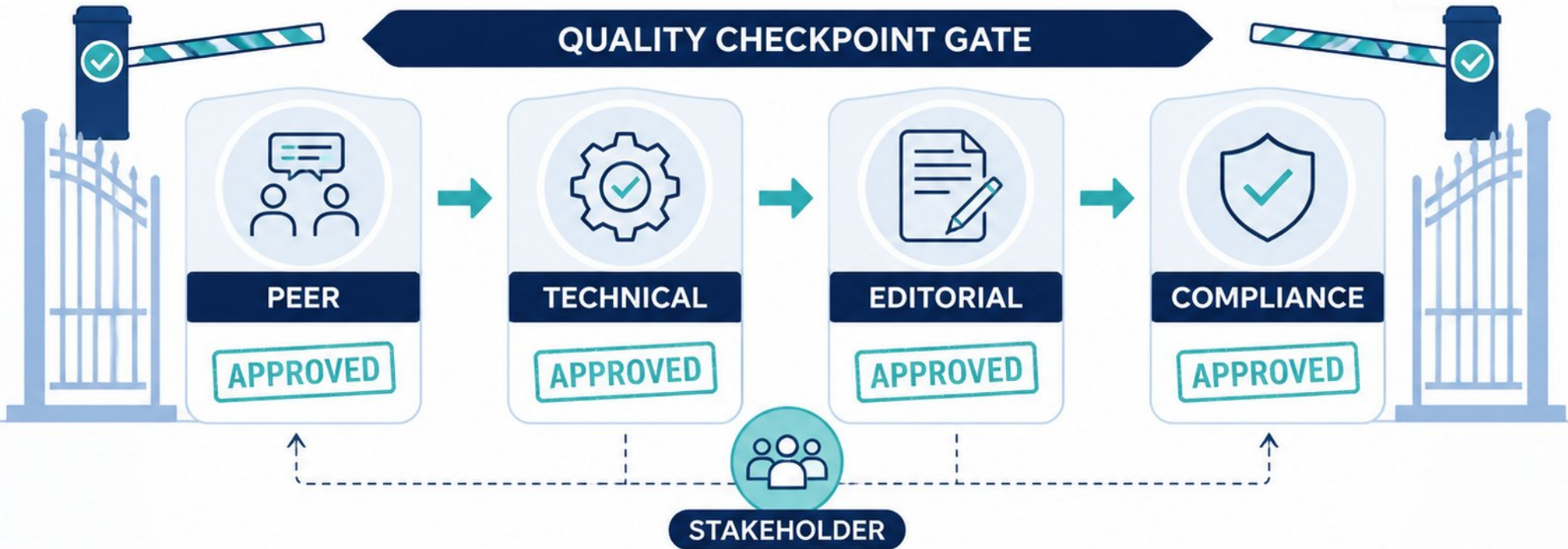


Stage 3: Drafting and Collaborative Writing

- - Draft for clarity, task orientation, and consistent terminology
- - Collaborate with developers and SMEs while maintaining editorial ownership
- - Use templates, style guides, and tooling during drafting to keep one consistent voice



Stage 4: Review, Verification, and Approval

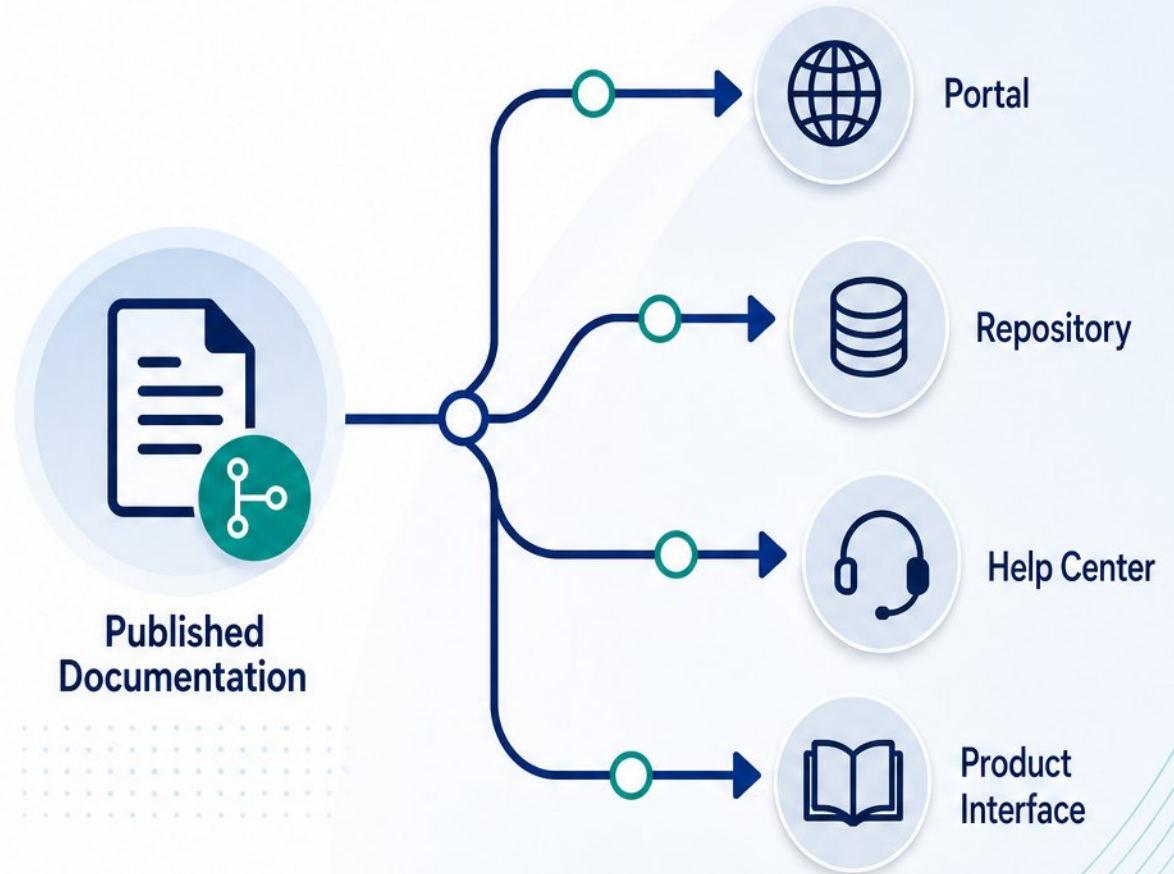


- ✓ Sequential review stages: peer, technical, editorial, compliance, stakeholder
- ✓ Verify accuracy against actual product behavior, not just specs
- ✓ Sign-off gates with clear decision owners prevent bottlenecks
- ✓ Timestamped, version-bound approvals ensure audit-ready governance



Stage 5: Publication, Distribution, and Maintenance

- Publish with version control to portals, repositories, or help centers
- Distribute intentionally via SEO, internal links, support macros, release notes
- Maintain with review cadence, product change triggers, named page owners
- Track freshness: pages updated in last 90 days
- Treat publishing as midpoint, not finish line



Versioning and Content Governance



- Map docs to product releases using semantic versioning



- Branch, tag, or snapshot docs per major version



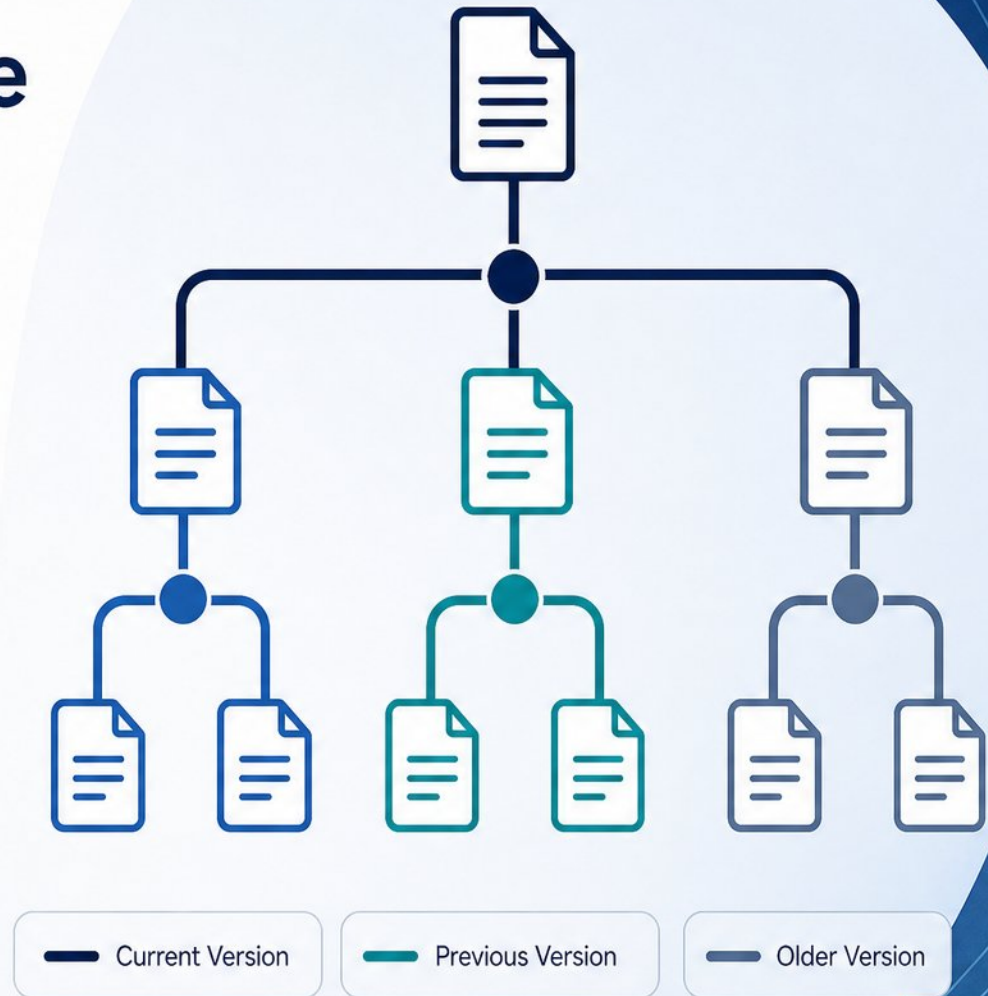
- Keep current version plus one or two older releases



- Governance defines ownership, review policy, and deprecation



- Archive deprecated content with banners and redirects



Roles, Responsibilities, and Handoffs



- Define clear duties for writers, developers, PMs, SMEs, and reviewers



- Use RACI-style mapping to clarify every task: create, verify, approve, maintain

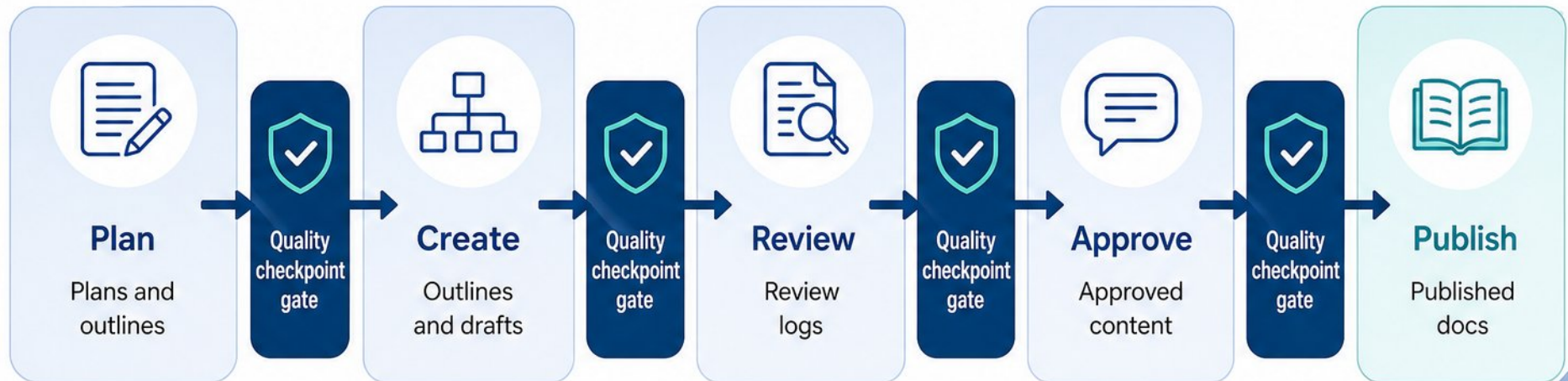


- Explicit workflows prevent ownership gaps and delayed handoffs

	 Technical Writers	 Developers	 PMs	 SMEs	 Reviewers
 Create	R	C	I	C	I
 Verify	C	R	C	R	C
 Approve	I	I	A	A	R
 Maintain	R	R	C	C	C



Deliverables and Quality Metrics by Stage



- ✓ - Key deliverables: plans, outlines, drafts, review logs, published docs
- ✓ - Measure accuracy, findability, task success, completeness, maintainability
- ✓ - Use outcome metrics over vanity metrics
- ✓ - Track support deflection, onboarding time, and coverage score
- ✓ - Name page owners and set review cadences in governance

Applying the Process to Your Team



- Start with high-impact pages, not a big-bang rollout



- Use lightweight governance: owners, review cadence, triggers



- Add doc updates to the definition of done for every feature



- Iterate: track stage KPIs, gather feedback, adjust cadence



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