

User Story Format and Example

User stories are often expressed in a simple sentence, structured as follows:

“As a [persona], I [want to], [so that].”

Breaking this down:

“As a [persona]”: Who are we building this for? We’re not just after a job title, we’re after the persona of the person. Max. Our team should have a shared understanding of who Max is. We’ve hopefully interviewed plenty of Max’s. We understand how that person works, how they think and what they feel. We have empathy for Max.

“Wants to”: Here we’re describing their intent — not the features they use. What is it they’re actually trying to achieve? This statement should be implementation free — if you’re describing any part of the UI and not what the user goal is you’re missing the point.

“So that”: how does their immediate desire to do something this fit into their bigger picture? What’s the overall benefit they’re trying to achieve? What is the big problem that needs solving?

For example, user stories might look like:

As Max, I want to invite my friends, so we can enjoy this service together.

As Sascha, I want to organize my work, so I can feel more in control.

As a manager, I want to be able to understand my colleagues progress, so I can better report our success and failures.

This structure is not required, but it is helpful for defining done. When that persona can capture their desired value, then the story is complete. We encourage teams to define their own structure, and then to stick to it.

