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# Essential Agile Retrospective

An Agile retrospective is a meeting held by a team at the end of a sprint to reflect on the recent work done and identify areas of improvement for the next sprint.

A retrospective focuses on the team's performance as a whole rather than individual contributions. Everyone gathers together to discuss both positive and negative aspects of the sprint and identifies what to do next.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Preparation |  | Introduction/Closing |  | energizer/icebreaker |  | theory |  | exercise |  | discussion/debriefing |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Time | Length |  | Title | Description | Additional Info |
| 00:00 | 10m |  | **Before the Retrospective** | Schedule a suitable time after the project's close to hold a retrospective.  **Key tip:** Align everyone with project outcomes by sharing the project brief and achievements. Invite people to reflect in preparation for the retrospective. |  |
| **Retrospective Introduction** | | |  |  |  |
| 00:10 | 10m |  | **Introduction** | * Welcome everyone! * Explain the purpose of the retrospective * Remind everyone of the team's goals and objectives * Review the agenda for the meeting * Set any housekeeping rules | Welcome your team to space, and give everyone time to get settled.  Share any rules around communication and general housekeeping |
| 00:20 | 10m |  | **Check-In** | A check-in exercise is a great way to start an Agile retrospective as it helps to **establish a collaborative atmosphere.**  As the team know each other having worked on a sprint together, try something simple yet effective such as a **One Word Check-In**:   * Ask each team member to share one word that describes **how they are feeling** at the moment. * **Encourage them to be honest and authentic with their word.** * After everyone has shared, you could ask a few team members to explain **why they chose that word and how it relates to their experience** of the last sprint. | A check-in allows team members to express themselves briefly, and it can help to **build empathy and understanding within the group.**  It can also help to identify if any team members are feeling particularly positive or negative, which **can influence the overall mood** of the retrospective. By doing this exercise, you can **establish an open and safe environment** for the rest of the retrospective.  For variations, try Hyper Island's [Check-In Questions](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/check-in-questions) |
| **Retrospective** | | |  |  |  |
| 00:30 | 15m |  | **Presentation** | The project manager or team lead can align the team by presenting the **facts and data** from the project.   * Define the **project goals and objectives** * **Highlight the achievements** * Present any data with regard to **timescale, budget, and project scope.** |  |
| 00:45 | 20m |  | **Retrospective Timeline** | Encourage the team to **share feedback** in a collaborative and constructive way. A productive way to **gather data visually** could be through a timeline exercise that identifies key milestones or events that affected their work.   * **Draw a timeline** on a whiteboard or flipchart, marking the beginning and end of the sprint. * Ask each team member to **write down their observations and feedback** on sticky notes and place them on the timeline at the relevant point in time. * Ask the team to **group the sticky notes by theme**, and **discuss each theme** in turn. * Encourage team members to **share their perspectives** on each theme and **ask clarifying questions** to deepen the conversation. |  |
| 01:05 | 20m |  | **Generate Insights** | The next step is to **generate insights** from the retrospective. Encourage team members to **reflect on the data** they have gathered and **identify patterns, trends, and potential areas of improvement**.   * Ask the team to **identify the most important themes.** * Encourage the team to **discuss both positive and negative themes.** * Ask the team to **explore why these are important**. You might use [Liberating Structures 9 Whys](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/nine-whys) or a similar shorter exercise:  1. **Choose a specific theme that the team has identified as an area for improvement.** 2. **Ask the team to ask "Why?" five times or more, with each subsequent answer building on the previous one.** 3. **The goal is to identify the root cause of the issue.** |  |
| 01:25 | 20m |  | **Decide what to do** | Once the team has **identified the root cause**, ask them to **brainstorm potential solutions**, **prioritizing them** before **assigning actions**   1. Encourage team members to **think creatively** and **be open** to different ideas. 2. **Prioritize the ideas** by having the team vote on the most important ones 3. Create a document to **assign actions** and owners for each idea   Your team could try an exercise designed to activate the team to take action at the end of a workshop. [3 Action Steps](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/3-action-steps) from Hyper Island is a powerful method to lead a group towards a shared vision. |  |
| **Closing a Retrospective** | | |  |  |  |
| 01:45 | 10m |  | **Q&A** | * Encourage team members to **ask questions** or **share any additional thoughts** or concerns |  |
| 01:55 | 5m |  | **Close the retrospective** | * **Summarize the key points** of the meeting * **Thank everyone** for their participation * Remind the team of the **next steps** |  |
| *02:00* |  | |  |  |  |

Total length: 2h 00m

# Essential Agile Retrospective - block details

## Before the Retrospective

00:00 | 10m

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**Key tip:** Align everyone with project outcomes by sharing the project brief and achievements. Invite people to reflect in preparation for the retrospective.

## Retrospective Introduction

## Introduction

00:10 | 10m

* Welcome everyone!
* Explain the purpose of the retrospective
* Remind everyone of the team's goals and objectives
* Review the agenda for the meeting
* Set any housekeeping rules

### Additional Information

Welcome your team to space, and give everyone time to get settled.

Share any rules around communication and general housekeeping

## Check-In

00:20 | 10m

A check-in exercise is a great way to start an Agile retrospective as it helps to **establish a collaborative atmosphere.**

As the team know each other having worked on a sprint together, try something simple yet effective such as a **One Word Check-In**:

* Ask each team member to share one word that describes **how they are feeling** at the moment.
* **Encourage them to be honest and authentic with their word.**
* After everyone has shared, you could ask a few team members to explain **why they chose that word and how it relates to their experience** of the last sprint.

### Additional Information

A check-in allows team members to express themselves briefly, and it can help to **build empathy and understanding within the group.**  It can also help to identify if any team members are feeling particularly positive or negative, which **can influence the overall mood** of the retrospective. By doing this exercise, you can **establish an open and safe environment** for the rest of the retrospective.

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## Retrospective

## Presentation

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The project manager or team lead can align the team by presenting the **facts and data** from the project.

* Define the **project goals and objectives**
* **Highlight the achievements**
* Present any data with regard to **timescale, budget, and project scope.**

## Retrospective Timeline

00:45 | 20m

Encourage the team to **share feedback** in a collaborative and constructive way. A productive way to **gather data visually** could be through a timeline exercise that identifies key milestones or events that affected their work.

* **Draw a timeline** on a whiteboard or flipchart, marking the beginning and end of the sprint.
* Ask each team member to **write down their observations and feedback** on sticky notes and place them on the timeline at the relevant point in time.
* Ask the team to **group the sticky notes by theme**, and **discuss each theme** in turn.
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The next step is to **generate insights** from the retrospective. Encourage team members to **reflect on the data** they have gathered and **identify patterns, trends, and potential areas of improvement**.

* Ask the team to **identify the most important themes.**
* Encourage the team to **discuss both positive and negative themes.**
* Ask the team to **explore why these are important**. You might use [Liberating Structures 9 Whys](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/nine-whys) or a similar shorter exercise:

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1. Encourage team members to **think creatively** and **be open** to different ideas.
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3. Create a document to **assign actions** and owners for each idea

Your team could try an exercise designed to activate the team to take action at the end of a workshop. [3 Action Steps](https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/3-action-steps) from Hyper Island is a powerful method to lead a group towards a shared vision.

## Closing a Retrospective

## Q&A

01:45 | 10m

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## Close the retrospective

01:55 | 5m

* **Summarize the key points** of the meeting
* **Thank everyone** for their participation
* Remind the team of the **next steps**