

Five Best Practices for Writing Requirements

Better requirements lead to clearer, more effective communication between a product's stakeholders. That, in turn, has ripple effects across the entire organization—including greater transparency, less rework, and accelerated development without sacrificing product quality.

But what specific guidelines can you follow to write ideal requirements? While requirements writing is both an art and a science that will vary by context, there are a few best practices to consider:



Understand the Problem

Use a **problem framing methodology like the “five whys”** to hone in on the specific issue to be addressed and align the entire team around solving it.

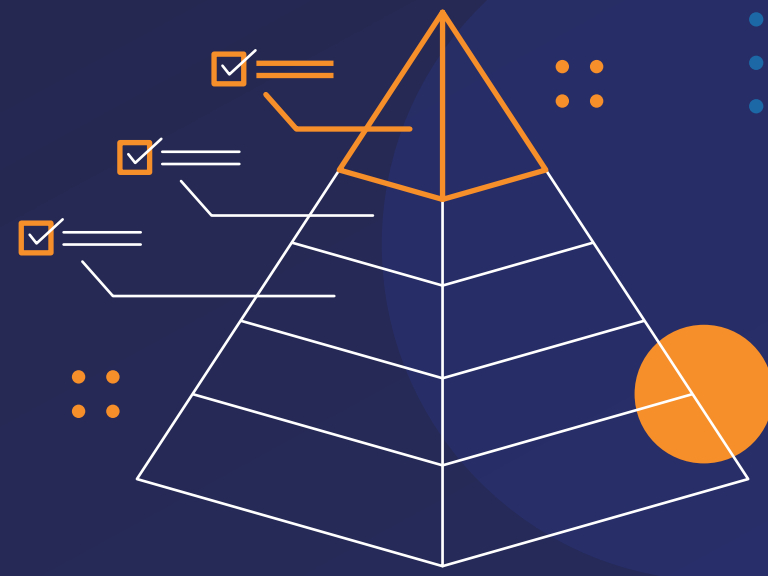
Next, **construct a problem statement** defining who has the problem, what it is, and how often it occurs, to clarify the higher-level need and create context.



Define Requirements Hierarchy

Differentiate between requirements (a need) and design (a response to that need), to avoid overly detailed or constraining requirements and ensure semantic clarity.

This helps with tracing requirements to design, decomposing general requirements into granular ones, ensuring validation and verification test coverage, and establishing traceability.



Let the Designers Design

As much as possible, **leave design teams the freedom to solve the problem stated in the requirements**. Don't restrict how those requirements will be met unless necessary and, give your engineers time back to do what they do best, R&D.



Be Unambiguous

Avoid untestable ambiguities like “the system must be intuitive,” choose consistent verbs instead of multiple ones with similar everyday meanings, and leave out adverbs (e.g., “significantly”).



Use Requirements Templates and Group Discussions

Use requirements templates to enable consistency and show clear relationships between users, needs, purposes, and objectives.

Regularly review and discuss requirements in a platform like Jama Connect, to enable shared understanding, real-time collaboration and feedback, and ensure end-to-end traceability across the product development lifecycle.



Learn more about how to write better requirements
by viewing our full webinar!