

PMP Cheat Sheet PDF 2026

PMP EXAM STRUCTURE — WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Exam Mechanics

- 180 questions (175 scored)
- 230 minutes
- 2 optional 10-minute breaks
- Adaptive difficulty
- ~50% predictive / ~50% agile or hybrid
- Many “**what should the PM do first?**” questions

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Process Groups × Knowledge Areas (High-Level)

Knowledge Area	Initiating	Planning	Executing	Monitoring & Controlling	Closing
Integration	Charter	Plans	Direct Work	Change Control	Close Project
Scope	-	Define Scope/WBS	-	Validate Scope Control Scope	-
Schedule	-	Develop Schedule	-	Control Schedule	-
Cost	-	Estimate/Budget	-	Control Costs	-

Quality	-	Plan Quality	Manage Quality	Control Quality	-
Resources	-	Plan Resources	Acquire/Develop/Manage	Control Resources	-
Communications	-	Plan Comms	Manage Comms	Monitor Comms	-
Risk	-	Plan/Identify/Analyze	Implement Responses	Monitor Risks	-
Procurement	-	Plan Procurements	Conduct Procurements	Control Procurements	-
Stakeholder	Identify Stakeholders	Plan Engagement	Manage Engagement	Monitor Engagement	-

PMP CHEAT SHEET – QUICK REFERENCE



PROCESS GROUPS & KNOWLEDGE AREAS

	Initiating	Planning	Executing	Monitoring & Controlling	Closing
Integration	1	3	4	6	1
Scope	3	6	6	7	4
Schedule	6	6	7	4	1
Cost	4	3	3	3	3
Quality	3	3	3	3	1
Resource	1	6	3	3	2
Communication	3	3	3	3	1
Risk	2	4	1	2	2
Procurement	1	1	1	3	2
Stakeholder	1	1	1	2	1

KEY DEFINITIONS

Project: Temporary endeavor with unique outcome

Program: Group of related projects

Portfolio: Collection of programs/projects

Stakeholder: Anyone impacted by the project

Remember: **I-P-M-C-C** = Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring & Controlling, Closing

KEY PROCESSES

- Develop Project Charter
- Identify Stakeholders
- Plan Scope, Schedule, Cost
- Direct & Manage Work
- Monitor & Control Project
- Close Project or Phase

IMPORTANT FORMULAS & CALCULATIONS

- **EVM:** $CV = EV - AC$
 $CPI = EV / AC$
 $EAC = BAC / CPI$
- $EMV = Probability \times Impact$
- $Comm. Channels = n(n-1) / 2$

RACI CHART

- **R** = Responsible
- **A** = Accountable
- **C** = Consulted
- **I** = Informed

CONTRACT TYPES

- Fixed-Price (FP)
- Cost-Reimbursable (CR)
- Time & Material (T&M)

MNEMONICS & TIPS

- **I-P-M-C-C** = Process Groups
- **TARA** = Risk Responses:
 - **Transfe** ~~re~~ **Avoue** ~~re~~ **Pecafer**, Avoid, Retain, Accept
- "Good Boys Do Fine Always" for EVM: (PV, BAC, D, FC, A)

QUICK TIPS

- Know the 49 Processes
- Memorize Key Formulas
- Review Definitions & Contracts
- Practice EVM & RACI

All PMP Formulas – Must Memorize

Earned Value Management (EVM)

Formula	Meaning	Good	Bad
$CV = EV - AC$	Cost Variance	Positive	Negative
$SV = EV - PV$	Schedule Variance	Positive	Negative
$CPI = EV / AC$	Cost Performance Index	> 1	< 1
$SPI = EV / PV$	Schedule Performance Index	> 1	< 1
$EAC = BAC / CPI$	Estimate at Completion	-	-
$EAC = AC + (BAC - EV) / CPI$	Typical EAC	-	-
$VAC = BAC - EAC$	Variance at Completion	Positive	Negative
$TCPI = (BAC - EV) / (BAC - AC)$	To Complete Perf. Index	< 1 (easier)	> 1 (harder)

Schedule & Estimation

- $PERT = (O + 4M + P) / 6$
- Standard Deviation (σ) = $(P - O) / 6$
- 95.5% confidence range = $\pm 2\sigma$
- Float = LS - ES or LF - EF (Critical Path = 0)
- Crashing = add cost | Fast Tracking = parallel work (adds risk)

Agile Metrics

- Velocity = Storypoints completed per iteration
- Cycle Time = Start → Done duration
- Lead Time = Request → Delivery
- Burn-down / Burn-up charts track progress

ITTO Logic & Core Project Documents

ITTO Direction (Think Flow, Not Memorization)

- Initiating: Business docs → Project Charter → Stakeholder Register
- Planning: Charter → Management Plans → Baselines (Scope/Schedule/Cost)

- Executing: Plans → Deliverables → Work Performance Data
- Monitoring & Controlling: Baselines → Variances → Change Requests
- Closing: Accepted Deliverables → Final Product → Lessons Learned

Key Documents by Phase

Phase	Key Inputs	Key Outputs
Initiate	Business Case, SOW	Project Charter, Stakeholder Register
Plan	Charter	13 Subsidiary Plans, Baselines, Registers
Execute	Plans, Resources	Deliverables, Issue Log
Control	Baselines	Forecasts, Change Requests
Close	Accepted Deliverables	Final Product, Lessons Learned

Cover 3 Exam Domains

Domain 1: PEOPLE (42%) – THE REAL WEIGHT

This domain is heavily situational. If you think “communication + servant leadership + analysis first,” you’re usually right.

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A. Leadership Styles (Know When to Use Each)

Style	When Used	PMP Logic
Servant Leader	Agile teams	Remove impediments, empower team
Democratic	Complex decisions	Gain buy-in
Autocratic	Crisis	Fast decisions
Coaching	Skill gaps	Develop people
Laissez-faire	Mature experts	Hands-off

Exam rule: In agile → servant leadership always wins.

B. Conflict Resolution (Most Tested Topic)

Order from BEST to WORST:

1. **Collaborate / Problem Solve** (Win-Win)
2. Compromise
3. Smooth
4. Force (Win-Lose)
5. Withdraw

Exam trick:

If the project is healthy → collaborate.

If urgent crisis → compromise may be acceptable.

C. Team Development (Tuckman)

Form → Storm → Norm → Perform → Adjour

- Storming = conflict phase
- PM must coach and facilitate
- Agile teams self-organize during norming/performing

D. Emotional Intelligence (EI)

PMI increasingly tests this.

High EI =

- Self-awareness
- Active listening
- Empathy
- Non-reactive communication

If the answer involves escalating too quickly → wrong.

E. Stakeholder Engagement

Power/Interest Grid:

| High Power | Manage Closely | | Low Power | Monitor |

Golden Rule:

If stakeholder resistance appears → meet 1-on-1 first before escalating.

Domain 2: PROCESS (50%) – TECHNICAL CORE

This is where most formula + situational control questions come from.

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INTEGRATION MANAGEMENT (The Backbone)

Most tested knowledge area.

Key Concepts

- Charter authorizes project
- PM assigned BEFORE planning
- Change requests go through:
 1. Impact analysis
 2. CCB approval
 3. Update baselines

Never implement change without approval.

SCOPE MANAGEMENT

Key Tools:

- WBS = Decomposition
Scope baseline = Scope statement + WBS + WBS dictionary

Exam Traps:

- Scope creep = uncontrolled changes
- Gold plating = adding extra features (always wrong)
- Validate scope = customer acceptance
- Control scope = manage changes internally

SCHEDULE MANAGEMENT

Network Diagram Logic

- Critical Path = longest path
- Zero float
- If CP slips → project slips

Schedule Compression

Method	Adds Cost?	Adds Risk?
Crashing	Yes	Low
Fast Tracking	No	High

Exam logic:

- Behind schedule & no budget → Fast Track
- Behind schedule & budget available → Crash

COST MANAGEMENT

- EVM (MUST MASTER)

Metric	Meaning
EV	Earned Value (value of work actually completed)
PV	Planned Value (budgeted cost of scheduled work)
AC	Actual Cost (total cost incurred for work performed)

Key interpretations:

- $CPI < 1$ → Over budget
- $SPI < 1$ → Behind schedule
- $TCPI > 1$ → Need improved efficiency

EAC Scenarios

Use:

- BAC/CPI → if performance continues
- $AC + \text{Bottom-up}$ → if estimate flawed

Exam often asks which EAC to use based on scenario.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

- Prevention over inspection
- Cost of Quality = Prevention + Appraisal + Failure
- Control quality uses:
 - Control charts
 - Pareto charts
 - Fishbone diagrams

Rule of Seven: 7 points in a row on one side = out of control.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Resource smoothing = within float
- Resource leveling = may change critical path
- RACI chart = roles clarity

If team conflict due to unclear roles → create RACI.

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Formula:

Numberofcommunication channels = $n(n-1)/2$

Exam trap:

If miscommunication occurs → update communications plan, not escalate immediately.

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RISK MANAGEMENT (Frequently Tested)

Risk Process Order:

1. Plan
2. Identify
3. Qualitative
4. Quantitative
5. Plan Responses
6. Implement Responses
7. Monitor

Risk Strategies

Threats:

- Avoid

- Mitigate
- Transfer
- Accept

Opportunities:

- Exploit
- Enhance
- Share
- Accept

Exam trick:

Mitigate ≠ Avoid.

EMV

EMV = Probability × Impact

Decision Tree questions use EMV.

PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT

Fixed Price → seller risk

Cost Reimbursable → buyer risk

T&M → shared risk

If scope unclear → avoid Fixed Price.

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

If stakeholder becomes resistant:

- Reassess engagement
- Update engagement plan
- Communicate

Do not escalate immediately.

Domain 2: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT (8%) – Often Underestimated

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Compliance & Governance

- Follow regulations
- Ensure ethical conduct
- PMI Code of Ethics:
 - Responsibility
 - Respect
 - Fairness
 - Honesty

If ethical violation appears → escalate appropriately.

Benefits Realization

Project success ≠ on time/on budget.

Success = benefits achieved.

Business case owned by sponsor.

Organizational Change Management

Change resistance?

- Communicate vision
- Provide training
- Engage stakeholders early

AGILE & HYBRID – HALF THE EXAM

Agile Core Principles

- Working product over documentation
- Responding to change over following a plan
- Customer collaboration

Scrum Framework

Roles:

- Product Owner
- Scrum Master
- Development Team

Events:

- Sprint
- Daily Scrum
- Review
- Retrospective

Artifacts:

- Product Backlog
- Sprint Backlog
- Increment

Agile Metrics

Velocity = story points per sprint

Burndown = remaining work

Burnup = work completed

If velocity drops:

- Investigate impediments
- Do not pressure team

Hybrid Scenarios

Predictive planning + Agile execution.

Example:

- Fixed budget
- Iterative delivery

HIGH-FREQUENCY PMP EXAM LOGIC

When unsure, ask:

1. Is this People, Process, or Business?
2. Predictive or Agile?
3. What should the PM do FIRST?
4. Is communication missing?
5. Is analysis missing?

THE PMP MINDSET

PMI wants you to:

- Be proactive
- Communicate first
- Analyze before acting
- Follow process
- Protect team

- Respect governance
- Focus on value

MOST COMMON EXAM MISTAKES

1. Escalating too early
Implementing change without approval
2. Ignoring stakeholder engagement
3. Choosing authoritarian approach in agile
4. Ignoring risk planning
5. Forgetting lessons learned

LAST-MINUTE MEMORY LIST

Memorize cold:

- All EVM formulas
- Communication channels formula
- PERT formula
- Risk response types
- Conflict resolution order
- Tuckman stages
- Change control flow
- CPI/SPI interpretation

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Helpful Articles:

- [PMP Test Fee Breakdown](#)
- [Best PMP Study Plan](#)
- [PMP Application Examples Explained](#)
- [Difference Between PMP and CAPM](#)
- [Difference Between PgMP and PMP](#)
- [Difference Between PMP and MBA](#)