The four verdicts: *a plan-check sheet*

You have asked your two questions, so you have facts. Before you say yes, test each plan you could offer against those facts and give it one of four verdicts. This sheet explains the four, shows one filled example, and has two blank sheets for your own practice.

The four verdicts

Fits

The numbers work and someone with authority supports it.

Then: Say yes, with the numbers.

Needs a decision

It could work if the person who decides approves it.

Then: Name who decides and ask them. Don't decide for them.

Gap

It falls short of what it needs (time, hours or a missing fact) and could work if that shortfall were closed.

Then: Write down what would close it, and who holds that.

Breaks

It does something the case does not allow.

Then: Don't offer it as it stands. Say what it would break.

A way to test a plan, in this order

This order is a thinking aid, not a rule. The first question you answer yes to gives the verdict.

1. **Does it do something the case does not allow?** For example, moving a date that is fixed, cutting a step the outcome needs, or doing a check that only someone else may do. If yes: **Breaks.**
2. **Does it fall short of what it needs?** Not enough hours, not enough time, or a fact you don't have yet. If yes: **Gap.** Write down what would close it.
3. **Do the numbers work, but does someone else have to approve it?** If yes: **Needs a decision.** Write down who decides. Approving a later slot for something that is outside the plan does not make the plan itself need a decision.
4. **Do the numbers work, and does someone with authority support it?** If yes: **Fits.**

Gap and breaks are different. A gap can be closed by getting the hours or the fact. A plan that breaks is not fixed by more hours: it does something the case does not allow.

How to use it: read the filled example on page 2, then fill a blank sheet for a case or a request of your own. Every case here is fictional; the hours are practice numbers, not promises about real work. Draft for review, not a final product; no price or offer attached.

Play the free cases: [PUBLIC_URL]/practice/

Example: *the Friday deadline*

Case C01. The Client asks for all of it by Friday noon. Alex, the Client and the workplace are fictional; the hours are practice numbers.

What I know. Friday noon is fixed. The demo needs the core and the handoff; the polish is optional.

What my two questions turned up. I asked Alex: "How many hours do you have before Friday noon?" and "How long does each part take?" Alex: "Five hours. Nothing extra has been approved." and "Core 3h, handoff 1h, polish 3h."

The numbers. 3 + 1 + 3 = 7 hours of work against 5 hours free. Core + handoff = 4 hours, so 1 hour is left over, and it does not buy the 3-hour polish.

Each plan, with its verdict

THE PLAN	VERDICT	WHY	WHAT CLOSES IT, OR WHO DECIDES
All three parts by Friday noon	Fits Needs a decision **Gap** Breaks	3 + 1 + 3 = 7h against 5h. It only works if two extra hours are approved AND actually free.	Two extra hours, approved and actually free. Write down who approved them.
Core + handoff by Friday noon; polish decided separately	**Fits** Needs a decision Gap Breaks	Core 3h + handoff 1h = 4h of 5h. Friday noon is met. The demo owner decides when polish happens.	Who decides: the owner of the Friday demo, on when the polish happens.
Core only by Friday noon	Fits Needs a decision Gap **Breaks**	The demo needs the handoff too. Cutting it isn't your decision.	Not closed by more hours: the demo needs the handoff.
Everything next week	Fits Needs a decision Gap **Breaks**	Friday noon is fixed. Only the date owner could authorize a change.	Not closed by more hours: Friday noon is fixed. Only the date owner could change it.

One more verdict: needs a decision

None of the four plans above needs a decision, so here is a plan from a second fictional case, Scope Swap, where one does.

THE PLAN	VERDICT	WHY	WHAT CLOSES IT, OR WHO DECIDES
Swap the recommendations section for the comparison (case C02, fictional)	Fits **Needs a decision** Gap Breaks	2 + 2 + 1 = 5h, so it fits, but only once the scope owner approves removing the recommendations.	Who decides: the scope owner. Ask; don't decide for them.

The reply that follows from the sheet

> **"Yes to core and handoff by Friday noon. That's four of the five free hours. The full version with polish is seven hours, so it doesn't fit as things stand. Can we decide on the polish separately?"**

It starts with the yes the numbers support, shows them, keeps the handoff visible and hands the open decision to the person who owns it. Fictional practice case: the plans, verdicts and reasons are the case's own, the reply is written for the practice book. Draft for review, not a final product.

Plan-check sheet

Request or case _____ **Date** _____

What I know _____

What my questions turned up _____

Test each plan. Circle one verdict per plan, write the numbers or facts behind it, and note what would close a gap or who decides.

#	THE PLAN	VERDICT (CIRCLE ONE)	WHY (NUMBERS, FACTS)	WHAT CLOSES IT, OR WHO DECIDES
1		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
2		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
3		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
4		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
5		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		

The plan I would offer _____

Who decides _____

My reply in two or three lines (start with what I can say yes to, show the numbers, hand the open decision to the person who owns it):

_____

_____

_____

Fictional practice sheet. Use it on the practice cases or on your own requests; the verdicts are a way to think, not a rating of any real person. Draft for review, not a final product.

Plan-check sheet

Request or case _____ **Date** _____

What I know _____

What my questions turned up _____

Test each plan. Circle one verdict per plan, write the numbers or facts behind it, and note what would close a gap or who decides.

#	THE PLAN	VERDICT (CIRCLE ONE)	WHY (NUMBERS, FACTS)	WHAT CLOSES IT, OR WHO DECIDES
1		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
2		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
3		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
4		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		
5		Fits Needs a decision Gap Breaks		

The plan I would offer _____

Who decides _____

My reply in two or three lines (start with what I can say yes to, show the numbers, hand the open decision to the person who owns it):

_____

_____

_____

Fictional practice sheet. Use it on the practice cases or on your own requests; the verdicts are a way to think, not a rating of any real person. Draft for review, not a final product.