

Planning Poker - Estimation Helper

AI-assisted evidence brief for better-informed estimation conversations

Input Proposed story / requirement	AI's role Find, compare and synthesize relevant evidence	Decision owner Engineering owns the estimate
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Purpose

Planning Poker - Estimation Helper is an AI-assisted workflow that brings historical delivery evidence and relevant technical context into refinement before Engineering sizes a story. It does not calculate story points. Its job is to reduce context rediscovery and make useful evidence, uncertainty and unanswered questions visible before the planning poker conversation.

The principle

Comparable work is evidence, not an estimate. AI can help investigate and synthesize the available context; Engineering validates that evidence, determines the implementation approach and owns the final estimate.

Example input

Story: As an operations user, I want to cancel an eligible booking so that bookings that will no longer proceed can be closed correctly.

Known requirement: Cancellation is unavailable once the booking has started. Existing refund handling should remain unchanged.

Evidence brief

Evidence / signal	What it may tell Engineering	Confidence / action
A comparable Azure DevOps ticket changed the same validation path and required both API and UI updates.	The visible UI change may not be isolated; the validation path may span more than one layer.	Comparable, not equivalent. Confirm whether the same path is still used.
Similar workflow work required broader regression coverage around booking status transitions.	Cancellation may affect downstream states or existing transition rules.	Use as a regression signal; validate current status model.
Relevant code context suggests cancellation logic may be shared across more than one booking type.	A change intended for one flow could have wider impact.	Technical hypothesis only. Engineering to confirm implementation scope.
Refund handling appears to be owned outside the immediate cancellation flow.	There may be a service or workflow dependency even though refund behaviour is not changing.	Confirm ownership and whether cancellation invokes that dependency.

Questions to take into planning poker

- What exact event or status means the booking has “started”?
- Is cancellation logic shared across booking types or isolated to this workflow?
- Does cancellation trigger any downstream service even when refund behaviour is unchanged?

- Are there historical or in-progress bookings that need different handling?
- What regression coverage is required around status transitions and existing refund behaviour?

What the helper should make explicit

Comparable work found	Show why it is comparable and where the comparison stops.
No comparable work found	Say so explicitly rather than manufacturing a comparison.
Technical signal	Present it as evidence or a hypothesis, not as confirmed architecture.
Requirement uncertainty	Surface it before sizing if it could materially affect implementation.
Estimate	Not generated. Engineering sizes the story after reviewing the evidence.

Suggested workflow

1. Start with the proposed story and confirmed requirement context.
2. AI searches for potentially comparable delivery history.
3. AI compares relevant historical work and available technical context.
4. Surface likely dependencies, complexity signals, caveats and unanswered questions.
5. BA / Product reviews the evidence and removes weak or unsupported comparisons.
6. Engineering validates the evidence during refinement / planning poker.
7. Engineering assigns the estimate.

Guardrails

The helper should never assign story points, treat an old ticket as an exact equivalent, override Engineering judgment, present code-analysis guesses as facts, or hide uncertainty to make the brief appear complete.

Portfolio note: This is a reconstructed sample illustrating the workflow and type of evidence the Estimation Helper is designed to surface. Details are intentionally generic and do not reproduce proprietary employer documentation.