

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Gantt chart?

Answer: A Gantt chart is a type of bar chart used to illustrate work break down structure of a project schedule comprising of summary and detail elements, especially the tasks and the milestones.

2. Highlight the purpose of Gantt chart in project.

Answer: Gantt chart's purpose is to help the viewer to easily understand the important aspects of a project:

- sub-components of the project
- the tasks to be completed under each sub-component
- the flow or sequence of tasks
- the start and end date of the tasks and sub-components
- the interim and final milestones to be achieved
- the dependency between various tasks

3. Who introduced Gantt chart and in which year?

Answer: Gantt charts are named after Henry Laurence Gantt, an American Engineer and Social Scientist who introduced them in the 1910s.

4. What is a project plan?

Answer: A project plan is a document stating of how and when a project's objectives are to be achieved. It is often further elaborated through a project schedule, which shows a list of the project's summary and terminal elements with their respective start and end dates.

5. What are terminal elements?

Answer: Terminal elements are the lowest level tasks in a schedule, which cannot be further subdivided.

6. What are summary elements?

Answer: Summary elements comprise of one or more terminal elements, and hence represent a group of activities to be completed for achieving a common objective or milestone.

7. Give an example for terminal elements.

Answer: In a software development project, many programs will have to be written, tested and integrated to create the final application. Separate tasks will be created for writing and testing of each program. Each such task is typically assigned to a single person and hence cannot be broken down any further. These are examples of lowest level tasks or terminal elements in a project schedule.

8. Give an example for summary elements.

Answer: In creating a module, we will need several programs to be coded, tested and integrated to create a single executable file. Hence, it becomes a summary task with many sub-tasks under it.

9. What is a work breakdown and work breakdown structure?

Answer: Decomposing the project into sub-components and tasks to achieve interim and final objectives is called "Work Break Down". The resulting tree structure with groups of tasks is called a Work Break Down Structure.

10. List the important attributes in context of building Gantt charts.

Answer:

Task Name: This will be a short description of the objective or nature of the task.

Start Date/Time: This will be the planned start date, if the task is yet to begin. It will be the actual start date, if the task has already begun.

End Date/Time: This will be either the planned end date (if the task is yet to begin or is in progress) or actual end date (if the task is already completed).

Dependency: In some cases, execution of a task may depend upon the status of another task. In such cases, both these tasks become "linked" and a dependency is established between them. In other words, such tasks cannot be executed independently; they are influenced by the status of one or more other tasks.

11. Highlight the importance of dependency in project scheduling.

Answer: Dependency is a very important aspect of project scheduling. They determine the complexity of a project and the "critical path" to complete the project. Depicting and tracking dependencies is always a challenge for project managers.

12. List the types of dependency.

Answer: There are four types of dependency, they are:

- Finish to Start (FS)
- Finish to Finish (FF)
- Start to Start (SS)
- Start to Finish (SF)

13. List the advantages of Gantt chart.

Answer: The advantages of Gantt chart are:

- The Gantt chart presents a much better view of the project plan. It helps us to quickly form a high level impression about the duration and sub-components of the project. It also helps us to easily understand the flow of work and the dependencies associated with the tasks.
- Gantt chart will help us to appreciate the complexities involved with a project in an easier and quicker manner.

- Gantt Charts use very little text and hence are ideal to share Project Plans & Schedules across multi-lingual, multi-cultural teams.

With several such advantages, Gantt Charts have become the preferred way of presenting project plans & schedules, across the world.

14. List the key considerations while making Gantt charts.

Answer: The key considerations while making Gantt chart are:

- There are no default colour codes for tasks, milestones and other components of a Gantt chart. You are free to choose your preferences. Most of the project management tools provide you with options to manipulate the look & feel of Gantt Charts.
- Modern project management tools support several enhanced versions of Gantt Charts giving additional information about progress, criticality, etc.
- Although a Gantt chart is useful and valuable for small projects that fit on a single sheet or screen, they can become quite unwieldy for projects with a large number of activities or with long time horizon. Gantt charts may not be suitable for certain computer displays. Similarly, displaying a large number of dependencies may result in a cluttered or unreadable Gantt chart.
- Hence, in case of very large and complex projects, it is recommended to create smaller (child) charts and integrate them into summary (parent) charts. Most of the project management software tools support such requirements.
- Gantt charts primarily focus on Project Schedule management. They are not quite efficient in representing cost and scope of projects. They also do not represent the size of a project.

15. List the key usages of Gantt chart.

Answer:

- Gantt Charts are very widely used by managers in every industry sector dealing with projects:
 - Software projects and product development
 - Civil construction projects (buildings and structures)
 - Defence planning (deployment of troops and weapons, infrastructure creation)
 - Heavy Engineering projects (commissioning of plants, machinery, etc)
 - Aeroplane and Automobile design and development projects
 - Governmental programs (public services and utilities)

- Gantt Charts are also used for team communication and workplace collaboration across company networks and internet.
- Gantt Charts have emerged as the world's preferred technique for presenting project plans and schedules. With the availability of powerful project management software products, generating and updating Gantt Charts have become quite easy.