



Keys &  
Quills

# Vibe Coding Checklist

A structured approach to clear, maintainable, and thoughtful code.

## Layer 1: Surface Integrity

*Can I read this? Does it run? Is it consistent?*

- ☐ Code runs and passes tests
- ☐ Syntax is clean (linted and formatted)
- ☐ Naming is clear and descriptive
- ☐ Structure and file placement are consistent
- ☐ Formatting aligned with project style
- ☐ Automation: Are these checks in CI/CD or pre-commit

## Layer 3: Abstraction & Boundaries

*How does this fit into the rest of the system?*

- ☐ DRY is used judiciously
- ☐ Each function/module/class has one clear purpose
- ☐ Levels of abstraction are consistent
- ☐ Scope is clear, modular, and extendable
- ☐ Avoid dumping-ground folders and files
- ☐ Imports are clear and minimal
- ☐ No circular dependencies
- ☐ Connascence is intentional
- ☐ Complexity is observed and questioned

## Layer 5: Communication & Context

*Do I understand what changed & why it matters?*

- ☐ Commit/PR message explains intent, not implementation
- ☐ Commentary highlights business value, risks, or tradeoffs
- ☐ Stakeholders could read the PR and understand its purpose
- ☐ Uncertainty or open questions are clearly flagged

## Layer 2: Clarity & Intent

*What is this trying to do, and how clearly does it say it?*

- ☐ Function/module purpose is immediately apparent
- ☐ Comments are useful and explain why
- ☐ Logic is readable and flows cleanly
- ☐ Cognitive load is low
- ☐ Will this make sense in 6 months?

## Layer 4: System Impact

*What happens when this is deployed?*

- ☐ Dependencies are minimal and stable
- ☐ Code is resilient to change
- ☐ Structure makes tests easy to write and maintain
- ☐ Performance is reasonable and scalable
- ☐ Security - Start with OWASP 10
- ☐ Error handling is clear and user-friendly
- ☐ Documentation is updated

## Self-Check

*How I reviewed*

- ☐ My comments focused on the code, not the coder
- ☐ I gave feedback with curiosity, not condescension
- ☐ I highlighted opportunities for clarity or learning
- ☐ I made the impact and ROI of changes more visible
- ☐ I would be happy receiving the kind of feedback I just gave