Keys & Quills

PR Review Check List

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 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 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 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

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

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

https://keysandquills.com