

FOR DEVELOPERS / TECH LEADS / CODE REVIEWERS

AI Code Review Field Kit

Catch the monsters
before you merge.



SCOPE CREEP KRAKEN / VOLUME I

Twelve checks. One accountable human.

01 / THE MERGE CHECKLIST

Use alongside your normal review. Check a box when you can point to evidence. An unknown answer is a follow-up, not a pass.

01 A human owns it

- ☐ **Explain the decision.**
Identify AI-assisted parts and explain why this approach fits, in the author's own words.
- ☐ **Trace a real input.**
Walk it through the changed path, including an error or boundary case.
- ☐ **Name the maintainer.**
Record who can debug, change, and support this code after merge.

WATCH FOR / Phantom Intern

03 The change belongs here

- ☐ **Match local conventions.**
Reuse the module's existing patterns, naming, and error handling.
- ☐ **Justify new machinery.**
Every dependency and abstraction solves a current, named problem.
- ☐ **Review the change as a whole.**
Check the design, integration, and unfamiliar paths. Split work too large to assess.

WATCH FOR / Congealing Slop

02 The behavior is proven

- ☐ **Test the requirement.**
Expected results come from the intended behavior, not the generated code.
- ☐ **Try to break it.**
Check invalid inputs, failure paths, and the relevant integration boundary.
- ☐ **Inspect the evidence.**
Run the checks. Read the results. For model-driven flows, repeat representative cases.

WATCH FOR / Probability Pixie

04 The boundary is clear

- ☐ **Stay inside the task.**
Separate helpful extras from the acceptance criteria for this change.
- ☐ **Trace sensitive data.**
Check destinations, access controls, and tool permissions for the changed flow.
- ☐ **Plan a safe recovery.**
Identify the failure impact, rollout owner, and rollback or recovery path.

WATCH FOR / Scope Creep Kraken

Before you
approve

If an answer is missing, request the evidence, narrow the change, or bring in the right reviewer.

02 / THE POCKET BESTIARY

Name the monster. Make the next move.

Four failure modes from Volume I. Recognize the pattern, then try a specific intervention.



01 / LOST OWNERSHIP

Phantom Intern

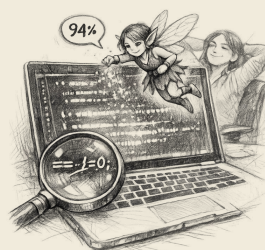
"Who can explain this?"

The code works, but the reasoning left with the prompt. Nobody can confidently change it.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Have a human trace the code, record the decisions, and take ownership before it ships.

Ask: What would you change if the input assumption changed?



02 / UNTESTED RELIABILITY

Probability Pixie

"It worked in the demo."

A few good outputs conceal failures across a longer workflow. Spot checks become certainty.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Test representative inputs end to end, repeat model-driven cases, and define acceptable failure.

Ask: What evidence covers the whole workflow, including failures?



03 / ACCUMULATING FRICTION

Congealing Slop

"Each piece works on its own."

Locally plausible code becomes a globally inconsistent system that nobody wants to touch.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Use one existing pattern. Remove duplication. Review how the change fits its neighbors.

Ask: Which existing module should this code look like?



04 / UNBOUNDED SCOPE

Scope Creep Kraken

"While we're at..."

Cheap generation makes every extra feature feel free. The maintenance bill arrives later.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Restate the acceptance criteria. Move extras into separate work with an owner and a reason.

Ask: Would we still choose this if we had to maintain it for a year?

Name patterns, not people. Bring a concrete example from the work. The name should make a difficult conversation easier to have.

03 / BUILD A BETTER REVIEW PAIR

Know your instinct. Borrow a counterweight.

AI amplifies the way you already work. A different perspective helps you notice what your strongest instinct misses.



MOVE FAST

Fighter

Turns intent into working code.

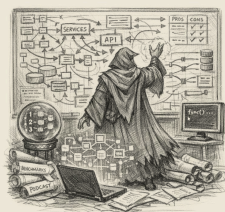
Watch for: AI makes speed outrun understanding.

THE REVIEW QUESTION

“Walk me through one failure path before we merge.”

Pair with a Wizard.

Bring the design question back into view.



DESIGN DEEPLY

Wizard

Sees structure and long-term consequences.

Watch for: AI makes unnecessary architecture easy.

THE REVIEW QUESTION

“What is the smallest version that meets the requirement?”

Pair with a Fighter.

Turn the design into a bounded, working slice.



FIND A WAY

Rogue

Solves the immediate problem resourcefully.

Watch for: Borrowed solutions outrun review and ownership.

THE REVIEW QUESTION

“Which shortcut needs a test, an owner, or a follow-up?”

Pair with a Cleric.

Make the useful shortcut safe to repeat.



TRUST THE PROCESS

Cleric

Makes good practice consistent.

Watch for: A green pipeline substitutes for judgment.

THE REVIEW QUESTION

“What important failure could still pass all our checks?”

Pair with a Rogue.

Test whether the process holds in the real world.

A behavior, not a personality test. You may be a Fighter on one task and a Wizard on the next. Choose the question that fits today's work.

One change. Fifteen useful minutes.

Bring one AI-assisted pull request. Leave with one action that makes the design, evidence, or ownership clearer.

00-03MIN Choose a real change Bring one recent AI-assisted pull request. Read its purpose and skim the diff together.	03-08MIN Name the evidence Use page 1. Pick the least convincing answer. Use page 2 to name the pattern, with a specific example.	08-15MIN Choose one repair Agree on the smallest useful change, a human owner, and the evidence that will show it is done.
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Make the repair concrete

WRITE IT DOWN

The pattern + evidence

Smallest useful action

Owner

Check by

We will know it worked when

COPY INTO YOUR NEXT PR

Leave a decision record.

A few human-written lines make the next review easier.

Purpose	This change exists to...
Decision	I chose this approach because...
Evidence	I checked these cases and observed...
Boundary	This does not do... / The remaining risk is...
Ownership	The maintainer and recovery plan are...

CONTINUE IN VOLUME I

Recognize the pattern.
Know what to do next.

The full class portraits, monsters, and interventions live in Volume I. Use the book to go deeper; bring its card deck to the next review.

EXPLORE VOLUME I

slopcodex.com/books/volume-1

Add the Volume I card deck ↗