

CODERPAD SCREEN · AI-AWARE ASSESSMENT

Evaluate AI as a **force multiplier**, not a shortcut.

Score each criterion 1–5. Total range: 6–30. Evaluate whether the candidate uses AI as a high-leverage tool for reasoning and acceleration — not as a substitute for thinking. Senior engineers should direct AI, not follow it.

SCORING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	SCORE /5	SCORE 1-2 · WEAK	SCORE 3-4 · STRONG	SCORE 5 · ADVANCED	KEY QUESTION
AI Strategy & Intent <i>Who is driving the work?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AI drives direction; candidate reacts. Heavy reliance without clear control. No stated goals or constraints.	Uses AI deliberately across the workflow. Clearly sets goals, constraints, eval criteria. "I want 3 approaches, optimize for simplicity."	Directs strategy and reframes AI outputs. Keeps full ownership of problem-solving process. Fluidly adjusts AI role throughout the session.	"What did you want AI to do here — and was that the right call?"
Problem Framing <i>Do they think before they prompt?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No independent framing before prompting. Partial understanding of the problem space. Doesn't define success criteria upfront.	Defines approach before turning to AI. Breaks problem into components and risks. Identifies hard parts before asking AI.	Strong independent framing of constraints and failure modes. AI used only to validate or extend own framing. Defines full solution space independently first.	"Walk me through how you broke this problem down before prompting."
Most Important Ownership & Architectural Reasoning <i>Can they understand and elevate the solution?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot explain solution meaningfully. Explains mechanics only, no design decisions. Leans on generated text to explain approach.	Discusses design decisions and alternatives. Explains edge cases, maintainability, scaling. Recognises hidden assumptions in the output.	Improves structure beyond the AI output. Reframes architecture or finds better abstraction. Explains as if briefing a PM or staff engineer.	"What tradeoffs does this make?" / "Would you ship this?"
Critical Evaluation & Judgment <i>Do they treat AI output as untrusted?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blindly trusts output. Reactive debugging only when failures appear. Doesn't inspect assumptions in the solution.	Validates correctness with tests. Proactively checks edge cases and limitations. Asks "what's wrong with this?" unprompted.	Actively challenges and rejects weak recommendations. Validates against product and operational realities. Calls out scaling or security issues unprompted.	"What's risky or fragile about this?" / "Would you ship this to production?"
Integration into Workflow <i>Does AI increase leverage?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AI derails or fragments thinking. Adds friction or creates dependency. Slow or no recovery from bad AI output.	AI improves momentum and execution speed. Visible progress within minutes of AI use. Recovers quickly from bad output.	Seamless — AI embedded without disrupting reasoning. Workflow noticeably smoother with AI introduced. Knows precisely when to stop relying on AI.	"If you couldn't use AI, how would your approach differ?"
Abstraction & Generalization <i>Can they think beyond the immediate task?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stays at implementation level only. Limited generalization beyond immediate task. Uses AI to generate one solution only.	Discusses reuse, variants, or tradeoffs. Uses AI to compare patterns and approaches. Can generalize solution into a reusable pattern.	Elevates to systems thinking and long-term design. Explores implications beyond the immediate prompt. Uses AI to pressure-test architectural decisions.	"How would this change at 10x scale?" / "What pattern is this an example of?"

TOTAL /30 **Ownership ≤ 2 = no hire regardless of total · Red flag: AI used before forming a plan or for core logic**

SCORING BANDS · HIRE DECISION · INTERVIEWER REFERENCE

SCORE	LEVEL	INTERPRETATION
6–12	Basic	AI-dependent, limited independent reasoning
13–20	Effective	Strong engineer, AI used competently as an assistant
21–26	Advanced	High-leverage AI use with strong independent judgment
27–30	Exceptional	AI amplifies already strong system-level thinking

SIGNAL	CRITERIA
Strong Hire	Effective or above (≥13) AND Problem Framing ≥ 4 AND Ownership ≥ 4
Weak Signal	Ownership ≤ 2 — no hire regardless of total
Red Flag	AI used before forming a plan, or over-reliance for core logic
Exceptional	Candidate improves or reframes AI output at a system or design level
Escalate	"What tradeoffs does this solution make?" / "What would you have tried without AI?"

PROBING QUESTIONS TO USE MID-SCREEN

- "What do you think of the AI's output here?"
- "Can you explain what this code does and why it works?"
- "Why did you accept — or reject — that suggestion?"
- "Which model did you use, and why that one?"
- "What would you do differently with more time?"
- "Walk me through how payment validation works across these files."

Task Types & What They Reveal

- Debug** — Juniors jump to fixing; seniors understand root cause first
- Build / extend** — Watch how they break the problem down with AI
- Optimize / refactor** — Reveals strategic thinking and trade-off awareness
- Code review** — Separates those who understand from those just following AI
- Explain** — Ask mid-task to check comprehension, not just execution

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

- Candidates who prompt more (multi-turn) pass at **10%+ higher rates** per 1,000 interviews
- Selecting a **specific model provider** correlates strongly with better performance
- Only **30% of candidates** set collaboration terms unprompted — it's a top differentiator
- The best candidates use both **augmentative** (real-time) and **delegative** (async) modes
- Final code alone doesn't tell the story — **the process matters as much as the output**