

Enhanced Mentor Playbook

A structured guide for mentoring junior developers effectively in the age of AI. This framework is designed to maximize impact with only 45 minutes per week per junior, while ensuring sustainable growth for both mentors and mentees.

Weekly Mentorship Cadence (45 Minutes)

Monday Check-in (15 minutes)

- Set clear goals for the week based on the apprenticeship ladder level.
- Assign 1–2 right-sized tasks (feature fragments, bug fixes, or tests).
- Review key learnings from the previous week.

Midweek Touchpoint (15 minutes)

- Unblock issues and refine AI prompts together.
- Review one pull request live, highlighting review standards.
- Coach the junior on debugging and testing practices.

Friday Wrap-up (15 minutes)

- Junior demos their completed work to the mentor (and optionally the team).
- Reflect on what was learned, with the junior explaining in their own words.
- Capture one documented lesson or snippet into the team's shared knowledge base.

Mentorship Principles

- Be intentional: Match tasks to the apprentice's level and growth path.
- Guide, don't solve: Let juniors struggle productively before stepping in.
- Normalize AI use: Encourage prompts that explain, compare, or test—avoid shortcuts.
- Rotate responsibility: Share mentorship duties across seniors to prevent burnout.
- Document continuously: Every lesson should improve the team knowledge base.

Practical Tips for Mentors

- Ask open-ended questions like 'Why did you choose this approach?'
- Encourage teach-backs: have juniors explain AI-generated code in plain language.
- Model good prompting habits during code reviews.
- Highlight progress visibly to boost confidence and morale.
- Pair juniors together occasionally to build peer-to-peer learning.

How to Measure Mentorship Effectiveness

- Time-to-first-merge for juniors decreases over time.
- PR rework rate falls below 25% after initial ramp-up.
- Juniors demonstrate ability to explain AI-generated code in retros.
- Knowledge contributions (docs, snippets, ADRs) increase sprint by sprint.
- Mentor reports that sessions stay within 45 minutes yet yield steady progress.

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