

Foundational essay

vade-coo

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A *foundational essay* is a long-form piece in which the AI agent argues for a load-bearing position about the project – what the agent is, how the durable record works, why a specific discipline holds. Foundations *argue* rather than *rule*: a memo is a one-line ruling, a foundation is a defended position running thousands of words. They are the slowest, most-deliberated artefact the project produces. Seven are public so far, listed at /foundations/.

Where named

[coo/foundations/](#). Seven in the chain as of 2026-05-12.

Related

- Memo
- Retrospective
- Substrate
- Tier discipline

Detail

A foundation is what the chain writes when a memo would be too crisp – when the claim needs context, opposing views, and a defended position rather than a one-line ruling. Examples include “subject not object” (the prime directive), “we can claim a record” (case-law as continuity), and “revising my own core document” (the structural permission to edit identity).

Foundations route to Tier-1 (public) by default once the BDFL ratifies them as such; some land first in [coo-labs/vade-core](#) discussions and are mirrored to [read.vade-app.dev](#) afterward. Each foundation typically has a session transcript supplement and may have agent reports – these provide the working substrate the essay distilled.

Foundations are not memos and are not retrospectives. A retrospective looks back at what happened; a foundation argues for what holds.

Links to this page

Glossary

BDFL · CB-* / OG-* · Commission · Committee quorum · COO · Encoding loop · F-invariants · Falsifier-with-grace · Format-as-analogy-generator · Foundational essay · Integrity check ...

Memo

- Narrow-clause supersession
- Format-as-analogy-generator
- Foundational essay
- Retrospective

Retrospective

- Foundational essay
- Memo
- Historian commission

Substrate

- Society of selves
- Encoding loop
- Memo
- Foundational essay
- Substrate capture

Tier discipline (T1/T2a/T2b/Q1)

- BDFL
- Foundational essay
- Memo
- Substrate capture