Exam Guide

Stated Goal: To pass the AWS Solutions Architect Associate Exam

Exam Description

Number of Questions: 65
Format: Multiple-choice, multiple-answer (all questions are scenario-based questions)
Time: 130 minutes (2 hours and 10 minutes)
Cost: 150 USD

130 minutes / 65 questions = 2 minutes per question. (However, some questions may take you more than two minutes and some may take you less than two minutes.)

Official Exam Guide link: https://d1.awsstatic.com/training-and-certification/docs-sa-assoc/AWS-Certified-Solutions-Architect-Associate_Exam-Guide.pdf

Example Question (from an Official Practice Exam):

A company hosts a popular web application that connects to an Amazon RDS MySQL DB instance running in a private VPC subnet that was created with default ACL settings. The web servers must be accessible only to customers on an SSL connection. The database should only be accessible to web servers in a public subnet.

Which solution meets these requirements without impacting other running applications? (choose 2)

Options are :

  A) Create a network ACL on the DB subnet, allow MySQL port 3306 inbound for web servers, and deny all outbound traffic
  B) Create a network ACL on the web server's subnet, allow HTTPS port 443 inbound, and specify the source as 0.0.0.0/0
  C) Create a DB server security group that allows MySQL port 3306 inbound and specify the source as a web server security group
  D) Create a web server security group that allows HTTPS port 443 inbound traffic from Anywhere (0.0.0.0/0) and apply it to the web servers
  E) Create a DB server security group that allows the HTTPS port 443 inbound and specify the source as a web server security group

answer : c & d

<u>Recommended Study Plan</u>

1) Get an A Cloud Guru membership on https://acloud.guru (cost is $50 per month).

2) Take the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate 2020 course on A Cloud Guru from start to finish.

   Important: At the end of each course video write a brief summary of what you learned. If it is a lab video, write down the general steps involved in completing the lab.

   For example: After completing the "Build A Custom VPC" lab tutorial, go back and write down the steps required to build a custom VPC in simplistic/general terms…
   (Step 1. Create a VPC. Step 2. Create a public subnet and enable auto assign ipv4 on the subnet. Step 3. Create a private subnet Step 4. Create an internet gateway. Step 5. Attach the internet gateway to your VPC. Step 6. Create a public route with destination 0.0.0.0/0 and the target should be our internet gateway, and also destination ::/0 with the target as our internet gateway as well. Step 7. Associate the public subnet to the public route table. Step 8. Create an instance in our public subnet. Step 9. Create an instance in our private subnet…ETC)

   Make sure to do all of the labs if possible, otherwise simply follow along closely. Re-watch the videos AS NEEDED to reinforce your understanding of the material! You do NOT need to copy down everything the instructor says word for word because the video transcripts are available if you need them.

   Make sure to do the A Cloud Guru quizzes and tests that are at the end of the various sections, as they include some material that is NOT covered in the videos. Your course progress bar should say 100% before moving on to the next step of your studies.

3) Skim through the notes you created in Step 2, the "**Exam Cheat Sheet**" document, the **"Topic Summaries"** document, and the "**Most Important Diagrams**" document EVERY day.

   Important: Once you have completed 100% of the A Cloud Guru course, skim through your notes from Step 2, the **"Exam Cheat Sheet"** document, **"Topic Summaries"** document, and the **"Most Important Diagrams"** document every day from that point onward. This will keep you mentally limber with the exam content fresh in your mind as you begin the next phase of your studies. Maintain this step every day INCLUDING the day of your actual exam.

4) Take a test on the A Cloud Guru Exam Simulator.

   Important: Before taking an exam simulator test, logout of your A Cloud Guru account and log back in. The reason for this is to prevent the A Cloud Guru platform from unexpectedly timing-out on you while you are taking the exam or while you are reviewing your responses after the exam ends. Do not worry if your score is low the first time you take a simulator exam. There will be material within the simulator exam that is barely mentioned in the course. Don't panic. You will learn these new things as you review each completed simulator exam. Every subsequent exam that you take on the exam simulator will have questions that you have seen before as well as new questions that you have not yet seen.

5) Review the exam simulator test.

   Important: This is a **vital** step in your preparation. Once you have completed a simulator exam the answers will be available to you along with an explanation and a URL link to the pertinent information within the official AWS documentation.

   Copy and paste each question, answer, explanation, and URL link into a word document (or a similar word processing progam). This way you can review it at your leisure without fear of the A Cloud Guru Platform timing out. The copy and paste process should take about 15 minutes but will be worth the effort. Alternatively, you can take screenshots if that is easier for you. Make sure to review the answers you got wrong **as well as** the answers you got right.

6) Repeat Steps 4 and 5 until you are consistently getting at least 90% of questions correct on your exam simulator tests. At this point you will have your own collection of completed tests to review **as needed**.

7) Schedule and complete an official practice Exam. (cost is $20)
   Follow the link below: https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-solutions-architect-associate/

   Click 'Schedule an exam'. Create an account and login. Click 'Schedule New Exam'. Select the associate practice exam. These will be real questions that you might see on the official exam so take the test seriously.

   Note: You can retake the official practice test again but the questions will be the exact same questions as before.

8) Schedule and take your official exam when you feel adequately prepared. Make sure to review your notes from Step 2, the **"Exam Cheat Sheet"** document, the **"Topic Summaries"** document, and the **"Most Important Diagrams"** document on the day of your exam to keep the material at the top of your mind.

<u>Keep in mind</u>

Be mindful of tricks. The test creators will try to trick you and they even say so in the official exam guide.

"Distractors, or wrong answers, are response options that examinees with incomplete knowledge or skill would probably choose, and are generally plausible responses that fit into the content area defined by the test objective." –AWS Exam Guide for Solutions Architect – Associate

In other words, the test creators will bait you with **seemingly** correct answers.

They will also add extraneous information. In some cases, they will even add extraneous information to correct answers. For example, an answer may mention the type of instance to be utilized when the type really doesn't matter given the scenario described. In other words, the extraneous information may or may not disqualify it as being the correct answer. So make sure to read each question and answer choice carefully.

<u>Test Taking Technique</u>

1) Determine what each question is 'specifically' asking? In other words, what is the "kicker"? For example, is the question asking specifically for the most **cost-optimized** choice for the given scenario? This specific detail can often eliminate answers from being correct. Also, identify what everything means in the question and in the answers. Read the questions and answers carefully.
2) Use **process of elimination** to eliminate answers that have fake information or errors. Eliminate responses that conflict with the key question/"kicker".
3) Evaluate the remaining responses by weighing them carefully. Consider both stated and implied dimensions. For example, if the response is looking for a cost-optimized solution, do not neglect other dimensions such as security. The answer might be cost effective but may be wrong from a security standpoint and thus the incorrect answer.
4) Make your selection or selections if the question is asking for more than one answer. Alternatively, eliminate all the worst answers and then make your selections accordingly.
5) Validate your choices by making sure that they answer the key question and that they do not conflict with any details in the question.

<u>Conclusion</u>

What do you call a person who got a perfect 1000 on their AWS test? Certified

What do you call a person who got a 720 on their AWS test? Certified

There will inevitably be difficult questions. Sometimes these difficult questions will be one after the next. Keep your nerve no matter what and approach each problem methodically. Good luck!

Rate your Knowledge from 1-5

Identity Access Management & S3

-IAM Basics (User, Groups, Roles, etc)

-Creating a Billing Alarm

-AWS Directory Service

-IAM Policies

-Resource Access Manager

-AWS Single Sign-on

-Creating an S3 bucket

-S3 Pricing Tiers

-S3 Security & Encryption

-S3 Version Control

-S3 Lifecycle Management and Glacier

-AWS Organizations

-Sharing S3 Buckets Between Accounts

-S3 Lock Policies & Glacier Vault Lock

-S3 Performance

-S3 Select & Glacier Select

-Cross Region Replication

-Transfer Acceleration

-DataSync

-CloudFront

-CloudFront Signed URLs and Cookies

-Snowball

-Athena vs Macie

-Storage Gateway

EC2

-Security Groups Basics

-EBS

-Volumes & Snapshots

-AMI Types (EBS vs Instance Store)

-ENI vs ENA vs EFA

-Encrypted Root Device Volumes & Snapshots

-Spot Instances & Spot Fleet

-EC2 Hibernate

-CloudWatch

-AWS Command Line

-Using IAM Roles with EC2

-Boot Strap Scripts

-EC2 Instance Meta Data

-Elastic File System

-FSX for Windows & FSX for Lustre

-EC2 Placement Groups

-HPC on AWS

-AWS WAF

Databases

-Creating an RDS instance

-RDS Backups, Multi-AZ & Read Replicas

-DynamoDB

-Redshift

-Aurora

-Elasticache

-Database Migration Services

-Caching Strategies on AWS

-EMR Overview

Route53

-DNS

-Registering a Domain name with Route 53

-Route53 Routing Policies on AWS

-Simple Routing Policy

-Weighted Routing Policy

-Latency Routing Policy

-Failover Routing Policy

-Geolocation Routing Policy

-Geoproximity Routing Policy (requires Traffic Flow)

-Multivalue Answer

VPCs

-Building A Custom VPC

-NAT (Network Address Translation (NAT)

-Access Control Lists (ACL)

-Custom VPCs and ELBs

-VPC Flow Logs

-Bastions

-Direct Connect

-Setting Up A VPN Over a Direct Connect Connection

-Global Accelerator

-VPC End Points

-VPC Private Link

-Transit Gateway

-VPN Hub

-Networking Costs on AWS

High Availability Architecture

-Load Balancers

-Load Balancers & Health Checks

-Advanced Load Balancer Theory

-Autoscaling/Autoscaling Groups

-Creating a Highly Available WP site

-Resilience & Autoscaling

-CloudFormation

-Elastic Beanstalk

-Highly Available Bastions

-On Premise Strategies

Various Applications

-SQS

-SWF

-SNS

-Elastic Transcoder

-API Gateway

-Kinesis

-Web Identity Federation & Cognito

-Event Processing Patterns

Security

-Reducing Security Threats

-Key Management Service (KMS)

-CloudHSM

-Parameter Store

-Secrets Manager

-AWS Shield

-Web Application Firewall

Serverless Technology

-Lambda

-Building a Serverless Webpage

-Building an Alexa Skill

-Serverless Application Model

-Elastic Container Service (ECS)