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Transcript:

Choosing the wrong certification could waste months of your time and thousands of dollars. But get it right, and you'll gain the in-demand cloud skills to land a high paying job. In this video, I'll use my experience as a self-taught cloud engineer specializing in AWS to provide a step-by-step roadmap for beginners. I'll show you which certifications to prioritize, which to skip, and the exact order to take them. This roadmap has been designed with beginners in mind, and will be valid for all cloud-related roles. But first, our AWS certifications actually worth it. Imagine you're going to run a marathon. You know it's going to be a long, challenging journey. So you start training, waking up early, planning out your meals, and strength training. You know, it's not always easy, and there's definitely times when you feel like giving up. But you keep pushing through, focused on your goal of crossing that finish line. And in a way, getting an AWS job is a lot like finishing a marathon. Doing certifications is like the preparation you put in before the big race. It's important, sure, but it's not quite enough. You still have to shop on the day and actually run the race. And this means getting hands-on practical experience. See, pretty much everyone knows that building projects is the most important thing when it comes to landing a cloud job. Employers want to see that you've actually worked with the technologies and have the actual practical skills, not just theoretical knowledge. But just like how training helps you finish the marathon, the knowledge that you get from getting certified helps you build your own projects and stand out. But that's not all. This redditter says that by getting certified, they got promoted, and got to raise, and got an increased bonus. Although it did not help me get the job, but boosted my credibility within the company. It's not uncommon for some companies to reward and incentivize their engineers to take certifications. This could be in the form of a promotion, a raise, or just better projects coming your way. So if you're new to AWS, the first certification you should aim for is the AWS certified cloud practitioner. This is AWS's entry-level foundational certification that's specifically designed for people who are just beginning their cloud journey. The cloud practitioner cert covers a lot of the basics, such as core services, security, pricing, it helps you understand the fundamentals of how AWS works at a very high level. You learn the language, the core concepts, and how to navigate around the AWS console. Now, there's a bit of debate online about whether this cert is actually worth doing. To be honest, it's not detailed enough to really help you get a job and doesn't really go into any core services in too much detail. But I still think it is worth doing. When I was first learning AWS, I started with the cloud practitioner, and looking back, I don't regret it. If you were to jump straight into a more difficult certification, the knowledge gap between where you're at now and what those tests expect you to know is going to be pretty huge. You're not trying to get a job with the cloud practitioner. You're trying to get enough knowledge so you're able to understand conversations around AWS and cloud concepts. And I think this certification does provide that. Okay, great. So you've done the cloud practitioner. What's next? So imagine you're building a house. You wouldn't just start with the roof and the walls, right? You need a solid foundation first. Something strong that everything else can be built upon. Without that foundation, the whole structure is kind of wobbly and unstable. And it's the same thing with AWS certifications. Regardless of what specific cloud job you're looking for, whether it's a solutions architect or cloud engineer, DevOps or something else, my advice is the same. You should aim to get free out of the four main associate AWS certifications. This provides a great level of knowledge across the core AWS services and concepts. Now, could you just skip straight to the advanced certifications like the professional or the specialty ones? I mean, sure. There's nothing physically stopping you from doing that. But it's generally not a good idea. The advanced certifications assume you already have a certain level of knowledge going in. They build on the concepts from the associate certifications. So if you haven't done those first, you're going to have some pretty big gaps to fill. It's like trying to build a house starting with the walls. It's not impossible, but it'll be

a lot harder and take you longer than if you just did the associate certifications first. So here's the specific path that I recommend. Start off by getting your solutions architect associate. Architecture is really at the center of working with AWS. The knowledge you get from this will help put other certifications in context and make them a bit easier. This certification covers a wide range of AWS services and really starts to go in depth on some of the stuff you need to know like EC2 and VPCs. I see it as the foundational building block for your AWS journey, which you'll keep adding to it as you start learning more and more. Plus, a lot of the material overlaps with the other associate certifications. So you save yourself time in the future. Next, go for the developer associate. Now, don't let the name fool you. You don't actually need any hardcore programming skills for this one. They won't test you on any of that. It's more about understanding how to use AWS services to build and deploy apps. And like I said, there's a ton of overlap between this and the solutions architect. So if you've already put in the work to study for that, you're already most are way there. Okay, what's next? Well, I recommend doing the CISOPS administrator associate. I know, I know. It's got CIS in its name. So you might be thinking it's only for IT operations people. But the truth is, this material is important for any cloud role, including solutions architects and cloud engineers. The CISOPS certification gets into core AWS services for managing and monitoring cloud resources like cloud watch and systems manager. And again, there's a bunch of overlap between this and the solutions architect. So you won't have to start again from scratch. I will say that the CISOPS is generally considered the toughest out of the three associate certifications. But at this point, the actual amount of new things that you need to learn should be quite minimal. Now, after these, you can go for the data engineer certification if you're interested in specializing in data and analytics. It's a great one to have, but it does get pretty in depth on some niche topics that aren't really necessary for most cloud or solutions architect roles. So I consider it more of an optional one that you can tackle later down the road if it aligns with your specific career path. Great, you've done the associates. Now, this is where things start to get exciting. At this point, you should have a lot of knowledge about core AWS services. If you don't have much work experience, I honestly do think that getting a professional cert can really help you stand out. But it's not going to be easy. The professional exams are no joke and are much harder than the associates. I can't emphasize this enough. It's a big step up. If you're trying to speedrun through certifications, you should really slow down for these. They go deep into the details of AWS services and really test your understanding. The questions on the professional exam are presented in the form of long case studies. The questions and answers are much more wordy than what you see on the associates. Even though the professional exams are only 15 minutes longer, they feel a lot longer because the questions are so much more detailed. It's definitely not something where you can just memorize facts or figures. You really need to know your stuff and be able to apply it to a real life situation. So you really have two paths here depending on which kind of career path you're more interested in. Now, I know some people out there recommend doing both no matter what. But honestly, I think there's a point of diminishing returns. Like if you want to be a cloud expert and you have time, then yeah, it's good to have both. But if you're 100% set on either being a cloud engineer or solutions architect, you can probably focus on the one that better aligns with your career goals and get most of value. With that being said, if you're leaning more towards a career in cloud engineering, I would suggest focusing on the DevOps professional. This exam focuses a lot on deployment, operations, and scaling infrastructure in AWS. It covers things like CICD, infrastructure's code, monitoring, unlocking, and troubleshooting in a lot of detail. These are super important skills for any cloud engineer to have. A lot of people also find the DevOps professional to be slightly easier than the solutions architect professional, but I definitely wouldn't underestimate it. For those interested in the solutions architect career, do the solutions architect professional. I kind of think of it like this. The associate solutions architect exam covers a wide range of services, but doesn't go super deep in depth on any of them. The professional version tests you on all of these services at a much more detailed and advanced level. It hits both the breadth and

the depth of your AWS knowledge, which is kind of why it's so challenging. It is worth noting that there is some overlap between the DevOps professional and the solutions architect professional. But not a ton, less than what you see between the associate exams. So it's not like you can study for one and be totally prepared for the other. At this stage, we have to stop and say congrats. You've worked hard, pass on pretty tough exams, and you're definitely not a beginner anymore. Next, you have the specialty certifications. There's not really a defined roadmap for this. The cert that you should do depends on your own career goals and interests. These specialty certs are meant to expand on what you know already as part of your on-the-job experience. They go deeper into advanced topics and best practices around networking, machine learning, and security on AWS. But they assume you've got a solid foundation already, not just from passing exams, but from actually using AWS day to day to solve real problems. These specialty certs will cover things that you should already be doing and just add a bit more detail to them. The other thing is, a lot of people consider the specialty certs to be a bit easier than the professional ones. The professional certs test you on a much broader set of services and concepts, whereas the specialty exams are narrower in scope, focusing on one domain in a lot of detail. So while they're not easy, by any means, they may be a bit less daunting. Although you now understand what certifications you should do, you still need a strategy to actually study and pass them. The truth is, AWS exams are hard. If you don't have a good study plan, then you could end up wasting a lot of time and money. The good news is, I've created a simple step-by-step strategy that you can copy to study for any AWS exam, which you can find in this video.

Summary

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