All AWS Exams
Exam Strategy, Tips & Tricks

Question Format

1. **Background/Context**: Application, Infrastructure, Company Info

2. **Objective/Goal**: Migration, Optimization, High Availability

3. **Constraints**: cheapest, fastest, ease of use, minimal effort, no in-house expertise, no developers etc.

Process of Elimination

Use process of elimination to quickly identify and remove clearly incorrect answers.

100% -> 50% -> 25%

Similar Options

When two answer options are similar, one of them is likely the correct choice.

Focus on Keyword

Pay attention to keywords like "high availability," "scalable," or "cost-effective" that hint at the solution.

Avg Time/Question, 1-hour, 2-hour mark

Certification	Qns	Time (mins)	Avg-Time/Qn	1-Hr Mark	2-Hr Mark
Cloud Practitioner	65	90	1:23	43	-
Solutions Architect Associate	65	130	2:00	30	60
Developer Associate	65	130	2:00	30	60
Data Engineer Associate	65	130	2:00	30	60
AWS Certified SysOps Administrator – Associate	65	130	2:00	30	60
Solutions Architect Professional	75	180	2:24	25	50
DevOps Engineer Professional	75	180	2:24	25	50

Extra 30 minutes

For Non-Native English Speakers

Request ESL +30 accommodations to get an extra 30 minutes during the exam

ESL Candidate - Avg Time/Question, 1-hour, 2-hour, 3-hour mark

Certification	Qns	Time (mins)	Avg-Time/Qn	1-Hr	2-Hr	3-Hr
Cloud Practitioner	65	120	1:51	32	65	–
Solutions Architect Associate	65	160	2:28	24	49	–
Developer Associate	65	160	2:28	24	49	–
Data Engineer Associate	65	160	2:28	24	49	–
AWS Certified SysOps Administrator – Associate	65	160	2:28	24	49	–
Solutions Architect Professional	75	210	2:48	21	43	64
DevOps Engineer Professional	75	210	2:48	21	43	64

Flag for Review

Flag difficult questions and return to them later

Review All (DON'T) and Review Flagged(DO)

Max time for a question

Never spend more than 3-4 minutes on a single question

Slight Differences

When two answers look similar, focus on slight differences

AWS Specific Solutions

Look for AWS-specific solutions rather than generic IT solutions

IAM is important

Pay special attention to questions about IAM as they appear in all certifications

Commonly Confused Services

Review commonly confused services
1. Amazon SNS vs Amazon SQS
2. Amazon EBS vs Amazon EFS vs Amazon S3
3. AWS CloudWatch vs AWS CloudTrail
4. Auto Scaling vs Elastic Load Balancing
5. IAM Roles vs IAM Policies
6. RDS vs DynamoDB
7. NAT Gateway vs Internet Gateway
8. VPC Peering vs VPN vs Direct Connect
9. AWS Lambda vs AWS Fargate
10. AWS Config vs AWS Systems Manager

Question Types

Ensure familiarity with exam format and question types

1/4
2/5
3/6

Guesswork

Always chose the automated, perfect, ideal solution over manual cumbersome error-prone long-winded solution.

Ex: Install something on EC2, write some scripts and run them manually.

AWS has worked very hard to make everything as automatic and seamless as possible so guess the ideal, perfect solution.

Sit for the whole time

1. Sit for the exam for the whole time and try to remember/memorize the hard/difficult questions.
2. Questions which were flagged for review are obviously the hard questions.
3. Read them again.
4. You are ensuring the chances of passing on the 2nd attempt.

Test Center vs. Remotely Proctored

Chose test center over remotely proctored

My Strategy

Flag/Mark as many questions for review later till 55-60% that way you will be able to

1) **Warm Up**

2) **Fill in any knowledge gaps**

3) **Reading/Learning on the exam**

It is easier to tell what's wrong

Sometimes it's easier to pinpoint what's wrong rather than what's right

Reason for Change

Review Phase.

Don't change unless you have a solid justification.

Questions Qualified for Flagged for Review

1. **Complex scenario questions** that involve **multiple AWS services interacting together** 🔗.

2. **Multiple-choice questions** where you need to **select multiple correct answers** (like **3 out of 6** or **2 out of 5** options) ✅.

3. **Questions** with **similar-looking answer options** that require **careful comparison** 📊.

4. **Questions** involving **calculations** (**cost**, **IOPS**, **throughput**, **capacity**) 🧮.

5. **Questions** where you **understood the concept** but need **more time** to **analyze all options** 🕐.

Questions Qualified for Flagged for Review

6. **Questions** involving **step-by-step architecture designs**.

7. **Questions** where you need to **compare multiple** similar services (like **SNS vs SQS**) ⚖️.

8. **Questions** involving **complex IAM scenarios** or **security configurations** 🔐.

9. **Questions** about **disaster recovery** or **high availability** that require **multiple components** 🛡️.

10. **Questions** involving **cost comparisons** across **different solution approaches** 🧾.

No one knows it all

No one can know all of the answers, aim to get the highest possible score based on what you know

Apply Amazon Leadership Principles like "**Customer Obsession**" and "**Working Backwards**" to determine the best answer

Learn from questions

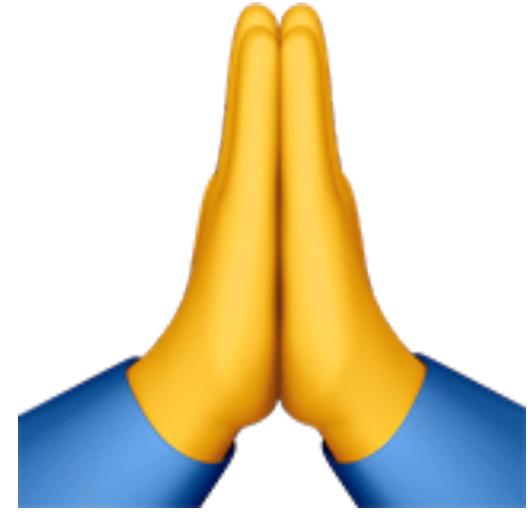**Use questions to help answer other questions in the exam**

Service Selection Patterns

1. Managed services are often preferred over self-managed solutions.
2. Serverless options are frequently correct for new implementations.
3. Native AWS services are typically favored over third-party solutions

Disclaimer

I have tried my best to recall and share as many tips as possible based on appearing for AWS Exams 25-30 times but you must use, adapt, improvise these as per your:

1. Individual learning style and pace
2. Personal exam-taking strengths and weaknesses
3. Specific certification exam requirements
4. Time management capabilities
5. Technical background and experience
6. Comfort level with different AWS services
7. Understanding of AWS concepts and architectures

🙏

Thanks for Watching