**How to Ace AWS Data Analytics Specialty Certification Exam Almost For Free**

**Yes, it has nothing to do with dogs. Just obvious click-bait.**

Photo by [Jamie Street](https://unsplash.com/@jamie452?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText) on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/s/photos/dogs?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText)

But let’s get back to our article. Well, the answer to this question is easy — study! But I cannot write an article with just one word “study”. You’ll need a bit more.

A few days ago I passed an exam for AWS Data Analytics Specialty Certification and while my memory is fresh I would like to share a preparation process that helped me to achieve this.

[via GIPHY](https://giphy.com/gifs/happy-excited-Na33dsU2umStO)

**What**

AWS Data Analytics Specialty exam focuses mostly on AWS services related to data and analytics (kinda obvious, isn’t it) and covers the following topics or domains:

* Collection
* Storage and Data Management
* Processing
* Analysis and Visualisation
* Security

The exam covers in depths all AWS services related to Data Analysis:

* Amazon S3
* Amazon Redshift
* Amazon Kinesis
* Amazon EMR
* Amazon ElasticSearch
* Amazon Athena
* AWS Glue
* Amazon QuickSight
* AWS Lake Formation
* and all the data services that might interact with the above (Backup, Glacier, GuardDuty, etc.)

You can find more information on the AWS web page, but also here is the official [exam guide](https://d1.awsstatic.com/training-and-certification/docs-data-analytics-specialty/AWS-Certified-Data-Analytics-Specialty_Exam-Guide.pdf), [sample questions](https://d1.awsstatic.com/training-and-certification/docs-data-analytics-specialty/AWS-Certified-Data-Analytics-Specialty_Sample-Questions.pdf), and some [additional resources](https://youtu.be/dQw4w9WgXcQ) that might help you. Also, bear in mind that these are applicable for 2021 — probably Amazon will publish some updates in the future, so better check their web if the above links do not work.

**Cost**

The cost of the exam is $300 (€270 + 21% VAT if you’re in Spain). Also, if you have already done any other AWS exams you get a 50% discount for the next one, so I paid only €163.35. You can first try a practice exam which costs $40 (€36 + 21% VAT if you’re in Spain) and again if you’ve already achieved any other AWS certification you get one practice exam for free.

**Where & How**

You can take the exam online (from your home or office) or go to a testing center. I recommend going to a testing center as when you’re at home/office they make you remove everything from the desk, be in a clean room with nothing in it except your laptop and if your internet connection isn’t stable enough you can lose a connection and stare for an hour into waiting room page thinking what’s going on and being afraid to open any other tab because you’re supposed to be monitored (happened to me and I failed the exam, but the support team was great and issued me a 100% discount code for the next exam and told AWS it was their fault, so I don’t have a record with failed exam attempt). Also, when you go to the testing center, check the facility’s COVID-19 safety protocol and be ready to wear a mask during the exam. It’s recommended to try an exam at home while wearing a mask — to make sure it won’t be an issue sitting and thinking 3 hours in it. Another one of my failures is documentation. Apparently, AWS requires 2 identity documents before allowing you to take an exam. I had to go home and bring my passport along with the ID card I thought would be enough. Although pretty sure, PSI and PearsonVUE warn about this on their FAQ and help pages.

[via GIPHY](https://giphy.com/gifs/disney-frozen-review-WrNfErHio7ZAc)

**Preparation**

It took me a little more than a month, approx 2 hours every day (six days per week) to prepare for the exam. I may say that I already have some experience with the aforementioned services, so maybe another one might spend more time studying. I used free resources from AWS training and purchased [Tutorials Dojo’s AWS Certified Data Analytics Specialty Practice Exams 2021](https://portal.tutorialsdojo.com/courses/aws-certified-data-analytics-specialty-practice-exams/), so the total cost of my preparation was $18 + time spent.

Useful resources to take a look at during preparation:

[AWS Certified Data Analytics Specialty Exam Study Path from Tutorials Dojo](https://tutorialsdojo.com/aws-certified-data-analytics-specialty-exam-study-path/) — it is a quite complete list of things you have to check before the exam, with some sample questions, cheat sheets for analytics services, and some common scenarios in exam questions.

[AWS Analytics Overview](https://docs.aws.amazon.com/whitepapers/latest/aws-overview/analytics.html) — a whitepaper with an overview of all AWS analytics that has links to more detailed resources about each service.

[Data Lakes and Analytics](https://aws.amazon.com/big-data/datalakes-and-analytics/?nc=sn&loc=0) — another overview of AWS analytics services.

[Data Analytics Fundamentals](https://www.aws.training/Details/eLearning?id=35364) — an official AWS course that is good, to begin within your preparation for the exam.

[Exam Readiness: AWS Certified Data Analytics — Specialty](https://www.aws.training/Details/eLearning?id=46612) — official AWS course that will help you to cover all necessary topics that you will find on the exam. Also, it’s free.

[Visualizing with QuickSight](https://www.aws.training/Details/Curriculum?id=35944) — a really great curriculum from AWS training that helped me a lot in better understanding of QuickSight. A must ace the visualization part of the exam.

[AWS Hadoop Fundamentals](https://www.aws.training/Details/eLearning?id=40337) — even though it’s a bit out of scope it helped me to better understand Hadoop and how it is integrated into AWS EMR. If you perfectly know Hadoop — this course isn’t necessary.

Other [AWS Training](https://www.aws.training/) courses covering S3, RDS, SageMaker, etc will be good for expanding your knowledge as there are some questions that touch these topics and the courses are really short but informative. Especially check out everything related to S3 — there are some funny pitfalls you should be aware of. You will find a lot of them in the Learning Library.

[Tutorials Dojo’s AWS Certified Data Analytics Specialty Practice Exams 2021](https://portal.tutorialsdojo.com/courses/aws-certified-data-analytics-specialty-practice-exams/) — essential in order to test your knowledge and find out where your weak spots are. Also, it is a good indicator of your readiness for the exam — don’t even try if you don’t score more than 90% in these practice exams.

**My results**

As I mentioned before, I passed the exam with a ~85% score while the passing grade was 75%. Not perfect, nor close to failing. Maybe if I studied more it could have been better, but it is still a pass. And now I am a proud owner of this badge:

**Conclusion**

AWS Certification Exams are not that difficult if you prepare for them. Also, having practical experience helps a lot. For example, as I worked with AWS Glue a lot I didn’t have to study much about this service as I already knew about its capabilities and functionality. And that experience is much better than some theoretical might-be scenarios — when you have fixed a lot of your own bugs you are confident to say I know that shit.

Hope this little summary helped you in preparation for becoming a better Data Analytics Professional and made you realize it is easily achievable.

Thanks for reading!

[via GIPHY](https://giphy.com/gifs/thank-you-keanu-reeves-QAsBwSjx9zVKoGp9nr)

*Originally published at* [*https://www.sergilehkyi.com*](https://www.sergilehkyi.com/how-to-ace-aws-data-analytics-specialty-certification-exam-almost-for-free/) *on September 10, 2021.*