

Course 4_Lab 3: Analyzing Audit logs using BigQuery

Scenario

Cymbal Bank has officially migrated to its hybrid cloud solution and successfully deployed its workflows on the new cloud environment. Unfortunately, the Security Engineering team has been notified of a high severity alert involving unauthorized access to several of its cloud resources. This is alarming since malicious actors can use compromised cloud resources to exfiltrate data and launch attacks on other systems. It is your first time experiencing a security incident. Your team lead, Chloe, recognizes this as a valuable opportunity for you to learn the processes and procedures involved with incident response. You've been assigned to shadow and observe Hannah, an incident responder on the Incident Response Team which is a unit of the Security Engineering department. Hannah has provided you with access to the alert's logs which you'll use to investigate the malicious activity. You want to get a better understanding of the security incident so you have set up a test environment to recreate the incident and analyze the artifacts. You will use two separate user accounts: one account will generate the malicious activity, and the other account will be used to investigate the activity.

Here's how you'll do this task. **First**, you'll recreate the security incident by generating activity from the first user account. **Next**, you'll export the logs for further analysis. **Then**, you'll continue recreating the incident and generate additional user activity. **Finally**, you'll utilize BigQuery to analyze the logs.

MY WORK:

Task 1: Generate account activity

In this task, a command provided by Google was added to Cloud Shell to generate account activity.

```
Cloud Shell
Terminal (qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38) x +
Copying file://sample.txt to gs://qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/sample.txt
Completed files 1/1 | 22.0B/22.0B
Created [https://www.googleapis.com/compute/v1/projects/qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/global/networks/mynetwork].
NAME: mynetwork
SUBNET_MODE: AUTO
BGP_ROUTING_MODE: REGIONAL
IPv4 RANGE:
GATEWAY_IPV6:
INTERNAL IPv6 RANGE:
Instances on this network will not be reachable until firewall rules
are created. As an example, you can allow all internal traffic between
instances as well as SSH, RDP, and ICMP by running:
$ gcloud compute firewall-rules create <FIREWALL_NAME> --network mynetwork --allow tcp,udp,icmp --source-ranges <IP_RANGE>
$ gcloud compute firewall-rules create <FIREWALL_NAME> --network mynetwork --allow tcp:22,tcp:3389,icmp
Created [https://www.googleapis.com/compute/v1/projects/qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/zones/us-east4-b/instances/default-us-vm].
NAME: default-us-vm
ZONE: us-east4-b
MACHINE_TYPE: e2-micro
PREEMPTIBLE:
INTERNAL_IP: 10.150.0.2
EXTERNAL_IP: 34.145.182.249
STATUS: RUNNING
Removing objects:
Removing gs://qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/sample.txt#1748261713617804...
Completed 1/1
Removing buckets:
Removing gs://qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/...
Completed 1/1
student_03_fdefbc4b051c@cloudshell:~ (qwklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38) $
```

Quick tip: Review the prerequisites before you run the lab

End Lab

01:27:06

Caution: When you are in the console, do not deviate from the lab instructions. Doing so may cause your account to be blocked. [Learn more.](#)

Open Google Cloud console

Google Cloud username 1
student-03-fdefbc4b051c

Google Cloud password 1
HhBsxxvULKdeK

Google Cloud username 2
student-00-c4f49d6debbd

Google Cloud password 2

```
export ZONE=$(gcloud compute project-info describe \
--format="value(commonInstanceMetadata.items[google-compute-
default-zone])")

gcloud compute instances create default-us-vm \
--machine-type=e2-micro \
--zone=$ZONE --network=mynetwork

gcloud storage rm --recursive gs://$DEVSHLL_PROJECT_ID
```

2. Press ENTER.

Click **Check my progress** to verify that you have completed this task correctly.

Generate account activity

Check my progress

You have successfully completed this task.

Task 2: Export the audit logs

This task focused on exporting the cloud logs. I used Logs Explorer to run a query and create a sink to export the logs based on details provided by Google. Specifically a sink is a configuration that specifies how and where log entries are exported. Future logs will be exported to Big Query, per this lab.

Create logs routing sink

Sink details
Provide a name and description for logs routing sink.
Name: AuditLogsExport
Description: AuditLogsExport

Sink destination
Select the service type and destination for logs routing sink. Logs routed to Cloud Storage are written in hourly batches while other sink types are processed in real time.
Select sink service: BigQuery dataset
Select BigQuery dataset: No items to display
Create new BigQuery dataset Use a BigQuery dataset in another project Cancel OK

Choose logs to include in sink
Create an inclusion filter to determine which logs are included in logs routing sink.

Choose logs to filter out of sink (optional)
Create exclusion filters to determine which logs are excluded from logs routing sink.

Create dataset
Project ID: qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38
Dataset ID:
Location type: Multi-region
Multi region: US (multiple regions in United States)
External Dataset: Link to an external dataset
Tags:
Advanced options:
Create dataset Cancel

Sink details

Name: AuditLogsExport
Resource name: projects/qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/sinks/AuditLogsExport
Description: None
Service: BigQuery dataset
Destination: bigquery.googleapis.com/projects/qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/datasets/auditlogs_dataset
Writer identity: serviceAccount:service-553658431994@gcp-sa-logging.iam.gserviceaccount.com
Inclusion filter: logName = ('projects/qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/logs/cloudaudit.googleapi
Exclusion filter(s): None
Cancel Edit sink

✔ Your log sink was successfully created. Data should be available soon. [Dismiss](#)

Recommended next steps

View matching logs
The log sink will export all logs that match your filter beginning now. Excluded logs may not show up in the Logs Explorer.
[Explore recent matching logs in this project →](#)

View sink destination
Logs routed to BigQuery, Pub/Sub, and Logging buckets should be visible within seconds. Logs routed to Cloud Storage are written in hourly batches and therefore may not be visible for up to an hour.
[See BigQuery dataset →](#)

View in Metrics Explorer
You can use Metrics Explorer to view the volume of logs that match your log sink as well as any errors.
[See log sink volume metrics →](#)

Export existing logs
Log sinks will apply to all logs that match your filter beginning now that your sink is created. Need to export some previous logs that are already ingested? Use our copy logs feature for one time exports to Cloud Storage.
[Learn more →](#)

Quick tip: Review the prerequisites before you run the lab

End Lab 01:20:17

Caution: When you are in the console, do not deviate from the lab instructions. Doing so may cause your account to be blocked. [Learn more.](#)

[Open Google Cloud console](#)

Google Cloud username 1
student-03-fdefbc4b051c@

Google Cloud password 1
HhBsxxvLKdeK

Google Cloud username 2
student-00-c4f49d6debbd@

sink in the **Log router sinks** list.


7. Inline with the **AuditLogsExport** sink, click **More actions** (⋮) > **View sink details** to view information about the **AuditLogsExport** sink you created. The **Sink details** dialog opens.

8. Click **Cancel** to close the **Sink details** dialog when you're done viewing the sink information.

All future logs will now be exported to BigQuery, and the BigQuery tools can be used to perform analysis on the audit log data. The export does not export existing log entries.

Click **Check my progress** to verify that you have completed this task correctly.

Export the audit logs

 [Check my progress](#)

You have successfully completed this task.

Task 3: Generate more account activity

For this task more account activity was generated. A Google command was input into the Cloud Shell terminal to create two storage buckets and delete a Compute Engine instance. Within this task, the buckets were also deleted.

```

CLOUD SHELL
Terminal [gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38] x +
gcloud storage buckets create gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID-test
echo "this is another sample file" > sample2.txt
gcloud storage cp sample.txt gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID-test
export ZONE=$(gcloud compute project-info describe \
--format='value(commonInstanceMetadata.items[google-compute-default-zone])')
gcloud compute instances delete --zone=$ZONE \
--delete-disk=all default-us-vm
Creating gs://gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38-test/...
Creating gs://gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38-test/...
Copying files/sample.txt to gs://gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38-test/sample.txt
Completed files 1/1: 12.08/22.08
The following instances will be deleted. Any attached disks configured to be auto-deleted will be deleted unless they are attached to any other instances or the '--keep-disks' flag is given and specifies them for keeping. Deleting a disk is irreversible and any data on the disk will be lost.
- [default-us-vm] in [us-east4-b]
Do you want to continue (Y/n)? y
Deleted [https://www.googleapis.com/compute/v1/projects/gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/zones/us-east4-b/instances/default-us-vm].
student_03.fdefbc051c@cloudshell:~ (gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38) $ gcloud storage rm --recursive gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID
gcloud storage rm --recursive gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID-test
Removing objects:
Completed 0
Removing buckets:
Removing gs://gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38-test/...
Completed 1/1
Removing objects:
Removing gs://gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38-test/sample.txt:174826229823024...
Completed 1/1
Removing buckets:
Removing gs://gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38-test/...
Completed 1/1
student_03.fdefbc051c@cloudshell:~ (gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38) $ gcloud storage rm --recursive gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID

```

you run the lab

End Lab 01:16:20

Caution: When you are in the console, do not deviate from the lab instructions. Doing so may cause your account to be blocked. [Learn more.](#)

[Open Google Cloud console](#)

Google Cloud username 1
student-03-fdefbc4b051c@

Google Cloud password 1
HhBsxxvLKdeK

Google Cloud username 2
student-00-c4f49d6debbd@

Google Cloud password 2
HhBsxxvLKdeK

Google Cloud project ID

When prompted, enter **Y**, and press **ENTER**. Notice you created two buckets and deleted a Compute Engine instance.

3. When the prompt appears after a few minutes, continue by entering the following commands into the Cloud Shell terminal:

```

gcloud storage rm --recursive gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID
gcloud storage rm --recursive gs://$DEVSHHELL_PROJECT_ID-test


```

4. Press **ENTER**.

Notice you deleted both buckets.

Click **Check my progress** to verify that you have completed this task correctly.

Generate more account activity

 [Check my progress](#)

You have successfully completed this task.

Task 4: Sign in as the second user

For this task, no screenshots were taken as I simply signed into a second account user.

Task 5: Analyze the Admin Activity logs

In this task, I reviewed the Admin activity logs generated in Task 3. In the screenshots below, it shows the different stages to complete the task as well as the logs that were reviewed. Running the queries for the deleted storage buckets allowed for more information to analyze within the logs.

The screenshot shows the Google Cloud Explorer interface. On the left, the 'Repositories' section is expanded, showing 'cloudaudit_googleapis_com_activity_20250526'. On the right, the 'Schema' tab is selected for the dataset 'cloudaudit_googleapis_com_activity_20250526'. The schema table lists various fields and their types:

Field Name	Type	Mode	Key	Collation	Default Value	Policy Tags
logName	STRING	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
resource	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
protoPayload_auditLog	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
textPayload	STRING	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
timestamp	TIMESTAMP	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
receiveTimestamp	TIMESTAMP	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
severity	STRING	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
insertId	STRING	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
httpRequest	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
operation	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
trace	STRING	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
spanId	STRING	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
traceSampled	BOOLEAN	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
sourceLocation	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
split	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
errorGroups	RECORD	REPEATED	-	-	-	-
apphub	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-
labels	RECORD	NULLABLE	-	-	-	-

The screenshot shows the Google Cloud Audit Log Explorer interface. The 'Fields' section is expanded, showing 'System Metadata' and 'Severity'. The 'Timeline' section shows a list of audit log entries. The 'JSON payload (most frequent)' section shows the details of the selected entry.

Severity	Time	Summary
Notice	2025-05-26 08:21:08.272	cloudresourcemanager.googleapis.com / SetIamPolicy
Error	2025-05-26 08:21:08.286	bigquery.googleapis.com / datasetService.update
Notice	2025-05-26 08:21:08.287	bigquery.googleapis.com / query.v2.DatasetService.PatchDataset
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:44.684	storage.googleapis.com / storage.buckets.create
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:47.580	storage.googleapis.com / storage.buckets.create
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:48.455	tableservice.googleapis.com / tableService.insert
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:48.457	bigquery.googleapis.com / query.v2.TableService.InsertTable
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:51.643	tableservice.googleapis.com / tableService.update
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:51.645	bigquery.googleapis.com / bigquery.v2.TableService.PatchTable
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:52.537	tableservice.googleapis.com / tableService.update
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:52.543	bigquery.googleapis.com / bigquery.v2.TableService.PatchTable
Notice	2025-05-26 08:24:01.937	compute.googleapis.com / v1.compute.instances.delete
Notice	2025-05-26 08:24:06.394	tableservice.googleapis.com / tableService.update
Notice	2025-05-26 08:24:06.408	bigquery.googleapis.com / bigquery.v2.TableService.PatchTable
Notice	2025-05-26 08:24:49.549	compute.googleapis.com / v1.compute.instances.delete
Notice	2025-05-26 08:26:14.298	storage.googleapis.com / storage.buckets.delete
Notice	2025-05-26 08:26:18.165	storage.googleapis.com / storage.buckets.delete

The screenshot shows the Google Cloud Audit Log Explorer interface. The 'Fields' section is expanded, showing 'System Metadata' and 'Severity'. The 'Timeline' section shows a list of audit log entries. The 'JSON payload (most frequent)' section shows the details of the selected entry.

Severity	Time	Summary
Notice	2025-05-26 08:23:30.000	storage.googleapis.com / storage.buckets.delete

Expand this log entry

```
{
  "insertId": "b8e9c8f7f8",
  "logName": "projects/qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17de0b38/logs/cloudaudit.googleapis.com%2Factivity",
  "protoPayload": {
    "@type": "google.cloud.audit.auditLog",
    "authenticationInfo": {
      "principalEmail": "student-03-fd6fc4b851c@qwiklabs.net"
    },
    "authorizationInfo": [2],
    "methodName": "storage.buckets.delete",
    "requestMetadata": {
      "requestId": "43",
      "resourceLocation": "us-east4",
      "resourceName": "projects/_/buckets/qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17de0b38/serviceName/storage.googleapis.com",
      "status": "OK"
    },
    "receiveTimestamp": "2025-05-26T12:15:58.719Z",
    "severity": "NOTICE",
    "timestamp": "2025-05-26T12:15:58.719Z"
  }
}
```

Task 6: Use BigQuery to analyze the audit logs

This task focused on analyzing the logs in Big Query that were generated in the previous tasks.

The screenshot shows the BigQuery Explorer interface. The left sidebar displays the project hierarchy, including 'auditlogs_dataset'. The main panel shows the 'Dataset info' for 'auditlogs_dataset', including details like Dataset ID, Created date, Default table expiration, Last modified date, Data location, Description, Default collation, Default rounding mode, Time travel window, Case insensitive, Labels, and Tags. The 'Permissions' menu is open, showing options like 'Authorize Views', 'Authorize Routines', 'Authorize Datasets', 'Manage Subscriptions', and 'Publish as Listing'.

The screenshot shows the BigQuery Explorer interface. The left sidebar displays the project hierarchy, including 'auditlogs_dataset'. The main panel shows the 'Dataset info' for 'auditlogs_dataset'. The 'Permissions' menu is open, showing the 'Filter' section with a search bar and a list of roles/principals with their inheritance status.

Role / Principal	Inheritance
BigQuery Admin (3)	
BigQuery Data Editor (2)	
Editors of project: qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38	
service-553658431994@gcp-sa-logging.iam.gserviceaccount.com	
BigQuery Data Owner (2)	
BigQuery Data Viewer (1)	
Cloud Logging Service Agent (1)	
Editor (4)	
Kubernetes Engine Service Agent (1)	
Owner (2)	
Viewer (2)	

The screenshot shows the BigQuery Explorer interface. The left sidebar displays the project hierarchy, including 'auditlogs_dataset'. The main panel shows a query result. The query is a SELECT statement filtering for 'v1.compute.instances.delete' operations. The results table shows one row with timestamp, instance_id, principalEmail, resourceName, and methodName.

```
1 SELECT
2   timestamp,
3   resource.labels.instance_id,
4   protopayload_auditlog.authenticationInfo.principalEmail,
5   protopayload_auditlog.resourceName,
6   protopayload_auditlog.methodName
7 FROM
8   `auditlogs_dataset.cloudaudit.googleapis.com.activity_*`
9 WHERE
10  PARSE_DATE('%Y%m%d', _TABLE_SUFFIX) BETWEEN
11  DATE_SUB(CURRENT_DATE(), INTERVAL 7 DAY) AND
12  CURRENT_DATE()
13 AND resource.type = "gce_instance"
14 AND operation.first IS TRUE
15 AND protopayload_auditlog.methodName = "v1.compute.instances.delete"
16 ORDER BY
17   timestamp,
18   resource.labels.instance_id
19 LIMIT 10
```

Row	timestamp	instance_id	principalEmail	resourceName	methodName
1	2025-05-26 12:24:01.957831 U...	3861319900183782784	student-03-fdefbc4b051c@qwi...	projects/qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38/zones/us-east4-b/instances/default-us-vm	v1.compute.instances.delete

Explorer

Search BigQuery resources

Show starred only

qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17de...

Repositories

Queries

Notebooks

Data canvases

Data preparations

Pipelines

External connections

auditlogs_dataset

cloudaudit_googl...

Untitled...ery

cloudau...526

*Untitled...ery

Run

Save

Download

Share

Schedule

Open in

More

Search BigQuery resources

Show starred only

Repositories

Queries

Notebooks

Data canvases

Data preparations

Pipelines

External connections

auditlogs_dataset

cloudaudit_googl...

Untitled query

Run

Save

Download

Share

Schedule

Open in

More

```

1 SELECT
2   timestamp,
3   resource.labels.bucket_name,
4   protopayload_auditlog.authenticationInfo.principalEmail,
5   protopayload_auditlog.resourceName,
6   protopayload_auditlog.methodName
7 FROM
8   auditlogs_dataset.cloudaudit_googleapis_com_activity_*
9 WHERE
10  PARSE_DATE('%Y%m%d', _TABLE_SUFFIX) BETWEEN
11  DATE_SUB(CURRENT_DATE(), INTERVAL 7 DAY) AND
12  CURRENT_DATE()
13 AND resource.type = "gcs_bucket"
14 AND protopayload_auditlog.methodName = "storage.buckets.delete"
15 ORDER BY
16   timestamp,
17   resource.labels.instance_id
18 LIMIT
19   1000;

```

Query completed

Query results

Job information

Results

Chart

JSON

Execution details

Execution graph

Row	timestamp	bucket_name	principalEmail	resourceName	methodName
1	2025-05-26 12:26:14.298693 U...	qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb38	student-03-fdefbc4b051c@qwi...	projects/_/buckets/qwiklabs-g...	storage.buckets.delete
2	2025-05-26 12:26:18.165717 U...	qwiklabs-gcp-00-2b4e17deeb3...	student-03-fdefbc4b051c@qwi...	projects/_/buckets/qwiklabs-g...	storage.buckets.delete

Quick tip: Review the prerequisites before you run the lab

End Lab

00:58:19

Caution: When you are in the console, do not deviate from the lab instructions. Doing so may cause your account to be blocked.
[Learn more.](#)

Open Google Cloud console

Google Cloud username 1

student-03-fdefbc4b051c

Google Cloud password 1

HhBsxvuLKdeK

Google Cloud username 2

student-00-c4f49d6debdb

Google Cloud password 2

HhBsxvuLKdeK

```
ORDER BY
  timestamp,
  resource.labels.instance_id
LIMIT
  1000;
```

This query returns the users that deleted Cloud Storage buckets in the last 7 days. You should notice two entries, which is the activity you generated in the previous tasks as user 1.

15. Click **Run**.

The ability to analyze audit logs in BigQuery is very powerful. In this activity, you viewed just two examples of querying audit logs.

Click **Check my progress** to verify that you have completed this task correctly.

✓

Use BigQuery to analyze the audit logs

Check my progress

You have successfully completed this task.

My Assessment

This lab focused on analyzing logs in Big Query after using Cloud Shell to generate account activity. This lab, specifically, provided a lot of insight as I was seeking a way to learn how to review and analyze logs.