Understanding How Active Directory Is Organized

Active Directory is essentially a database management system. The Active Directory database is where the individual objects tracked by the directory are stored. Active Directory uses a *hierarchical* database model, which groups items in a treelike structure.

The terms *object, organizational unit, domain, tree,* and *forest* are used to describe the way Active Directory organizes its data. The following sections explain the meaning of these important Active Directory terms.

Objects

The basic unit of data in Active Directory is called an *object.* Active Directory can store information about many kinds of objects. The objects you work with most are users, groups, computers, and printers.

Figure 12-1 shows the Active Directory Manager displaying a list of built-in objects that come preconfigured with Windows Server 2019. To get to this management tool, choose Start⇨ Administrative Tools⇨ Active Directory Users and Computers. Then click the Built-in node to show the built-in objects.
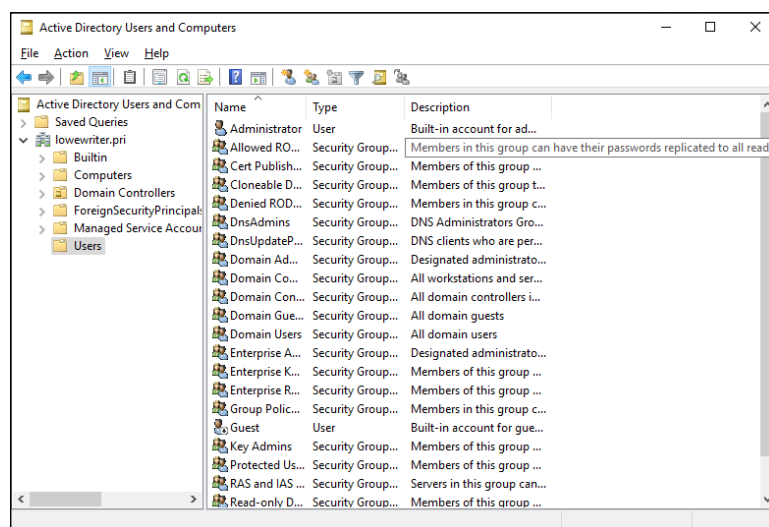

FIGURE 12-1: Objects displayed by the Active Directory Manager console.