

# Amazon Security Engineer Interview Preparation Checklist

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## Overview

This comprehensive checklist guides you through a 4-week preparation program for Amazon Security Engineer interviews. The preparation is structured in phases, building from technical fundamentals to behavioral excellence and Amazon-specific context.

### Key Success Factors:

- Structure your responses using STAR methodology
- Include specific metrics and data in all examples
- Focus on customer trust and business impact
- Practice explaining complex technical concepts clearly

## Success Metrics

### Technical Competency

- ☒ **Threat Modeling:** Complete systematic analysis in interview timeframe
- ☒ **Code Review:** Identify and explain security issues quickly and clearly
- ☒ **Automation:** Write functional security scripts during live coding
- ☒ **Communication:** Explain complex security concepts to various audiences

### Behavioral Excellence

- ☒ **Leadership Principles:** Compelling stories for all 16 principles with data
- ☒ **Customer Focus:** Connect security decisions to customer trust and experience
- ☒ **Business Impact:** Quantify outcomes and demonstrate value creation
- ☒ **Cultural Fit:** Show Amazon values of high standards, innovation, and collaboration

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## Phase 1: Master Core Technical Skills (Weeks 1-2)

### Threat Modeling Mastery

- ☐ Study [1-threat-modeling/amazon-scale-threat-modeling.md](#)
- ☐ Practice STRIDE methodology with 100M+ user scenarios
- ☐ Time yourself: Complete threat model in 15-20 minutes
- ☐ Focus on customer impact analysis
- ☐ Practice explaining threats to non-technical stakeholders

### Secure Code Review Excellence

- ☐ Review [2-secure-code-review/live-review-methodology.md](#)
- ☐ Practice identifying security issues in Java, Python, JavaScript
- ☐ Set up screen sharing practice sessions

- ☐ Build speed: Find critical issues within 5-10 minutes
- ☐ Practice explaining vulnerabilities to developers

## Security Automation Proficiency

- ☐ Study [3-security-automation/aws-security-automation.md](#)
- ☐ Write AWS security scripts using boto3
- ☐ Practice live coding during mock interviews
- ☐ Calculate ROI and business impact of automation
- ☐ Design security tools that help developers

## Vulnerability Analysis Skills

- ☐ Practice systematic vulnerability assessment
- ☐ Learn to prioritize risks by business impact
- ☐ Understand adversarial analysis techniques
- ☐ Practice using security tools to augment manual analysis

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## Phase 2: Perfect Leadership Principles (Weeks 3-4)

### STAR Story Development

- ☐ Read [5-leadership-principles/security-focused-star-stories.md](#)
- ☐ Develop 16 detailed stories (one per Leadership Principle)
- ☐ Include specific metrics and data in every story
- ☐ Practice delivering stories in 3-4 minutes each
- ☐ Prepare follow-up details for deeper questioning

### Communication & Influence Skills

- ☐ Practice explaining technical concepts to non-technical audiences
- ☐ Learn to "harmonize disparate opinions" as mentioned in job description
- ☐ Practice risk prioritization and stakeholder communication
- ☐ Develop examples of influencing teams toward secure solutions

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## Phase 3: Amazon-Specific Preparation (Week 4)

### Amazon Context Understanding

- ☐ Study [7-amazon-specific-prep/customer-trust-focus.md](#)
- ☐ Understand Amazon's diverse business contexts (cloud, retail, devices, etc.)
- ☐ Learn about Amazon's scale challenges and solutions
- ☐ Research Amazon Security organization and culture

### Interview Scenarios Practice

- ☐ Complete [8-interview-scenarios/phone-screen-prep.md](#)
- ☐ Practice 60-minute phone screen format (30 min technical + 30 min behavioral)

- ☐ Mock interview with technical and behavioral components
  - ☐ Prepare questions to ask interviewers
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## Daily Preparation Routine (30-45 minutes)

### Week 1-2: Technical Focus

- **Monday/Wednesday/Friday:** Code review practice (15 minutes)
- **Tuesday/Thursday:** Threat modeling scenarios (20 minutes)
- **Weekend:** Security automation scripting (45 minutes)

### Week 3-4: Behavioral Focus

- **Daily:** Practice 2-3 STAR stories out loud (15 minutes)
  - **Tuesday/Thursday:** Mock behavioral interviews (30 minutes)
  - **Weekend:** Amazon context research and interview scenarios
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## ☒ Pre-Interview Checklist (Day Before)

### Technical Readiness

- ☐ Can complete threat model in 15-20 minutes
- ☐ Can identify security issues in code review within 5-10 minutes
- ☐ Can write basic AWS security scripts from memory
- ☐ Can explain technical concepts clearly to non-technical audiences

### Behavioral Readiness

- ☐ Have compelling story for each Leadership Principle
- ☐ Can deliver any story naturally in 3-4 minutes
- ☐ Stories include specific data and measurable outcomes
- ☐ Examples show personal accountability and growth

### Amazon Context

- ☐ Understand customer trust focus in security decisions
  - ☐ Know Amazon's diverse business contexts
  - ☐ Can discuss security at Amazon's scale
  - ☐ Prepared thoughtful questions about the role and team
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## Interview Day Checklist

### 30 Minutes Before Phone Screen

- ☐ Test technology (screen sharing, microphone, internet)
- ☐ Review key STAR stories for quick recall
- ☐ Practice explaining technical concepts out loud

- ☐ Prepare pen and paper for note-taking

### During Technical Discussion (30 minutes)

- ☐ Ask clarifying questions about scope and constraints
- ☐ Think out loud to show problem-solving process
- ☐ Connect technical solutions to business value
- ☐ Be honest about knowledge gaps

### During Behavioral Discussion (30 minutes)

- ☐ Use STAR structure consistently
- ☐ Include specific data and metrics
- ☐ Use "I" not "we" to show personal accountability
- ☐ Show learning and growth from experiences

### Post-Interview

- ☐ Send thank-you email within 24 hours
- ☐ Reflect on performance and areas for improvement
- ☐ Continue preparing for potential virtual on-site interviews

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## Emergency Review (If Interview is Tomorrow)

### Priority 1 (2 hours)

- ☐ Review phone screen format and expectations
- ☐ Practice 3 strongest STAR stories
- ☐ Quick review of threat modeling methodology
- ☐ Test screen sharing and interview technology

### Priority 2 (1 hour)

- ☐ Review customer trust focus document
- ☐ Practice explaining one security vulnerability clearly
- ☐ Prepare 5 thoughtful questions about the role
- ☐ Plan outfit and logistics for interview day

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## Key Reminders

**Remember:** Amazon doesn't assess based on your resume - everything depends on what you tell them and how you tell it. Structure, specific examples, and customer focus are critical for success.

### Interview Success Formula

1. **Structure:** Use STAR methodology consistently
2. **Specificity:** Include concrete data and measurable outcomes
3. **Customer Focus:** Connect everything back to customer trust and experience

4. **Personal Accountability:** Use "I" statements to show your direct contributions
5. **Growth Mindset:** Demonstrate learning from challenges and failures