AWS SAA-C03: Target 85%+ — Final Rapid Revision Pack

> Got it. You're **hours away from SAA-C03**, so this is a **high-yield, exam-scoring revision pack** distilled from **your 3 mock/practice reviews** and tuned to the **exact traps you fell for**. This is designed to be **read end-to-end in ~15–20 minutes**, **2–3 times today**, and once just before the exam.

1️⃣ Ultra-Short Memory Hooks (Your Weak + High-Frequency Areas)

Networking / Hybrid

- VGW = AWS side, CGW = customer side
- DX alone ≠ encrypted → add VPN
- Site-to-Site VPN = fast to start, variable latency
- Transit Gateway = hub, not encryption
- VPN CloudHub = branch-to-branch

VPC Access

- AWS service private access → VPC Endpoint
- Private subnet → NAT = outbound only
- Public subnet → IGW
- PrivateLink = service-to-service, no internet

Compute

- User Data = root + runs only on first boot
- Cluster Placement Group = low latency / HPC
- Instance Store = cheap + fast + ephemeral
- Spot Fleet > Spot Instance for resilience

Storage

- NFS hybrid → Storage Gateway (File)
- Windows shared storage → FSx Windows
- Linux shared storage → EFS

- Accidental delete → S3 Versioning + MFA Delete

Databases

- Aurora reads → Reader endpoint
- Multi-AZ ≠ read scaling
- DAX = DynamoDB cache, no SQL
- ElastiCache = in-memory + SQL cache

Messaging / Streaming

- Streaming → Kinesis
- Notifications → SNS
- Decouple → SQS
- Streaming + notify → Kinesis + SNS

2️⃣ "If You See This Phrase → Pick This Service" (With Traps & Alternatives)

VPC / Connectivity

- *"Private access to AWS service"* → **VPC Endpoint**
- *"Branch offices talk to each other"* → **AWS VPN CloudHub**
- *"Dedicated + encrypted + low latency"* → **AWS Direct Connect + VPN**
- *Trap:* "Transit Gateway alone" ❌ (no encryption)

Databases (Big Trap Area)

- *"Read scaling Aurora"* → **Aurora Read Replica**
- *"High write + read load"* → Reader endpoint
- *Trap:* "Multi-AZ standby reads" ❌

Storage

- *"On-prem NFS → cloud, cheap"* → **AWS Storage Gateway File Gateway**
- *"Windows DFS / SMB"* → **Amazon FSx for Windows File Server**
- *Trap:* EFS for Windows ❌

Gateway & Migration

- *"Minimal downtime migration"* → **AWS DataSync**

- *"Database migration live"* → **AWS DMS**
- *Trap:* Snowball for live DB ❌

Data Transfer

- *"Large offline data"* → **AWS Snowball**
- *"Continuous sync"* → DataSync
- *"Hybrid file access"* → Storage Gateway

3️⃣ 20 Rapid-Fire Exam Traps (Read Twice)

1. Multi-AZ ≠ read scaling
2. Direct Connect ≠ encrypted
3. Transit Gateway ≠ VPN
4. User Data ≠ every reboot
5. DAX ≠ SQL cache
6. NAT ≠ inbound traffic
7. IGW ≠ private subnet
8. S3 ≠ POSIX filesystem
9. EFS ≠ Windows SMB
10. FSx Windows ≠ NFS
11. Spot Instance ≠ resilient
12. Spot Fleet = auto-replace
13. CloudFormation ≠ low downtime
14. SNS ≠ queue
15. SQS ≠ streaming
16. Kinesis ≠ notification
17. Reader endpoint ≠ writer
18. Instance Store ≠ durable
19. MFA Delete only with versioning
20. VPC Endpoint ≠ Internet Gateway

4️⃣ AWS Services That Cover ~75% of Exam Questions (With Score-Boosters)

Compute

- **Amazon EC2** *Key:* placement groups, instance store, Spot vs RI
- **AWS Lambda** *Key:* event-driven, no servers, cost-per-ms

Storage

- **Amazon S3** *Key:* versioning, lifecycle, MFA delete
- **Amazon EFS** *Key:* Linux NFS, multi-AZ
- **Amazon FSx** *Key:* Windows SMB vs Lustre (HPC)

Databases

- **Amazon Aurora** *Key:* reader endpoint, replicas, failover
- **Amazon DynamoDB** *Key:* DAX, global tables

Networking

- **Amazon VPC** *Key:* IGW vs NAT vs Endpoint
- **AWS Direct Connect** *Key:* add VPN for encryption
- **AWS Transit Gateway** *Key:* hub-and-spoke

Messaging / Streaming

- **Amazon SQS** – decouple
- **Amazon SNS** – notify
- **Amazon Kinesis** – streaming

🧠 Final Exam Strategy (Very Important)

- Eliminate **2 wrong answers first**
- Look for **keywords**: *least operational*, *most cost-effective*, *lowest downtime*
- If **hybrid** → think **VPN / DX / Gateway**
- If **reads slow** → think **replica**, not Multi-AZ
- If **AWS service access from VPC** → **Endpoint**

AWS SAA-C03 — 2-Page Ultra-Compressed Cheat Sheet

🧠 PAGE 1 — CORE MEMORY HOOKS + SERVICE PICKERS

1️⃣ Ultra-Short Memory Hooks (Read Fast)

Networking / Hybrid

- VGW = AWS side | CGW = On-prem side
- DX ≠ encrypted → add VPN
- Site-to-Site VPN = quick, variable latency
- Transit Gateway = hub only
- Branch ↔ Branch → VPN CloudHub

VPC Access

- Private access to AWS service → VPC Endpoint
- Private subnet outbound → NAT
- Public subnet inbound/outbound → IGW
- PrivateLink = no internet, service-to-service

Compute

- User Data = root + runs once (first boot)
- Cluster Placement Group = low latency / HPC
- Instance Store = fastest + cheapest + ephemeral
- Spot Fleet > Spot Instance (resilience)

Storage

- Hybrid NFS → Storage Gateway (File)
- Windows shared storage → FSx Windows
- Linux shared storage → EFS
- Accidental delete → S3 Versioning + MFA Delete

Databases

- Aurora read scaling → Reader endpoint
- Multi-AZ ≠ read scaling

- DAX = DynamoDB cache (NO SQL)
- SQL query caching → ElastiCache

Messaging / Streaming

- Streaming → Kinesis
- Notifications → SNS
- Decouple → SQS
- Streaming + notify → Kinesis + SNS

2️⃣ "If You See This Phrase → Pick This" (Exam Gold)

VPC / Connectivity

- *"Private AWS service access"* → **VPC Endpoint**
- *"Dedicated + encrypted + low latency"* → **AWS Direct Connect + VPN**
- *"Branch offices communicate"* → **AWS VPN CloudHub**
- *Trap:* Transit Gateway alone ❌

Databases (High-Trap Zone)

- *"Separate reads from writes"* → **Aurora Read Replica**
- *"High read traffic"* → **Reader endpoint**
- *Trap:* "Read from Multi-AZ standby" ❌

Storage / Hybrid

- *"On-prem NFS, cheap, scalable"* → **Storage Gateway (File)**
- *"Windows DFS / SMB"* → **Amazon FSx for Windows File Server**
- *Trap:* EFS for Windows ❌

Migration / Transfer

- *"Live DB migration"* → **AWS Database Migration Service**
- *"Ongoing sync"* → **AWS DataSync**
- *"Offline TBs"* → **AWS Snowball**

🧠 PAGE 2 — EXAM TRAPS + 75% SERVICES

3️⃣ 20 Rapid-Fire Exam Traps (Memorize)

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2. Direct Connect ≠ encrypted
3. Transit Gateway ≠ VPN
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5. DAX ≠ SQL cache
6. NAT ≠ inbound access
7. IGW ≠ private subnet
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18. Instance Store ≠ durable
19. MFA Delete only with Versioning
20. VPC Endpoint ≠ Internet Gateway

4️⃣ AWS Services Covering ~75% of Exam

Compute

- **Amazon EC2** Placement groups, Spot vs RI, instance store
- **AWS Lambda** Event-driven, serverless, cost per ms

Storage

- **Amazon S3** Versioning, lifecycle, MFA delete
- **Amazon EFS** Linux NFS, multi-AZ
- **Amazon FSx** Windows SMB vs Lustre (HPC)

Databases

- **Amazon Aurora** Reader endpoint, replicas, failover
- **Amazon DynamoDB** DAX, global tables

Networking

- **Amazon VPC** IGW vs NAT vs Endpoint

- **AWS Direct Connect** Add VPN for encryption
- **AWS Transit Gateway** Hub-and-spoke VPCs

Messaging / Streaming

- **Amazon SQS** – decouple
- **Amazon SNS** – notify
- **Amazon Kinesis** – streaming

🎯 Final 30-Second Exam Rule

> **If two options work → choose the one with less ops, more managed, more AWS-native**