Starter Package For Alexa

Tips for Assignment 5

INF 133 - User Interaction Software

Setup

- There are two main ways to develop skills for Alexa:
  - Alexa Skill Kit
  - Alexa Conversations

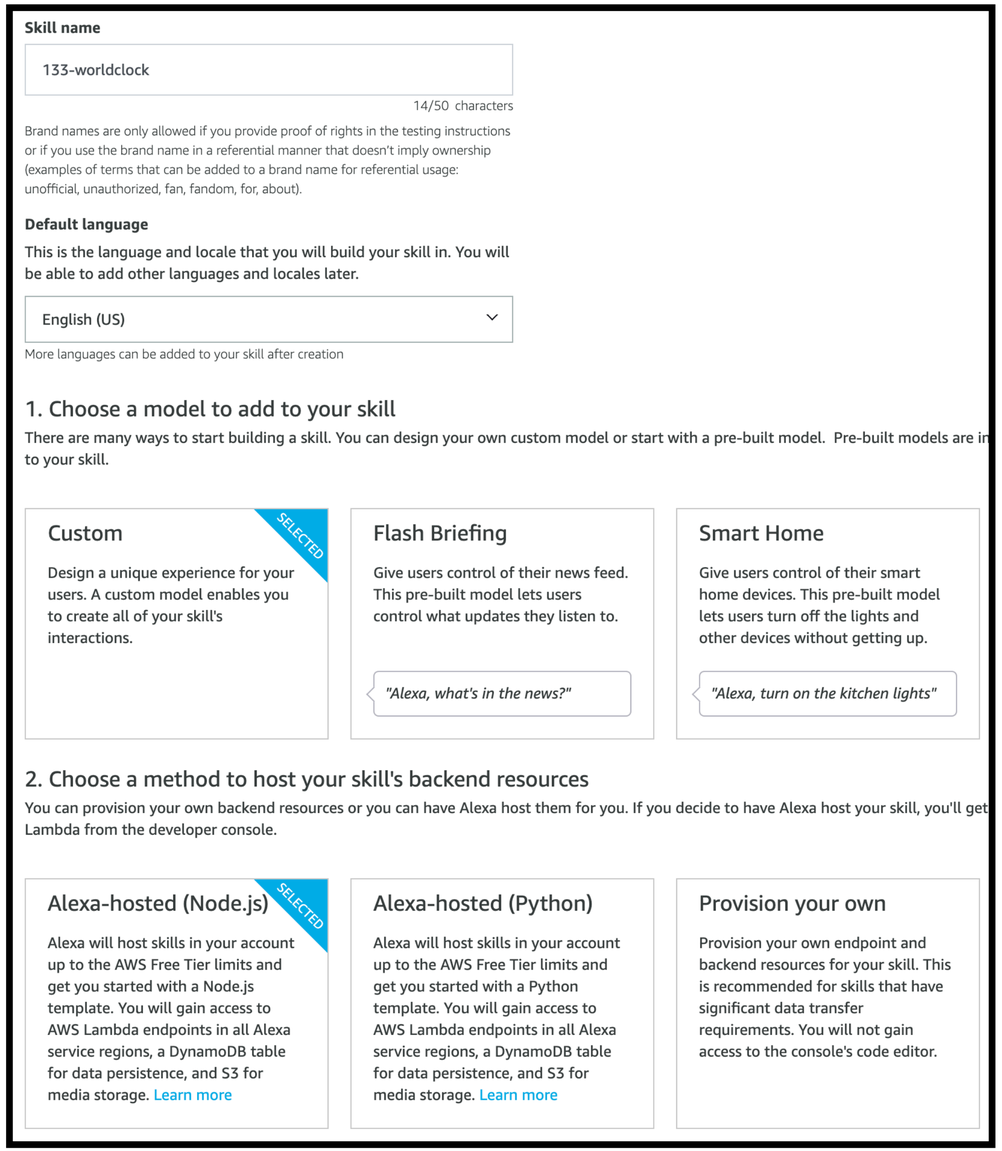
  - The backend code shouldn’t change much for either.
  - The following slides mostly give tips on getting started and some possible directions for Alexa Conversation Dialogs

Setup

- Create an account at the developer website:
  - https://developer.amazon.com/en-US/alexa
- Alexa Conversations documentation:
  - https://developer.amazon.com/en-US/docs/alexa/conversations/work-with-alexa-conversations.html
- Go to “Console” and then on “Create Skill”

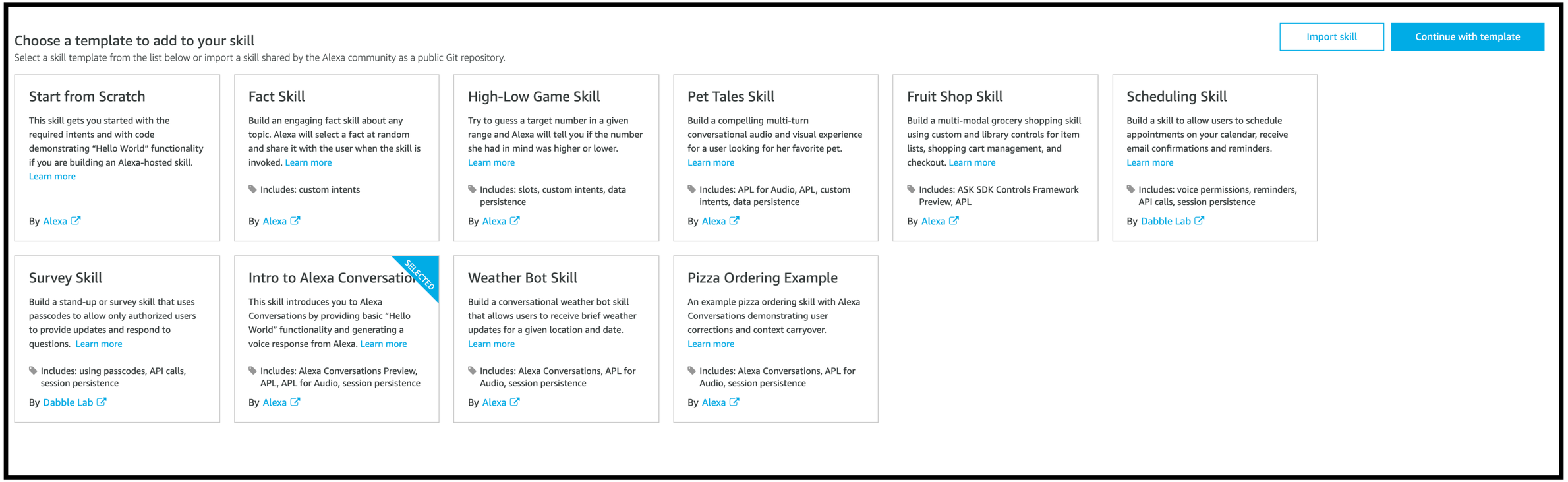
Setup

- Host your backend in Alexa-Hosted’s Node.js option



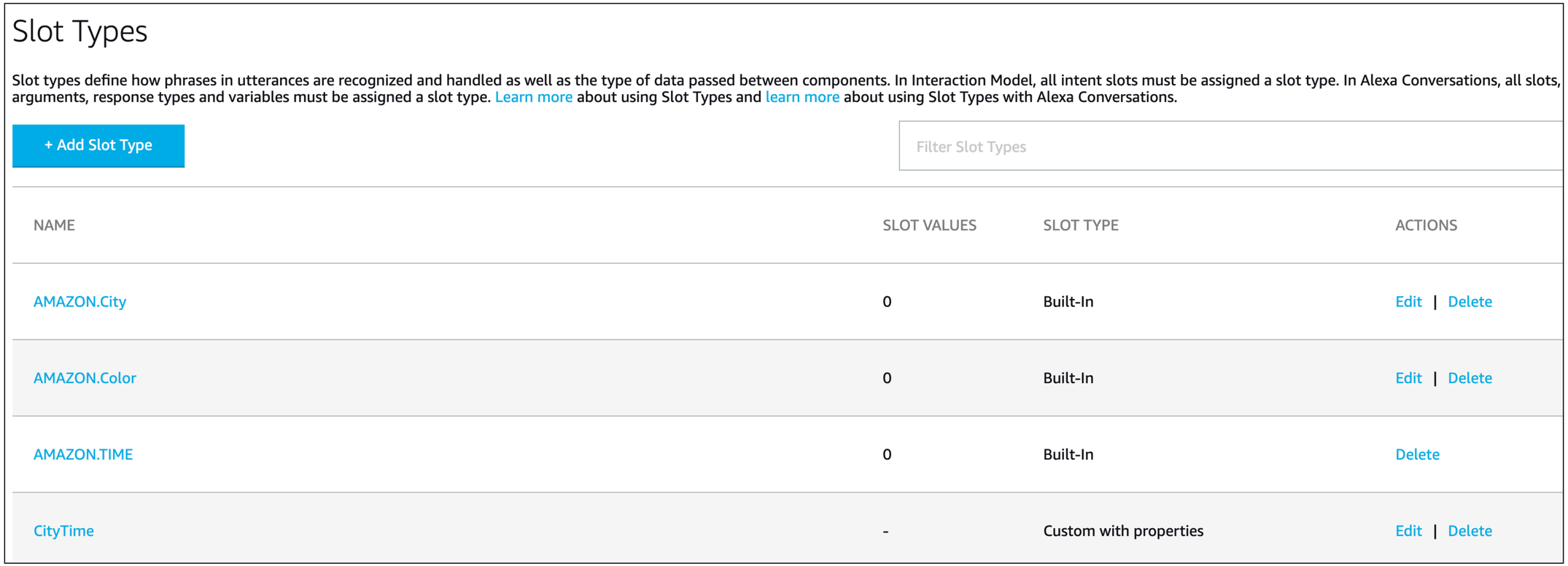
Setup

- You can choose the Alexa Conversations Template.
- This will help with some starter code and dialogs



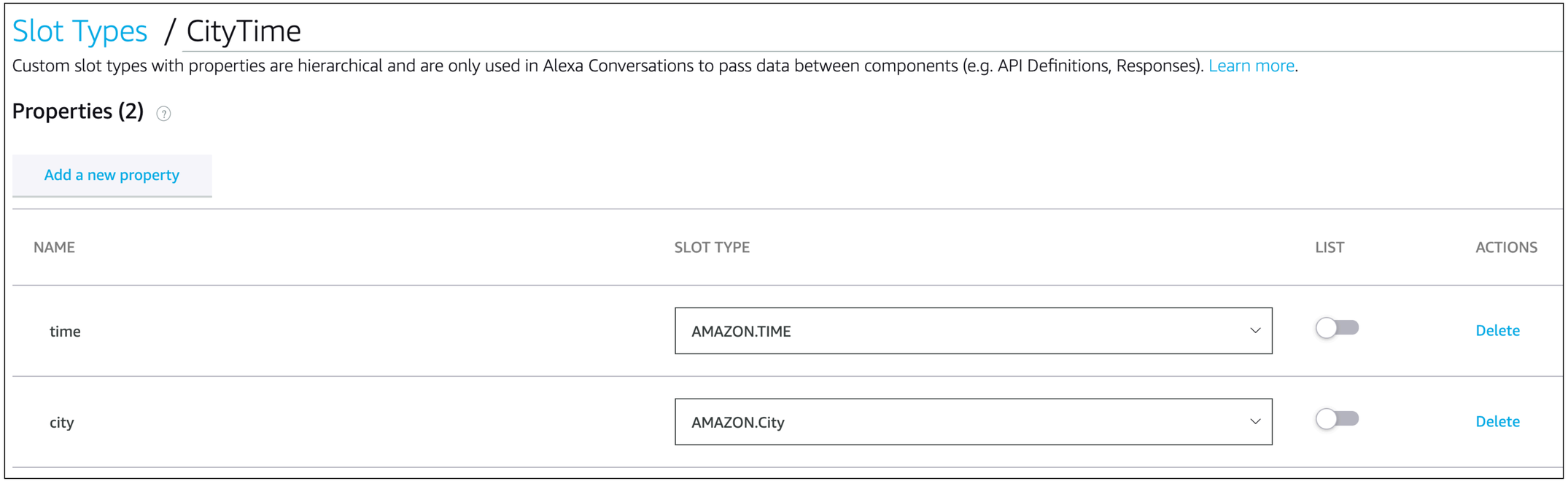
Constructing the Alexa Skill

- Skills make use of Slots, that are similar to variable types or definitions
- There are many builtin slot types



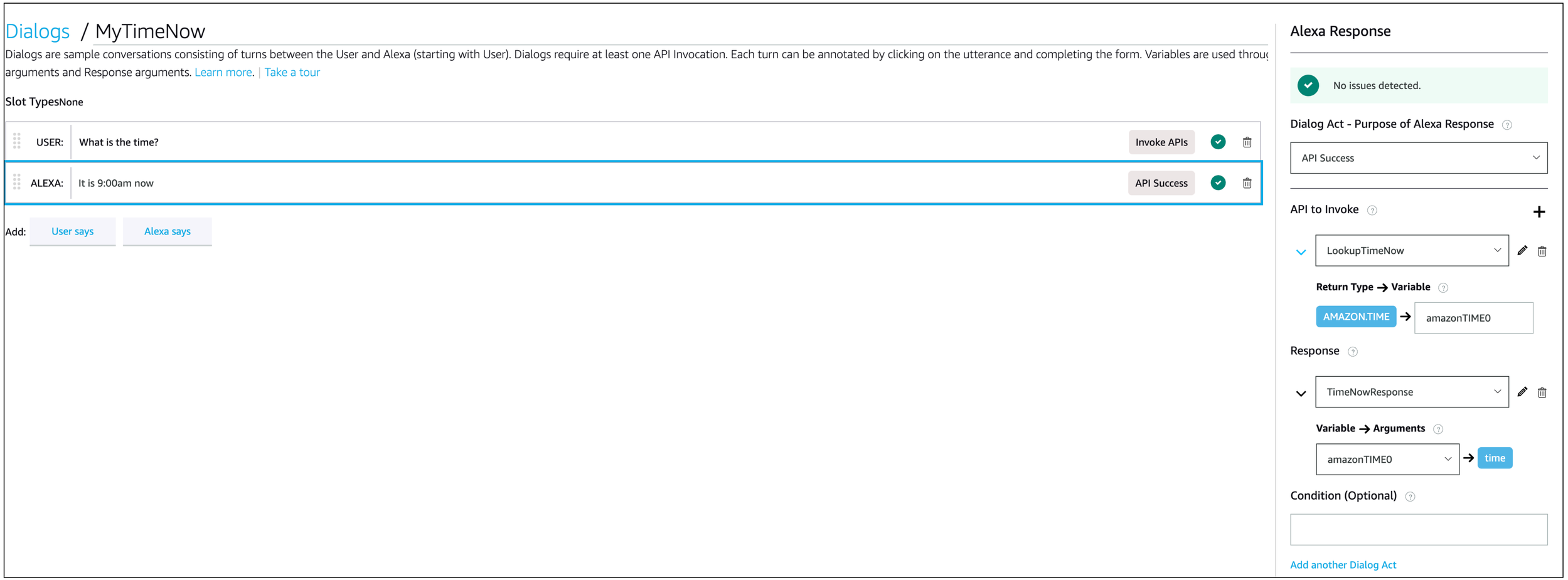
Constructing the Alexa Skill

- A slot can also combine other “primitive” slot types



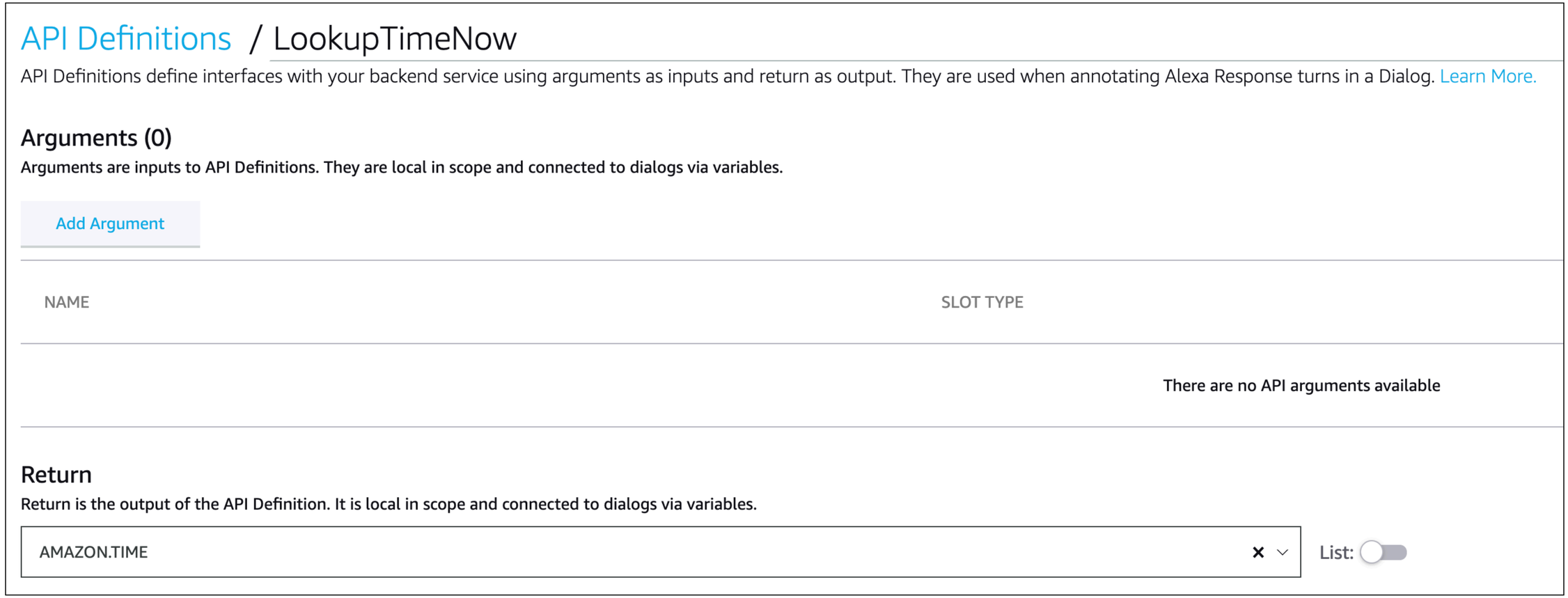
Constructing the Alexa Skill

- The template as examples for “Favorite color” dialogs.
- Bellow is an example of a possible Dialog for informing current time



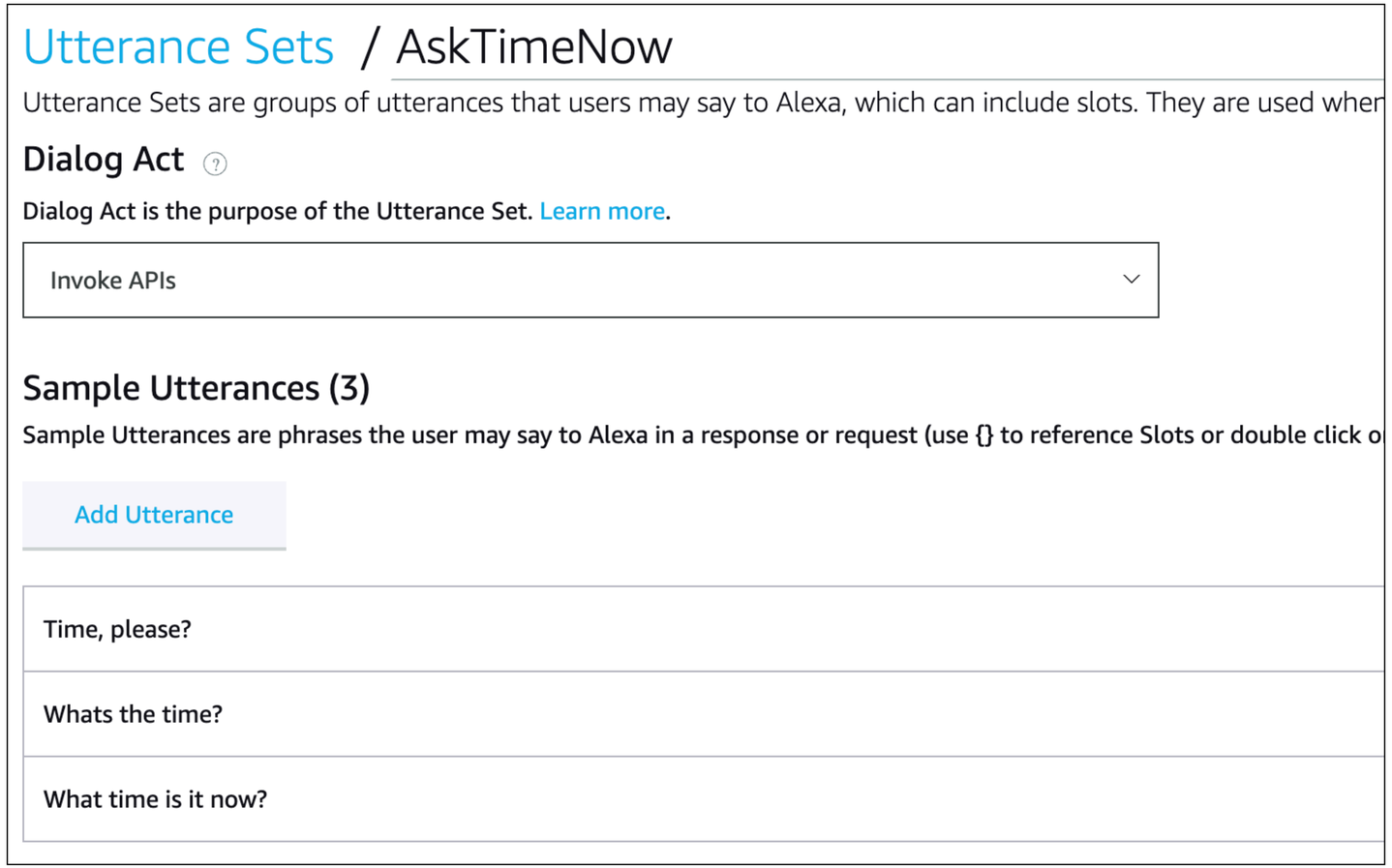
Constructing the Alexa Skill

- That dialog is invoking the following API definition
- APIs call backend code handlers



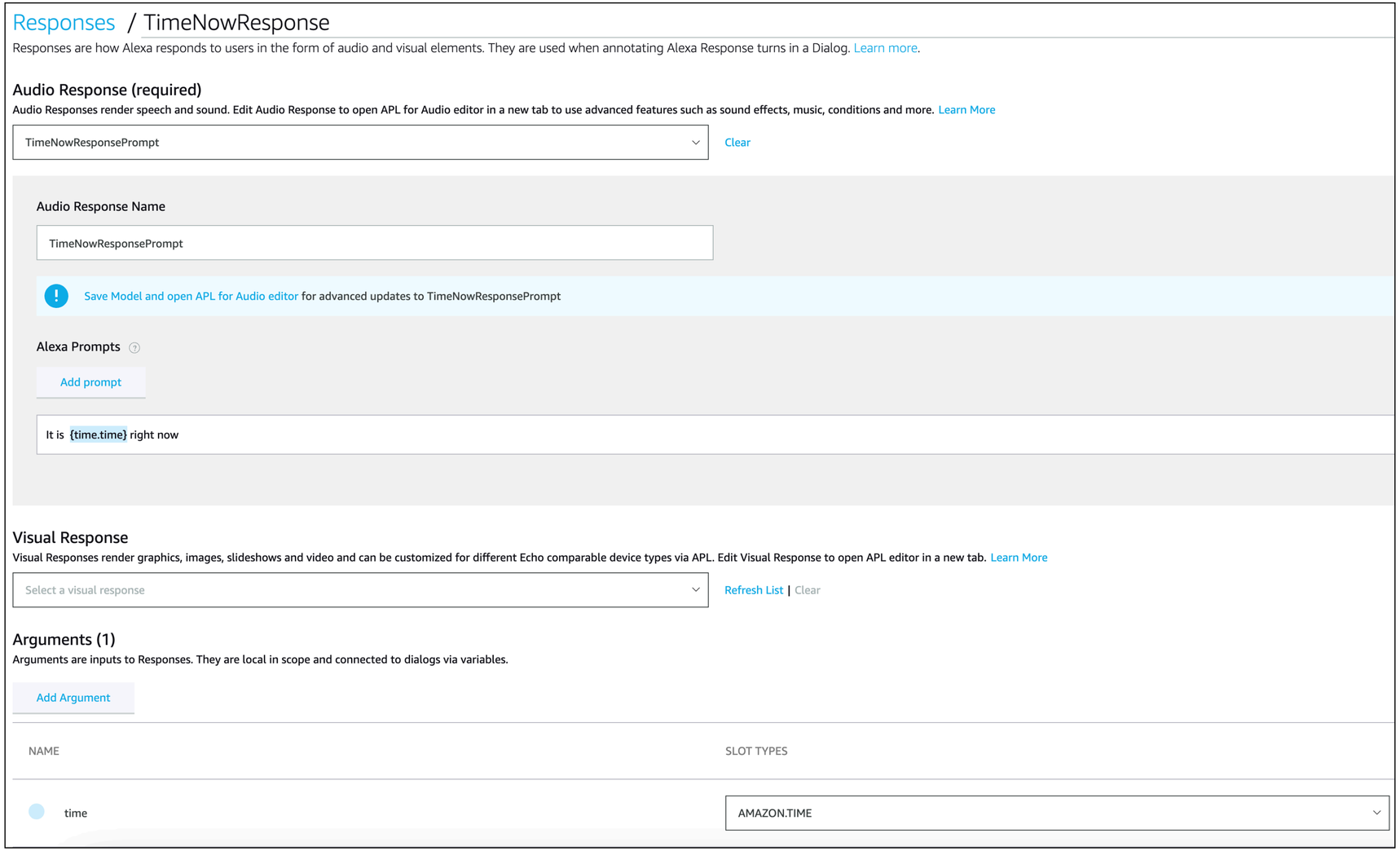
Setup

- Dialogs make use of utterance sets to teach Alexa what type of utterances to expect



Setup

- Dialogs also need to specify responses



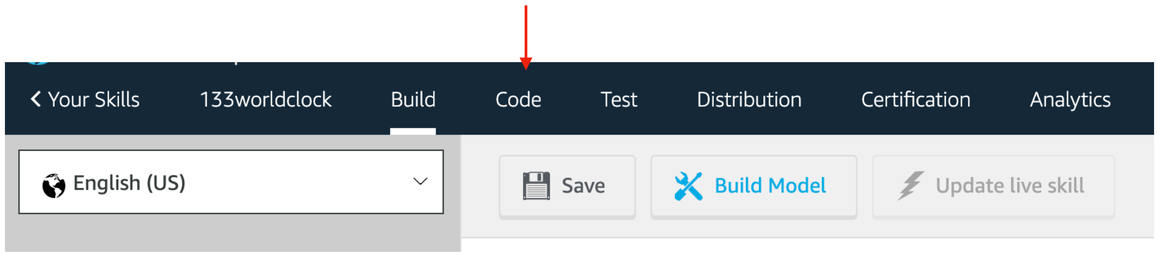
Backend

- Backend runs the code to handle API calls
- The Alexa-hosted backend can be in any of numerous AWS servers
  - The time in the server can be different from the local time of the user talking with the skill
  - Alexa supports discovering the device's timezone:

    https://developer.amazon.com/en-US/blogs/alexa/alexa-skills-kit/2019/07/getting-started-with-cake-time-using-the-alexa-settings-api-to-look-up-the-device-time-zone

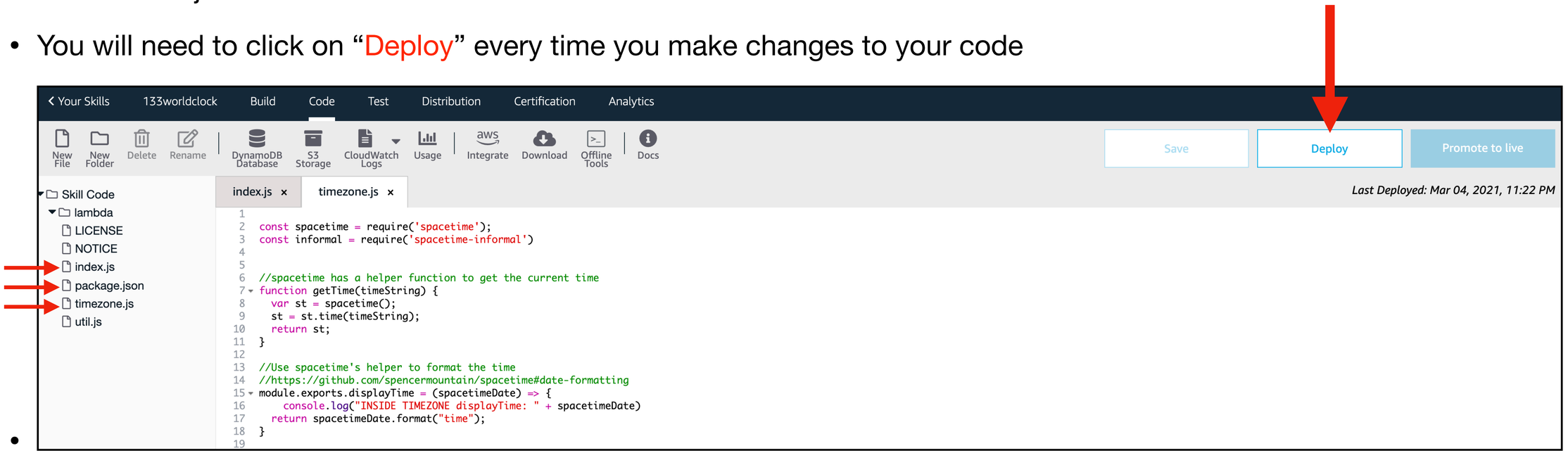
Backend

- We have provided a zip file with a starter code and helper file for your backend functions.
- Navigate to your backend code editor and alter the contents in the provided “lambda” folder accordingly



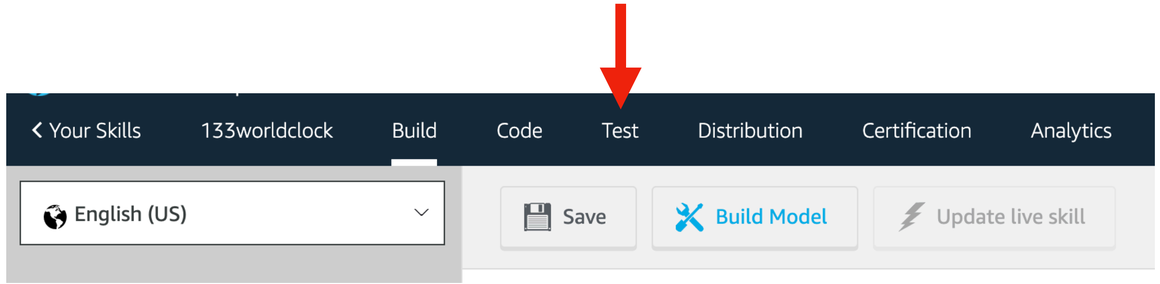
Backend

- Add spacetime libs to package.json
- Add timezone.js helper file
- Paste index.js content from the one in the starter code
- You will need to click on “Deploy” every time you make changes to your code

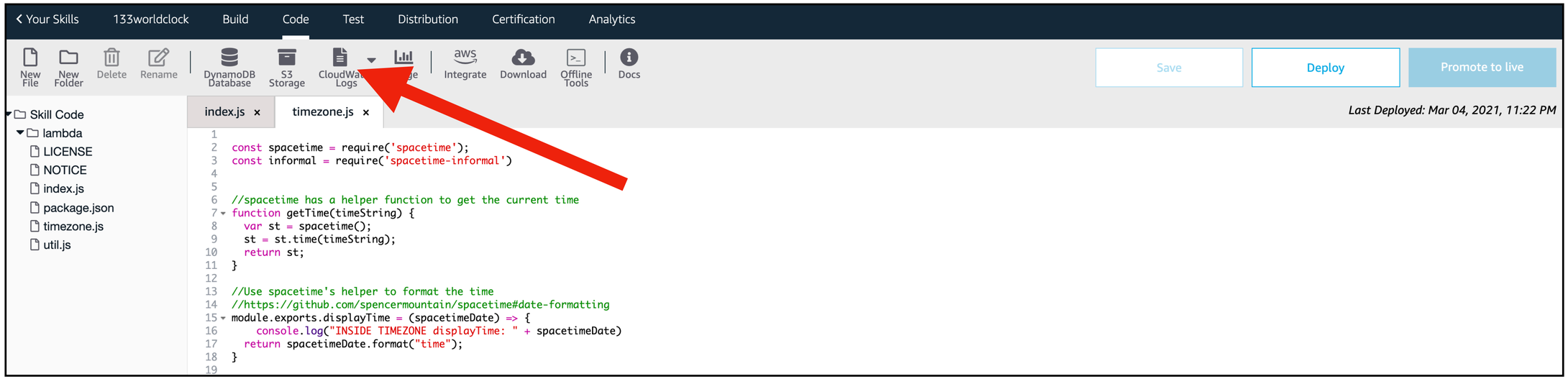


Starting the Skill

- Deploy your backend code
- Click on “Test” in the menu

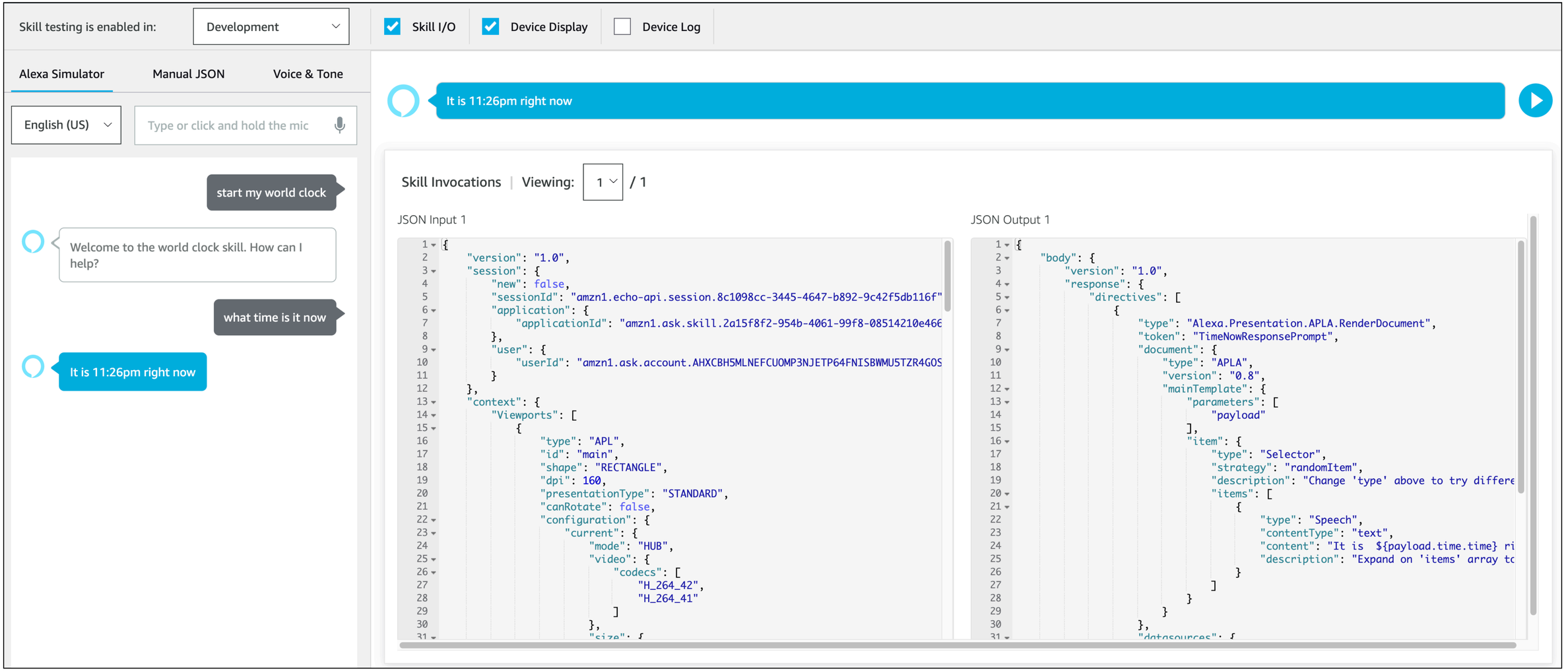


- “console.log()” can be useful in your code. The content is available in the “CloudWatch Logs” page:



Ask for local time

Task 1 example of possible conversation



Convert local time to another Location

Task 2 example of possible conversation