THE ULTIMATE BEGINNER
Cybersecurity Roadmap Guide

Step One

Find your cyber niche

Step Two

Take relevant course(s)

Step Three

Get your certification

Step Four

Work on technical projects

Step Five

Resume revamp

Step Six

LinkedIn revamp

Step Seven

Job applications (the right way)

Step Eight

Interview prep & negotiation

(Some links in this guide are affiliate links but are all resources I've personally vetted or used myself.)

CERTIFICATION ROADMAP

1   GOOGLE CYBERSECURITY PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION 🔗
A popular cert created by Google, hosted by Coursera. Made for *pure* beginners, also great to get some cyber projects on your resume. If you already have cybersecurity foundations or experience, you can skip straight to taking the CompTIA Security+ instead.

2   COMPTIA SECURITY+ 🔗
The OG beginner cybersecurity certification, which also happens to be great for HR with better chances to get you through to the interview stage. If you don't get any other cert, **AT LEAST GET YOUR CompTIA Sec+.**

3   FOR DEFENSIVE SECURITY: HACK THE BOX CDSA CERT 🔗
A relatively new HTB defensive security cert, goes very in-depth into incident response, Windows OS logs, SIEMs, etc. I'd recommend getting a Silver Annual subscription to get the most out of the program + exam.

4   FOR OFFENSIVE SECURITY: INE EJPT CERT 🔗
One of the more popular entry level EH certs, not without its haters, but likely still a better option than the CompTIA Pentest+. This plus CTF and other offensive security experience (HTB, TryHackMe) would be a good start for junior roles.

5   FOR COMPLIANCE/GRC: OCEG GRCP CERT 🔗
The GRP Professional certification created by OCEG is one of the most entry-level GRC certs you can get in this niche, without needing any prior years of experience as a pre-req.

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SOC Analyst (Cyber Defense Analyst)

A Security Operations Center (SOC) analyst is responsible for monitoring and analyzing an organization's cybersecurity infrastructure to detect and respond to security incidents.

BEST PROGRAMS/COURSES:

- [ ] Hack The Box Certified Defensive Security Analyst (CDSA)
- [ ] Springboard Cyber Security Bootcamp (w/ Job Guaratee if qualified)
- [ ] INE CCNA Certification Pathway

BEST CERTS:
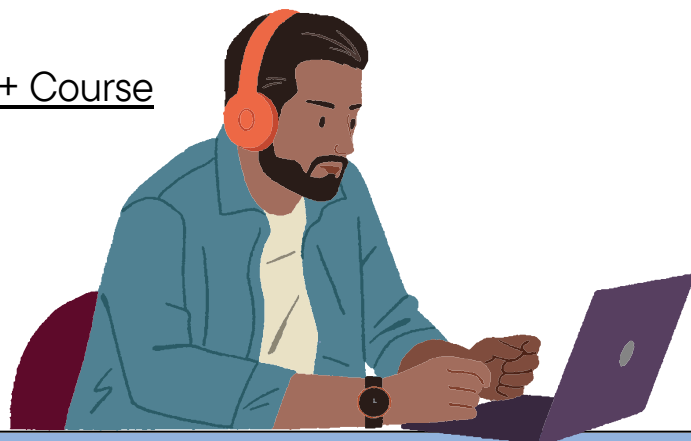
- [ ] Google Cybersecurity Professional Certificate
- [ ] CompTIA Security+ Certification
- [ ] Microsoft Cybersecurity Analyst Certificate

MY RELEVANT VIDEOS:

- [ ] How to Become an SOC Analyst
- [ ] Top 5 Beginner Cybersecurity Projects

OTHER RESOURCES:

- [ ] Professor Messer's CompTIA Security+ Course
- [ ] OpenSecurityTraining

Junior Pentester (Ethical Hacker)

A junior penetration tester is an entry-level professional who assesses the security of computer systems and networks by identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities to help organizations strengthen their overall cybersecurity.

BEST PROGRAMS/COURSES:

☐ INE Pentest Student Pathway

☐ Hack The Box Academy

☐ TryHackMe Training

BEST CERTS:

☐ INE eJPT Cert

☐ CompTIA Security+ Certification

MY RELEVANT VIDEOS:

☐ How to Get Started with Pentesting

OTHER RESOURCES:

☐ freeCodeCamp Pentesting Training

☐ OpenSecurityTraining

Compliance Analyst (GRC)

A Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) analyst is responsible for ensuring that an organization's policies, procedures, and processes align with regulatory requirements, managing risks, and maintaining compliance across various areas of the business.

BEST PROGRAMS/COURSES:

☐ Simply Cyber GRC Mastery Class

☐ Symposia (Become a GRC Analyst from 0 to 100)

☐ UnixGuy GRC Mastery Course

BEST CERTS:

☐ OCEG GRC Professional Certification

☐ CompTIA Security+ Certification

MY RELEVANT VIDEOS:

☐ Techpreneur's Club Program Review

☐ What Does an IT Auditor Do?

☐ The Future of Cyber is GRC

OTHER RESOURCES:

☐ Free GRC Hub Resources

IT/Helpdesk Analyst

If you're just starting your career and don't have a technical background, another option is to start your career in IT/Helpdesk first. Being an IT Analyst helps get you foundational skills around networking, creditialing, access manegement, etc. that can all apply to a future career in cybersecurity.

BEST PROGRAMS/COURSES:

☐ CourseCareers Entry-Level IT Course Taught by Josh Madakor (Get $50 Off)

BEST CERTS:

☐ CompTIA A+

☐ Cisco CCNA

MY RELEVANT VIDEOS:

☐ Will the CompTIA A+ Get You a Job?

☐ How to Start a Career in IT

Job Applications, LinkedIn, & Resumes

- Avoid the quick "easy-applies" and try to always apply on the official job site if possible. This will help your resume actually stand out rather than getting lost in the thousands of applicants in easy-apply apps.
- Apply on job sites that have quality job listings. The popular ones can sometimes be oversaturated so try my recommended job sites linked in the previous page.
- Make sure your resume has at least 3 of the keywords or skills the job listing is asking for. If you don't have those skills yet, try to find courses or free online walkthroughts to at least get a personal project using that tool onto your resume.
- **How to Start a Career in Cybersecurity:** https://youtu.be/HyYkc589AgM

RESUME TIPS

- Put your best foot forward: for you this could be your technical projects, past experience, certs, or technical skills. Make sure your "resume highlight" is at the top given the fact that most recruiters only look at a resume for a short amount of time. You want to catch their attention ASAP.
- Make sure your resume bullet points shows the **impact** of the work you did, not just the "what". Add numbers, stats, or other proof of impact into the bullet point.
- I have videos on my channel linked in the footer on building a cybersecurity resume from scratch for a better deep dive.
- **My Ultimate Cybersecurity Resume Video on YT:** https://youtu.be/K4uXHXcGYe8

LINKEDIN TIPS

- You may not be a poster on LinkedIn, but the best way to get the word out that you're looking for a job is to talk about it. If sharing a post about your experience, the type of role you're looking for, and what you bring to the table does that, then you should definitely be considering it. You'd be surprised how many people are willing to reach out and share a job listing they saw or a referral to their company. Put yourself out there and use the power of your network.
- Follow pages or accounts that either help you find new job listings or learn about the skills/roles companies are hiring for.
- Turn on job alerts on LinkedIn for the specific roles you're interested in for new job posts. **My LinkedIn Revamp Video on YT:** https://youtu.be/qIuD6Ru6TmY

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Cybersecurity Interview Prep 101

- **Build your cybersecurity knowledge base:** Familiarize yourself with core concepts like the CIA triad (Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability), common attacks (phishing, malware, etc.), and security best practices (encryption, firewalls) along with other cybersecurity interview practice questions. Try to always apply on the official job site if possible. This will help your resume actually stand out rather than getting lost in the thousands of applicants in easy-apply apps.
- **Start following cybersecurity news** feeds & blogs to keep up with the latest hacks that will (very likely) come up during an interview.
- **Sharpen your technical skills:** Brush up on relevant technical skills depending on the specific cybersecurity field you're interested in. This could involve learning operating systems like Linux, networking fundamentals, or security tools like firewalls or intrusion detection systems. Online courses or certifications can help here too.
- **Highlight your accomplishments:** If you have experience with cybersecurity projects (personal or professional), document them clearly. This could include participation in Capture the Flag (CTF) competitions, building secure systems, open-source projects, or even identifying and resolving security vulnerabilities.

INTERVIEW PREP

- **Research the company and role:** Dive deep into the company's security posture and recent news. Tailor your interview responses to show how your skills align with their specific needs. Understanding the role's responsibilities will help you anticipate interview questions and prepare targeted examples of your experience.
- **Prepare thoughtful questions for the interviewer:** Show your genuine interest in the role and company by having well-researched questions. Focus on the team culture, security challenges they face, and opportunities for professional development.
- Complete the **Cybersecurity Interview Prep Mastery Course**: This course was created to prepare you for technical, behavioral, and security design questions that you'll have to cover in your cybersecurity interviews. It also includes a cybersecurity mock interview, my formula to acing my technical interviews, and what types of questions to expect for different roles. Check out the course here.

Cybersecurity Job Offer Negotiations 101

- **Do your research:** Know your worth! Research average salaries for similar positions in your location with your experience level. Use resources like Glassdoor, Salary.com, or specific cybersecurity salary reports. Consider factors like cost of living and industry standards.

- **Target the top of the range:** Aim high! When the company presents a salary range, start negotiations at the top of that range. This gives you room to maneuver and leaves room for a compromise.

- **Focus on value, not just experience:** Highlight your accomplishments and how your skills will benefit the company. Quantify the impact you've had in previous roles (e.g., reduced security incidents by X%).

- **Be prepared to walk away:** Know your bottom line and be prepared to decline an offer that doesn't meet your expectations. Don't be afraid to thank them for their time and continue your job search.

- **Negotiate beyond salary:** Salary is important, but consider the whole package. Negotiate for benefits like sign-on bonuses, additional vacation days, remote work options, or professional development opportunities.

- **Be confident and professional:** Maintain a professional and positive demeanor throughout the negotiation process. Be clear about your value proposition and articulate your requests confidently.

My Cybersecurity Resources

Working in cybersecurity provides a great career path with high salaries, great job security, and limitless learning opportunities to niche down into specific areas in security as you grow in your career.

CYBERSECURITY PREP 101

- My Interview Prep Bundle

- My Cybersecurity Resume + Cover Letter Template

- Top 5 Beginner Cybersecurity Projects

- Cybersecurity VS Software Engineer

MY CAREER GUIDES:

- Web Pentester Career Bundle

- Security Engineer Career Bundle

- SOC Analyst Career Bundle

- Security Analyst Career Bundle

MY CYBERSECURITY COURSE:

- How to Get Your First Job in Cybersecurity

- Cybersecurity Interview Prep Mastery Course

MY RECOMMENDED JOB SITES:

- BuiltIn
- Dice.com
- Startup.Jobs
- LinkedIn Jobs

- Cybersecurity Tech/WFH Faves on Amazon

Thank you for using this cybersecurity career roadmap guide!

If you're currently interviewing for your next cybersecurity job, you can use code **KICKSTART25** to get 25% off my Cybersecurity Interview Prep Mastery Course