Tips and tricks for passing your technology certification exam

Let's admit it: Even with all the best study resources in the world, taking a certification exam can be nerve wracking and full of unknowns. Add on to that the pressure to pass a test that you are paying to take, and the motivation to pass the first time becomes real.

To help you answer all the peripheral "what ifs" of passing a technology certification exam, we asked some experts—and learners who've actually taken and passed the test themselves—for insights into how to get ready and nail your exam on the first try.

Focus on foundational certifications first, especially if you don't know where to start

Within AWS, for example, you have four different levels of certifications—foundational, associate, professional and specialty—but that foundational level is really the stepping stone to get you into the next level of certification. Starting with the foundational certification (especially if you are coming into the exam from a non-technical background) is often the best choice, because the higher-level exams are usually additive to that "base" exam; the information that you learn at the foundational level there will help you whether you just need a wide breadth of generalist skills in the cloud, or if you eventually want go deeper into a specialization such as machine learning or security.

Take advantage of the official exam page supplied by the vendor

Whether you're getting a certification through AWS, Microsoft, Google or another organization, there will be an official exam page you will have free access to. Not only is this the portal you will eventually go to when you're ready to

schedule an exam, but these pages are a great place to start for initial resources as you're preparing to study, including:

- A list of concepts and topics the exam is going to cover
- Sample questions from the exam
- An exam guide (which is actually what third-party instructors typically use to prepare their own exam prep content and curriculum for learners)
- And exam prerequisites

If you are taking a foundational-level exam for one of the big three cloud providers, don't let prerequisites requiring six months to a year of experience with the platform scare you away; there are numerous resources available for getting up to speed quickly.

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Career Guide

Quick & to the point – Career Advice

Question: *"I have a job interview coming up and would like to know what are some questions that I should be asking of them? I really need this job but also want to make sure it is a good fit, too. Thank you!"* – Derrick J. Holms

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Answer: First off, congrats on this opportunity, Derrick.

"So, do you have any questions for me?"

When you reach this point in a job interview — where the interviewer is done with their questions and opens up the floor — you don't want to be caught off guard. It's important to have a plan for how you'll respond, and a list of questions specific to that opportunity.

Here are some recommendations for how to approach this part of the interview and sample questions they've seen work in practice.

- What are your expectations for me in this role?
- What's the most important thing I should accomplish in the first 90 days?
- What's the performance review process like here? How often would I be formally reviewed?
- What metrics or goals will my performance be evaluated against?
- What are the most immediate projects that I would take on?
- What are the current goals that the company is focused on, and how does this team work to support hitting those goals?
- What gets you most excited about the company's future?
- How would you describe the company's values?
- How has the company changed over the last few years?
- What are the company's plans for growth and development?

There is much to think about before you jump ship. I hope this helps. Best of luck!
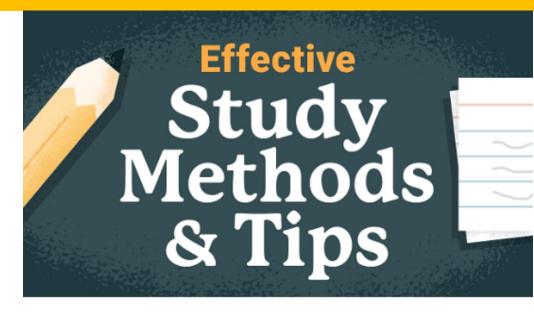
Best practice and study tips for taking IT certification exams

Are you getting prepared to take an IT certification exam and feel like your study habits aren't cutting it? The study material may be different than the things you used to study. Perhaps you've been choosing the wrong time to study, should change your study technique, or need to build better learning and study strategies. We become what we repeatedly do, so our habits can either make or break us. What could you be doing differently in order to study effectively and prepare for exams the right way?

Studying for an IT certification exam includes adopting a lot of technical knowledge, so you will need to employ more effective study skills and strategies. It all depends on your will, preparedness, and time management. It would be best if you didn't leave anything until the last minute but set up a clear timetable for your study. Write down how many topics you have to cover and the days on which you need to study. It is

Effective **Study Methods & Tips**

very important to find a balance you feel comfortable with, understand that the pressure can be your friend, and study smarter, not harder.

Understand the Concept of Study Cycle
We begin our study guide with the concept of the study cycle. A typical study cycle can be broken down into several different parts, including:

- Previewing
- Attending class
- Reviewing
- Studying

Checking your understanding Trying to take shortcuts and skip any of those steps will have you missing opportunities for effective studying. Be sure to understand the importance of

all stages of a study cycle. By following it, you improve your long-term memory, which is for the information you don't have to remember this instant. When you're preparing for an exam, that is long-term memory at work.

Organize Your Study Space
Start your test preparation by organizing your study space. Do you have enough space to spread out your notes, textbooks, and other course material? Do you have enough light? Is there enough room to create an IT test lab? Can you install and use the software required for the certification exam? Do all you can to get rid of all distractions. Make sure you can pay attention to the

Study Tips

study material and feel comfortable in your study space. Some people study more effectively when surrounded by other people (e.g., in a library), some students learn better when alone in complete silence, while others find background music helpful. You may need a tidy environment to organize your materials the way you like it, or maybe you thrive in a cluttered environment. Take your time to get things right.

Use Visual Aids

When revising course material and test questions, visual aids can be extremely helpful in learning and study strategy. For example, when starting a topic, challenge yourself to write everything you know about it. Then, detect the gaps and highlight those areas. As the exam date comes closer, condense all your revision notes into diagrams. When you get your ideas down in this format, you will be able to recall important information during the exam quickly.

Take Breaks

Trying to study for as many hours as you can is a counterproductive learning method. It won't do any good for your long-term memory, so it's important to take regular breaks. Avoid taking breaks longer than 15 minutes, but set the alarm for every 30 minutes and a take short, 5-10-minute break. Shorter study breaks will give you enough time to stretch, breathe, and refocus before getting back to learning. While studying, you should have water and snacks to fuel your brain. Nutritious snacks before studying and drinking enough water will help you stay more focused. Break your study time into chunks with 5-10-minute breaks between for the most effective learning (we will discuss spaced repetitions more later in the article).

Problems are Not Your Enemy
In technical courses, such as courses for IT certifications, working and reworking problems are very important. You must be able to explain the steps of any problem and why they work. It is often more important to work problems than to read the text. Write your problems in detail, annotate each step, and ask your course instructor to help you clarify them. During your test preparation, pull a list of problems from your course material, work them, and explain the steps to their solutions and why they work. Test yourself.

Practice

Study smarter, not harder. Every test is specific in itself, and one of the best test taking strategies is to practice as you will perform. Recreate practice tests, find older versions of the test, and use those questions as your practice questions. Make up or find practice questions that are of the same type that will be on the test, put all your study materials away, set up timed conditions, and start working until you complete the test. A great way of addressing the problem of test anxiety is

visiting the testing center and the examination room to get comfortable in the space. To create or find practice questions, you can:

On your course training, participate in studying sessions and ask each other material-related questions

- Use questions from your textbook study guide
- Use the chapter review questions from your textbook
- Write outlines for performance-based questions
- Turn your lecture notes and the headings in your course material into questions
- Make flash cards – a question on one side, the answer on the other

Spaced Repetitions

Spaced repetitions (also known as distributed practice or spaced practice) is a learning and study strategy where the practice is broken into short studying sessions over a longer period of time. Humans learn more effectively when they study in several sessions spread out over a longer period of time compared to studying repeatedly in a short period of time. That phenomenon is called the spacing effect. Spaced repetitions enhance problem-solving, long-term memory, and the transfer of learning to new contexts.

People believe that testing and learning are two separate things, so they prepare for exams but study inefficiently. They sit down with notes and a textbook and read the materials over and over again. Once the material looks familiar, they think they're done studying. However, testing yourself is one of the most effective learning styles because it prompts you to study in the way that you're going to be tested. Your study situation is similar to the testing situation, which is why you will be able to recall the information during the exam easily. In turn, the time spent on learning the right way helps build your confidence. When the test day comes, you'll be sure that you've learned the material properly and know which test question specifics you should pay attention to.

Before you delve into some of these test preparation strategies, be sure to have a solid command of the material and subject matter that will be presented on your test, then try some of these strategies. Remember to adapt these strategies to the specific type of IT exam you are taking. Remember to organize your materials, pay attention to details, and test yourself with flash cards, answering test questions, and participating in studying sessions. Once you have learned the material, keep on studying to solidify the material and learn more.

As you develop your study skills, you will be able to learn more effectively and rapidly. In the IT industry, there are always new techniques to adopt and skills to learn.

VETERNS, GET READY TO POWER YOUR TECH FUTURE AT GLOBAL IT

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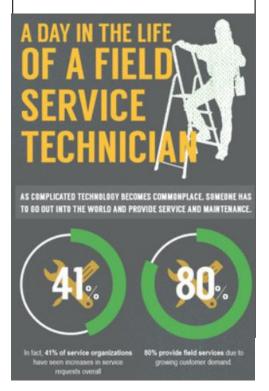Fun & Interesting Facts about Technology

Did you know? ………
Russia built a computer that ran on water: in 1936

Before the miniaturisation of transistors, computers had a much more visible system of counting: things like gears, pivots, beads and levers were often used and they needed some sort of power source to function. Vladimir Lukyanov built something like this in 1936 but he used water to create a computer that solved partial differential equations. In images of the Lukyanov computer, you'll see a complex system of interconnected tubes filled with water. Adjusting taps and plugs altered the flow of water (and changed variables) while the end result was seen by measuring the level of water in certain tubes. It was also called a Water Integrator and was originally designed to solve the problem of cracking in concrete. It's now found in Moscow's Polytechnic Museum.

A day in the life
In a Field Service Technician

Field service technicians have busy schedules. With unforeseen occurrences happening every day, it's important to have a scheduling solution that can account for all of the events in a day that are working against service professionals.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FIELD SERVICE TECHNICIAN

AS COMPLICATED TECHNOLOGY BECOMES COMMONPLACE, SOMEONE HAS TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND PROVIDE SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE.

41% In fact, 41% of service organizations have seen increases in service requests overall

80% 80% provide field services due to growing customer demand

GIT thought Provoking corner

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."

— Steve Jobs

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Raises for some IT pros could jump 8% in 2023, exceeding inflation

The ongoing shortage of qualified IT pros, an improving economic picture, and inflation pressures could push salaries up by 8% for some tech workers this year, according to a new report from business consultancy Janco Associates.

Leolintang / Getty Images
After failing miserably to keep up with inflation over the past two years, it appears salaries for IT pros are beginning to catch up, according to a new study from Janco Associates.

In 2021, the mean compensation for all IT pros rose just 2.05%, according to a mid-year salary survey from the business consultancy. In 2021, the median salary for IT pros at large enterprises was $100,022, and $95,681 for those at mid-sized firms.

In 2022, however, merit increases for IT pros lept to 5.61%, with the median salary for all IT professionals rising from $95,845 to $101,323. The median salary for an IT executive rose to $180,000.

In the year ahead, salaries could rise by another 8%, according to Janco Associates CEO Victor Janulaitis. "We project that salaries for IT pros in SMBs will exceed inflation. In large companies, we think it may lag since the salaries are greater," he said.

Recent salary increases were mostly due to a shortage of qualified IT pros at a time when organizations were embarking on digitization projects, the Great Resignation, and inflation pressures, according to industry analysts. Even as inflation soared in 2022, the pool of IT talent shrank as employees quit to re-evaluate their career and personal lives. Employers were also rolling out more technology projects in response to the global pandemic's effect on remote work, sales and services. Salary compression is also occurring as "new hires" are offered salaries at the top end of the pay ranges for existing positions — often getting more than current employees in the same positions, according to Janco. "Staffing and retention are now a primary priority of C-Level management," Janco argued.