

AWS SOA-C03 Exam Prep: Practical Strategies

AWS SOA-C03 SysOps. Deployment, management, and operations with practical strategies.

IT Certifications Instructor: Brian Taylor • 5 sections • 47 lessons • 15.50h total

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About this course

This course prepares you for the AWS SOA-C03 SysOps exam with practical strategies. We cover deployment, management, and operations on AWS. Hands-on labs, troubleshooting scenarios, and practice exams included.

Course curriculum

Foundations: Understanding the 2026 Exam Landscape

- **Decoding the SOA-C03 Blueprint for 2026 (12m)**
We'll break down the exam guide section by section, explaining what the new objectives mean for your daily work and study plan.
- **Setting Up Your AWS Free Tier for Practice (18m)**
A step-by-step guide to configuring a safe and effective practice environment, so you can follow along with hands-on labs without surprise costs.
- **The Mindset Shift: From Multiple Choice to Hands-On (8m)**
Learn how to approach the exam's unique format, focusing on the problem-solving skills that are tested beyond simple memorization.
- **Core AWS Services You Must Know Cold (25m)**
A focused review of the 10-15 services that appear most frequently, with a quick overview of their primary use cases and limits.
- **Navigating the AWS Console vs. AWS CLI (14m)**
We'll discuss when to use the graphical interface and when to rely on the command line, a key skill for efficient SysOps admins.
- **Defining Your 6-Week Study Plan (9m)**
Get a realistic, week-by-week study schedule template to keep you on track and prepared for exam day.
- **Introduction to Key AWS Terminology (15m)**
A quick-reference guide to the acronyms and terms you'll see constantly, ensuring you understand the language of the exam.

Core Concepts: Monitoring, Logging, and Deployment

- **Amazon CloudWatch for Real-World Monitoring (22m)**
Learn how to set up meaningful alarms, dashboards, and logs to proactively identify issues before they become critical.
- **Using AWS CloudTrail for Security and Compliance Audits (16m)**
A practical session on interpreting CloudTrail events to track user activity and troubleshoot unexpected changes.
- **Automating Deployments with AWS CloudFormation (28m)**
We'll build a simple but functional CloudFormation template to deploy a web server stack, covering templates and stack management.
- **Managing EC2 Instances: From Launch to Termination (24m)**
A complete walkthrough of launching, connecting, securing, and managing the lifecycle of EC2 instances in a production environment.
- **Deep Dive: EC2 Storage Options (EBS vs. Instance Store) (19m)**
Understand the performance and cost differences between storage types and how to choose the right one for your workload.

- **Implementing Load Balancing with ELB (21m)**
Learn how to configure an Application Load Balancer to distribute traffic and improve the fault tolerance of your applications.
- **Auto Scaling: Building Resilient Architectures (26m)**
Step-by-step guide to creating Auto Scaling groups that automatically adjust to traffic changes, saving costs and improving uptime.
- **Managing User Access with IAM (17m)**
A practical look at creating users, groups, and policies to enforce the principle of least privilege in your AWS account.
- **Securing Your AWS Account: MFA and Root User Best Practices (10m)**
A critical session on locking down your account's foundational security settings to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Troubleshooting Common EC2 and VPC Connectivity Issues (32m)**
A problem-solving session where we diagnose and fix typical network connection failures using VPC flow logs and security groups.

Deep Dive: Networking, Security, and Storage

- **VPC Fundamentals: Subnets, Route Tables, and Gateways (27m)**
We'll architect a custom VPC from scratch, explaining how network traffic flows and how to control it effectively.
- **Configuring Security Groups and Network ACLs (20m)**
Learn the crucial differences between these two firewalls and when to use each for robust network security.
- **Managing S3 Buckets: Policies, Versioning, and Lifecycle (23m)**
A deep dive into S3 configuration for cost-effective and secure object storage, including hands-on policy examples.
- **Understanding AWS Database Services: RDS vs. DynamoDB (15m)**
We'll compare managed SQL and NoSQL databases to help you understand which service fits different application needs.
- **Securing Data at Rest and in Transit (18m)**
Explore AWS KMS and encryption best practices to protect sensitive data across various services like EBS and S3.
- **Implementing Hybrid Networking with VPN and Direct Connect (25m)**
An overview of connecting your on-premises data center to AWS, a common scenario in enterprise environments.
- **Using AWS WAF to Protect Web Applications (13m)**
Learn how to deploy a Web Application Firewall to block common web exploits and bots without writing code.
- **Problem-Solving: Recovering from a Region-Wide Outage (30m)**
A case study on designing a disaster recovery strategy using multi-region architectures and failover mechanisms.

Advanced Application: Cost, Automation, and Optimization

- **Decoding Your AWS Bill: Cost Explorer and Budgets (21m)**
Learn to analyze cost reports, set up budgets with alerts, and identify the most expensive resources in your account.
- **Cost Optimization Strategies for SysOps Administrators (29m)**
A practical guide to using Reserved Instances, Savings Plans, and right-sizing to significantly reduce your AWS spend.
- **Automating Tasks with AWS Lambda: A SysOps Approach (24m)**
We'll write a simple Lambda function to automate a routine maintenance task, showing you how to extend your capabilities.
- **Building Event-Driven Workflows with Amazon EventBridge (19m)**
Learn how to connect different AWS services to react to changes automatically, like starting a backup when an instance stops.
- **Advanced CLI Scripting for Daily Operations (26m)**
Go beyond single commands and learn to write simple scripts that perform multi-step operational tasks efficiently.
- **Managing Secrets with AWS Secrets Manager (12m)**
A step-by-step guide to storing and rotating database credentials and API keys securely, instead of hardcoding them.
- **High Availability vs. Disaster Recovery: What's the Difference? (14m)**
Clarify these two critical concepts and learn how to implement solutions for each using multi-AZ and multi-region setups.
- **Using AWS Systems Manager for Patch Management (22m)**
Automate OS patching across your fleet of EC2 instances, a core responsibility for any SysOps administrator.
- **Troubleshooting S3 Permissions: A Case Study (17m)**
We'll diagnose and fix a complex 'Access Denied' error in S3 by analyzing bucket policies, IAM policies, and ACLs.
- **Optimizing Database Performance on RDS (18m)**
Learn to identify performance bottlenecks and use parameter groups and read replicas to improve database responsiveness.
- **Managing Infrastructure with AWS Elastic Beanstalk (16m)**
Understand how to use this PaaS offering to simplify application deployment and management without deep infrastructure control.
- **Deploying a Static Website with CloudFront and S3 (20m)**
A complete walkthrough of setting up a fast, secure, and cost-effective static website using AWS global infrastructure.

Implementation: Final Prep and Real-World Scenarios

- **Full Practice Exam: 30 Scenario-Based Questions (35m)**
Test your knowledge with a curated set of questions that mimic the style and difficulty of the real SOA-C03 exam.

- **Walkthrough: Analyzing the Practice Exam Results (28m)**
We'll review the practice exam answers together, explaining the logic behind each correct choice and common distractors.
- **Final Checklist: Last-Minute Review Topics (11m)**
A downloadable checklist of the most critical services and CLI commands to review in the days leading up to your exam.
- **Strategy: Managing Your Time During the Exam (9m)**
Tips and tricks for pacing yourself, flagging questions for review, and handling the more complex scenario-based items.
- **Real-World Case: Migrating an On-Prem App to AWS (31m)**
A comprehensive case study walking through the planning, execution, and troubleshooting of a typical application migration.
- **Real-World Case: Responding to a Security Incident (25m)**
A step-by-step analysis of how to use AWS security tools to identify, contain, and remediate a potential security breach.
- **Real-World Case: Automating a Legacy Backup Process (23m)**
See how to replace a manual, error-prone backup system with a reliable, automated solution using AWS services.
- **Real-World Case: Fixing a Broken CI/CD Pipeline (20m)**
A troubleshooting session focused on a common problem: a deployment that fails midway through the pipeline.
- **Beyond the Exam: Building a Career in Cloud Operations (13m)**
Get practical advice on how to leverage your new certification and skills for career growth and new opportunities.
- **Course Wrap-Up and Next Steps (7m)**
A quick summary of what we covered, and a guide on where to find official AWS documentation and community resources.

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