

AWS Solutions Architect Associate

8-week detailed curriculum | Target: AWS Solutions Architect - Associate (SAA-C03)

A message to you, Peter

Peter, I built this guide to give you a clear path into technology without expecting you to already know the language. You are not supposed to understand everything on day one. Your job is to show up consistently, practice, ask questions, and keep evidence of what you build. I will help you connect the pieces, but the hands-on work is where the confidence will come from.

Study rule: Do not only watch videos. Type the commands, build the labs, break things, fix them, and explain what happened in your own words.

Your outcome for this phase

Learn to design secure, resilient, high-performing, and cost-optimized AWS architectures and explain the tradeoffs behind each decision.

Expected pace: 2-3 hours Monday through Friday, 3-4 hours Saturday, and Sunday reserved for rest or catch-up. Each week ends with something you can demonstrate.

Phase learning resources

Resource	How to use it
AWS Solutions Architect exam guide	Official SAA-C03 domains and scope.
AWS Skill Builder	Official courses, Cloud Quest, labs, and practice questions.
AWS Workshops	Guided hands-on workshops across AWS services.
AWS Architecture Center	Reference architectures and best practices.
AWS Well-Architected Labs	Hands-on security, reliability, performance, cost, and operations labs.

How to prove you learned it

- Explain the concept without reading notes.
- Complete the lab twice: once with instructions and once from memory.
- Push scripts, diagrams, screenshots, or written reflections to GitHub.
- Write down one failure, the cause, and the fix each week.
- Answer practice questions only after performing hands-on work.

Week 1 - IAM, governance, and account design

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	IAM users, groups, roles, policies, evaluation logic; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	MFA, federation, Organizations, SCPs, Control Tower concepts; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	KMS, Secrets Manager, Parameter Store; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	CloudTrail, Config, Trusted Advisor; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: secure account baseline and cross-role access	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

End-of-week questions

- 1 What problem does this technology or concept solve?
- 2 What are the most important commands, services, or components?
- 3 What broke during the lab, and how did you identify the cause?
- 4 How does this week connect to cloud or DevOps work?

Week 2 - VPC networking

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	CIDR planning, public/private subnets; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	Route tables, IGW, NAT gateway, endpoints; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	Security groups vs NACLs; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	VPC peering, Transit Gateway, VPN, Direct Connect concepts; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: two-AZ VPC with public and private tiers	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Week 3 - Compute and scaling

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	EC2 families, AMIs, user data, EBS; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	Auto Scaling groups and launch templates; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	ALB, NLB, health checks, session design; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	ECS, Fargate, EKS, Lambda decision points; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: load-balanced auto-scaled web tier	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Week 4 - Storage and content delivery

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	S3 classes, lifecycle, versioning, replication; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	EBS vs EFS vs FSx; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	CloudFront, caching, signed URLs, Origin Access Control; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	Storage Gateway and DataSync concepts; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: secure static site with CloudFront	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Week 5 - Databases and integration

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	RDS Multi-AZ, read replicas, Aurora; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	DynamoDB capacity, indexes, streams, DAX; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	ElastiCache, Redshift, OpenSearch use cases; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	SQS, SNS, EventBridge, Step Functions; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: serverless API with decoupled messaging	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Week 6 - Resilience and disaster recovery

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	Multi-AZ vs multi-Region; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	Backup and restore, pilot light, warm standby, active-active; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	Route 53 routing policies and health checks; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	AWS Backup and restore testing; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: write DR plan with RTO/RPO	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Week 7 - Performance, cost, and operations

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	CloudWatch metrics, logs, alarms, dashboards; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	Systems Manager, CloudFormation, tagging; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	Cost Explorer, Budgets, Savings Plans, Reserved Instances, Spot; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	Caching, scaling, service quotas; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Lab: cost and performance review of prior architecture	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Week 8 - Exam synthesis and architecture portfolio

Weekly deliverable: Complete the assigned lab, update your GitHub notes, and record a 3-5 minute explanation of what you learned.

Day	Exact learning assignment	Proof of work
Mon	Well-Architected pillars and tradeoffs; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Tue	Timed scenario questions; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Wed	Architecture diagram and decision record; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Thu	Full practice exams and weak-domain repair; create notes and a small console/CLI demonstration.	Notes + commands/screenshots
Fri	Final project: present secure, resilient three-tier design	Notes + commands/screenshots
Sat	Review this week, complete 30-50 scenario questions, and update the architecture decision journal.	Completed lab + weekly recap

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Final phase assessment

Do not move forward based only on time spent. Move forward when you can perform and explain the following:

- Complete the main project without copying every step.
- Troubleshoot at least three intentionally introduced failures.
- Explain the architecture or workflow using a diagram.
- Score at least 80% on two separate practice assessments when a certification is targeted.
- Teach the core concepts back to another person in plain language.

Certification note

Target: **AWS Solutions Architect - Associate (SAA-C03)**. Certification dates should be adjusted based on readiness. Passing quickly is less important than retaining the skill and being able to use it in a real environment.