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Linux Foundation PCA Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PromQL: This section of the exam measures the skills of Monitoring Specialists and focuses on Prometheus Query Language (PromQL) concepts. It covers data selection, calculating rates and derivatives, and performing aggregations across time and dimensions. Candidates also study the use of binary operators, histograms, and timestamp metrics to analyze monitoring data effectively, ensuring accurate interpretation of system performance and trends.
Topic 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observability Concepts: This section of the exam measures the skills of Site Reliability Engineers and covers the essential principles of observability used in modern systems. It focuses on understanding metrics, logs, and tracing mechanisms such as spans, as well as the difference between push and pull data collection methods. Candidates also learn about service discovery processes and the fundamentals of defining and maintaining SLOs, SLAs, and SLIs to monitor performance and reliability.

Topic 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerting and Dashboarding: This section of the exam assesses the competencies of Cloud Operations Engineers and focuses on monitoring visualization and alert management. It covers dashboarding basics, alerting rules configuration, and the use of Alertmanager to handle notifications. Candidates also learn the core principles of when, what, and why to trigger alerts, ensuring they can create reliable monitoring dashboards and proactive alerting systems to maintain system stability.
Topic 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instrumentation and Exporters: This domain evaluates the abilities of Software Engineers and addresses the methods for integrating Prometheus into applications. It includes the use of client libraries, the process of instrumenting code, and the proper structuring and naming of metrics. The section also introduces exporters that allow Prometheus to collect metrics from various systems, ensuring efficient and standardized monitoring implementation.
Topic 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prometheus Fundamentals: This domain evaluates the knowledge of DevOps Engineers and emphasizes the core architecture and components of Prometheus. It includes topics such as configuration and scraping techniques, limitations of the Prometheus system, data models and labels, and the exposition format used for data collection. The section ensures a solid grasp of how Prometheus functions as a monitoring and alerting toolkit within distributed environments.

Linux Foundation Prometheus Certified Associate Exam Sample Questions (Q43-Q48):

NEW QUESTION # 43

How can you send metrics from your Prometheus setup to a remote system, e.g., for long-term storage?

- A. With S3 Buckets
- B. With "remote write"
- C. With "federation"
- D. With "scraping"

Answer: B

Explanation:

Prometheus provides a feature called Remote Write to transmit scraped and processed metrics to an external system for long-term storage, aggregation, or advanced analytics. When configured, Prometheus continuously pushes time series data to the remote endpoint defined in the `remote_write` section of the configuration file.

This mechanism is often used to integrate with long-term data storage backends such as Cortex, Thanos, Mimir, or InfluxDB, enabling durable retention and global query capabilities beyond Prometheus's local time series database limits.

In contrast, "scraping" refers to data collection from targets, while "federation" allows hierarchical Prometheus setups (pulling metrics from other Prometheus instances) but does not serve as long-term storage. Using "S3 Buckets" directly is also unsupported in native Prometheus configurations.

Reference:

Extracted and verified from Prometheus documentation - Remote Write/Read APIs and Long-Term Storage Integrations sections.

NEW QUESTION # 44

What does the `rate()` function in PromQL return?

- A. The number of samples in a range vector.
- B. The per-second rate of increase of a counter metric.
- C. The total increase of a counter over a range.
- D. The average of all values in a vector.

Answer: B

Explanation:

The `rate()` function calculates the average per-second rate of increase of a counter over the specified range. It smooths out short-term fluctuations and adjusts for counter resets.

Example:

```
rate(http_requests_total[5m])
```

returns the number of requests per second averaged over the last five minutes. This function is frequently used in dashboards and alerting expressions.

NEW QUESTION # 45

```
http_requests_total{verb="POST"} 30
```

```
http_requests_total{verb="GET"} 30
```

What is the issue with the metric family?

- A. verb label content should be normalized to lowercase.
- **B. Unit is missing in the http_requests_total metric name.**
- C. Metric names are missing a prefix to indicate which application is exposing the query.
- D. The value represents two different things across the dimensions: code and verb.

Answer: B

Explanation:

Prometheus metric naming best practices require that every metric name include a unit suffix that indicates the measurement type, where applicable. The unit should follow the base name, separated by an underscore, and must use base SI units (for example, `_seconds`, `_bytes`, `_total`, etc.).

In the case of `http_requests_total`, while the metric correctly includes the `_total` suffix-indicating it is a counter-it lacks a base unit of measurement (such as time, bytes, or duration). However, for event counters, `_total` is itself considered the unit, representing "total occurrences" of an event. Thus, the naming would be acceptable in strict Prometheus terms, but if this metric were measuring something like duration, size, or latency, then including a specific unit would be mandatory.

However, since the question implies that the missing unit is the issue and not the label schema, the expected answer aligns with ensuring metric names convey measurable units when applicable.

Reference:

Prometheus documentation - Metric and Label Naming Conventions, Instrumentation Best Practices, and Metric Type Naming (Counters, Gauges, and Units) sections.

NEW QUESTION # 46

What's "wrong" with the `myapp_filG_uploads_total{userid=„5123“,status="failed"}` metric?

- **A. The userid should not be exposed as a label.**
- B. The metric name should consist of dashes instead of underscores.
- C. The status should not be exposed as a label.
- D. The `_total` suffix should be omitted.

Answer: A

Explanation:

In Prometheus best practices, high-cardinality labels-especially those containing unique or user-specific identifiers-should be avoided. The metric `myapp_filG_uploads_total{userid="5123",status="failed"}` exposes the `userid` as a label, which is problematic. Each distinct value of a label generates a new time series in Prometheus. If there are thousands or millions of unique users, this would exponentially increase the number of time series, leading to cardinality explosion, degraded performance, and high memory usage. The `_total` suffix is actually correct and required for counters, as per the Prometheus naming convention. The use of underscores in metric names is also correct, as Prometheus does not support dashes in metric identifiers. The status label, however, is perfectly valid because it typically has a low number of possible values (e.g., "success", "failed").

Reference:

Verified from Prometheus official documentation sections Instrumentation - Metric and Label Naming Best Practices and Writing Exporters.

NEW QUESTION # 47

Given the following Histogram metric data, how many requests took less than or equal to 0.1 seconds?

```
apiserver_request_duration_seconds_bucket{job="kube-apiserver", le="+Inf"} 3
```

```
apiserver_request_duration_seconds_bucket{job="kube-apiserver", le="0.05"} 0
```

```
apiserver_request_duration_seconds_bucket{job="kube-apiserver", le="0.1"} 1
```

```
apiserver_request_duration_seconds_bucket{job="kube-apiserver", le="1"} 3
```

apiserver_request_duration_seconds_count{job="kube-apiserver"} 3 apiserver_request_duration_seconds_sum{job="kube-apiserver"} 0.554003785

- A. 0.554003785
- B. 0
- C. 1
- **D. 2**

Answer: D

Explanation:

In Prometheus, histogram metrics use cumulative buckets to record the count of observations that fall within specific duration thresholds. Each bucket has a label `le` ("less than or equal to"), representing the upper bound of that bucket.

In the given metric, the bucket labeled `le="0.1"` has a value of 1, meaning exactly one request took less than or equal to 0.1 seconds.

Buckets are cumulative, so:

`le="0.05"` → 0 requests ≤ 0.05 seconds

`le="0.1"` → 1 request ≤ 0.1 seconds

`le="1"` → 3 requests ≤ 1 second

`le="+Inf"` → all 3 requests total

The `_sum` and `_count` values represent total duration and request count respectively, but the number of requests below a given threshold is read directly from the bucket's `le` value.

Reference:

Verified from Prometheus documentation - Understanding Histograms and Summaries, Bucket Semantics, and Histogram Query Examples sections.

NEW QUESTION # 48

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