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Linux Foundation PCA Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	• 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 2	• 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 3	• 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 4	• 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 5	• 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.

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Linux Foundation Prometheus Certified Associate Exam Sample Questions (Q47-Q52):

NEW QUESTION # 47
http_requests_total{verb="POST"} 30
http_requests_total{verb="GET"} 30
What is the issue with the metric family?

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

Answer: C

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 # 48
Which kind of metrics are associated with the function deriv()?

- A. Counters
- B. Summaries
- C. Gauges
- D. Histograms

Answer: C

Explanation:
The deriv() function in PromQL calculates the per-second derivative of a time series using linear regression over the provided time range. It estimates the instantaneous rate of change for metrics that can both increase and decrease - which are typically gauges. Because counters can only increase (except when reset), rate() or increase() functions are more appropriate for them. deriv() is used to identify trends in fluctuating metrics like CPU temperature, memory utilization, or queue depth, where values rise and fall continuously.
In contrast, summaries and histograms consist of multiple sub-metrics (e.g., _count, _sum, _bucket) and are not directly suited for derivative calculation without decomposition.
Reference:
Extracted and verified from Prometheus documentation - PromQL Functions - deriv(), Understanding Rates and Derivatives, and Gauge Metric Examples.

NEW QUESTION # 49
What is the name of the official *nix OS kernel metrics exporter?

- A. node_exporter
- B. os_exporter
- C. metrics_exporter
- D. Prometheus_exporter

Answer: A

Explanation:
The official Prometheus exporter for collecting system-level and kernel-related metrics from Linux and other UNIX-like operating systems is the Node Exporter.
The Node Exporter exposes hardware and OS metrics including CPU load, memory usage, disk I/O, network traffic, and kernel statistics. It is designed to provide host-level observability and serves data at the default endpoint :9100/metrics in the standard Prometheus exposition text format.
This exporter is part of the official Prometheus ecosystem and is widely deployed for infrastructure monitoring. None of the other listed options (Prometheus_exporter, metrics_exporter, or os_exporter) are official components of the Prometheus project.
Reference:
Verified from Prometheus documentation - Node Exporter Overview, System Metrics Collection, and Official Exporters List.

NEW QUESTION # 50
Which metric type uses the delta() function?

- A. Info
- B. Counter
- C. Gauge
- D. Histogram

Answer: C

Explanation:
The delta() function in PromQL calculates the difference between the first and last samples in a range vector over a specified time window. This function is primarily used with gauge metrics, as they can move both up and down, and delta() captures that net change directly.
For example, if a gauge metric like node_memory_Active_bytes changes from 1000 to 1200 within a 5-minute window, delta(node_memory_Active_bytes[5m]) returns 200.

Unlike rate() or increase(), which are designed for monotonically increasing counters, delta() is ideal for metrics representing resource levels, capacities, or instantaneous measurements that fluctuate over time.
Reference:
Verified from Prometheus documentation - PromQL Range Functions - delta(), Gauge Semantics and Usage, and Comparing delta() and rate() sections.

NEW QUESTION # 51
Where does Prometheus store its time series data by default?

- A. In an external database such as InfluxDB.
- B. In-memory only.
- C. In etcd.
- D. In an embedded TSDB on local disk.

Answer: D

Explanation:
By default, Prometheus stores its time series data in a local, embedded Time Series Database (TSDB) on disk. The data is organized in block files under the data/ directory inside Prometheus's storage path.
Each block typically covers two hours of data, containing chunks, index, and metadata files. Older blocks are compacted and deleted based on retention settings.

NEW QUESTION # 52
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