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## Linux Foundation PCA Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>
Topic 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>
Topic 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>

Topic 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Topic 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

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## Linux Foundation Prometheus Certified Associate Exam Sample Questions (Q22-Q27):

### NEW QUESTION # 22

How would you add text from the instance label to the alert's description for the following alert?

alert: InstanceDown

expr: up == 0

for: 5m

labels:

severity: page

annotations:

description: "Instance INSTANCE\_NAME\_HERE down"

- A. Use \$value.instance instead of INSTANCE\_NAME\_HERE
- B. Use \$expr.instance instead of INSTANCE\_NAME\_HERE
- C. Use \$metric.instance instead of INSTANCE\_NAME\_HERE
- D. Use \$labels.instance instead of INSTANCE\_NAME\_HERE

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

In Prometheus alerting rules, you can dynamically reference label values in annotations and labels using template variables. Each alert has access to its labels via the variable \$labels, which allows direct insertion of label data into alert messages or descriptions.

To include the value of the instance label dynamically in the description, replace the placeholder INSTANCE\_NAME\_HERE with:  
description: "Instance {{\$labels.instance}} down"

or equivalently:

description: "Instance \$labels.instance down"

Both forms are valid - the first follows Go templating syntax and is the recommended format.

This ensures that when the alert fires, the instance label (e.g., a hostname or IP) is automatically included in the message, producing outputs like:

Instance 192.168.1.15:9100 down

Options B, C, and D are invalid because \$value, \$expr, and \$metric are not recognized context variables in alert templates.

Reference:

Verified from Prometheus documentation - Alerting Rules Configuration, Using Template Variables in Annotations and Labels, and Prometheus Templating Guide (Go Templates and \$labels usage) sections.

### NEW QUESTION # 23

Which Alertmanager feature allows you to temporarily stop notifications for a specific alert?

- A. Silence
- B. Deduplication
- C. Grouping
- D. Inhibition

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

The Silence feature in Alertmanager allows operators to mute specific alerts for a defined period. Each silence includes a matcher (labels), a creator, a comment, and an expiration time.

Silencing is useful during maintenance windows or known outages to prevent alert noise. Unlike inhibition, silences are manual and explicit.

### NEW QUESTION # 24

How would you correctly name a metric that provides metadata information about the binary?

- A. app\_metadata
- B. app\_build\_desc
- C. app\_build\_info
- D. app\_build

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

The Prometheus naming convention for metrics that expose build or version information about an application binary uses the `_info` suffix. The standard pattern is:

`<application>_build_info`

This metric typically includes constant labels such as version, revision, branch, and goversion to describe the build environment.

For example:

`app_build_info{version="1.2.3", revision="abc123", goversion="go1.22"} 1` This approach follows the official Prometheus instrumentation guidelines, where metrics ending in `_info` convey metadata or constant characteristics about the running process.

The other options do not conform to the Prometheus best practice of suffix-based semantic naming.

Reference:

Extracted and verified from Prometheus documentation - Metric Naming Conventions, Exposing Build Information, and Standard `_info` Metrics sections.

### NEW QUESTION # 25

Which function would you use to calculate the 95th percentile latency from histogram data?

- A. `histogram_quantile(0.95, sum(rate(http_request_duration_seconds_bucket[5m])) by (le))`
- B. `percentile(http_request_duration_seconds, 0.95)`
- C. `quantile_over_time(0.95, http_request_duration_seconds[5m])`
- D. `topk(0.95, http_request_duration_seconds)`

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

To calculate a percentile (e.g., 95th percentile) from histogram data in Prometheus, the correct function is `histogram_quantile()`. It estimates quantiles based on cumulative bucket counts.

Example:

`histogram_quantile(0.95, sum(rate(http_request_duration_seconds_bucket[5m])) by (le))` This computes the 95th percentile request duration across all observed instances over the last 5 minutes.



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