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Linux Foundation PCA Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	• 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 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	• 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 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.

Linux Foundation Prometheus Certified Associate Exam Sample Questions (Q37-Q42):

NEW QUESTION # 37
What is the role of the Pushgateway in Prometheus?

- A. To receive metrics pushed by short-lived batch jobs for later scraping by Prometheus.
- B. To visualize metrics in Grafana.
- C. To scrape short-lived targets directly.
- D. To store metrics long-term for historical analysis.

Answer: A

Explanation:
The Pushgateway is a Prometheus component used to handle short-lived batch jobs that cannot be scraped directly. These jobs push their metrics to the Pushgateway, which then exposes them for Prometheus to scrape.
This ensures metrics persist beyond the job's lifetime. However, it's not designed for continuously running services, as metrics in the Pushgateway remain static until replaced.

NEW QUESTION # 38
With the following metrics over the last 5 minutes:
up{instance="localhost"} 1 1 1 1 1
up{instance="server1"} 1 0 0 0 0
What does the following query return:
min_over_time(up[5m])

- A. {instance="server1"} 0
- B. {instance="localhost"} 1 {instance="server1"} 0

Answer: B

Explanation:
The min_over_time() function in PromQL returns the minimum sample value observed within the specified time range for each time series.
In the given data:
For up{instance="localhost"}, all samples are 1. The minimum value over 5 minutes is therefore 1.
For up{instance="server1"}, the sequence is 1 0 0 0 0. The minimum observed value is 0.
Thus, the query min_over_time(up[5m]) returns two series - one per instance:
{instance="localhost"} 1
{instance="server1"} 0

This query is commonly used to check uptime consistency. If the minimum value over the time window is 0, it indicates at least one scrape failure (target down).
Reference:
Verified from Prometheus documentation - PromQL Range Vector Functions, min_over_time() definition, and up Metric Semantics sections.

NEW QUESTION # 39
What is the best way to expose a timestamp from your application?

- A. With a constant metric of value 1 and the timestamp as label.
- B. With a constant metric of value 1 and the timestamp as metric timestamp.
- C. With a counter that is increased to the correct value.
- D. With a gauge that has the timestamp as value.

Answer: D

Explanation:
The correct way to expose a timestamp from an application in Prometheus is to use a gauge metric where the timestamp value (in Unix time, seconds since epoch) is stored as the metric's value. This approach aligns with the Prometheus data model, which discourages embedding timestamps as labels or metadata.
Example:
app_last_successful_backup_timestamp_seconds 1.696358e+09
In this example, the gauge represents the timestamp of the last successful backup. The _seconds suffix indicates the unit of measurement, making the metric self-descriptive. Prometheus automatically assigns timestamps to scraped samples, so the metric's value is treated purely as data, not as a Prometheus sample time.
Options B and D are incorrect because Prometheus does not allow arbitrary timestamps or labels for time values. Option C is incorrect since counters are monotonically increasing and not suited for discrete timestamp values.
Reference:
Verified from Prometheus documentation - Instrumentation Best Practices (Exposing Timestamps), Gauge Metric Semantics, and Metric Naming Conventions - _seconds suffix.

NEW QUESTION # 40
What does scrape_interval configure in Prometheus?

- A. It defines how often to send alerts.
- B. It defines how frequently to scrape targets.
- C. It defines how frequently to evaluate rules.
- D. It defines how often to refresh metrics.

Answer: B

Explanation:
In Prometheus, the scrape_interval parameter specifies how frequently the Prometheus server should scrape metrics from its configured targets. Each target exposes an HTTP endpoint (usually /metrics) that Prometheus collects data from at a fixed cadence. By default, the scrape_interval is set to 1 minute, but it can be overridden globally or per job configuration in the Prometheus YAML configuration file.
This setting directly affects the resolution of collected time series data-a shorter interval increases data granularity but also adds network and storage overhead, while a longer interval reduces load but might miss short-lived metric variations.
It is important to distinguish scrape_interval from evaluation_interval, which defines how often Prometheus evaluates recording and alerting rules. Thus, scrape_interval pertains only to data collection frequency, not to alerting or rule evaluation.
Reference:
Extracted and verified from Prometheus documentation on Configuration File - scrape_interval and Scraping Fundamentals sections.

NEW QUESTION # 41
Given the metric prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds, how do you know in which month the lowest timestamp of your Prometheus TSDB belongs?

- A. prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds % month
- B. month(prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds)
- C. (time() - prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds) / 86400
- D. format_date(prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds,"%M")

Answer: C

Explanation:
The metric prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds provides the oldest stored sample timestamp in Prometheus's local TSDB (in Unix epoch seconds). To determine the age or approximate date of this timestamp, you compare it with the current time (using time() in PromQL).
The expression:
(time() - prometheus_tsdb_lowest_timestamp_seconds) / 86400
converts the difference between the current time and the oldest timestamp from seconds into days (1 day = 86,400 seconds). This gives the number of days since the earliest sample was stored, allowing you to infer the time range and approximate month manually.
The other options are invalid because PromQL does not support direct date formatting (format_date) or month() extraction functions.
Reference:
Extracted and verified from Prometheus documentation - TSDB Internal Metrics, Time Functions in PromQL, and Using time() for Relative Calculations.

NEW QUESTION # 42
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