

Getting Started Guide

My First Jam



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What is AWS Jam ?

The AWS JAM is an event where participants experience a wide range of AWS services in a series of prepared scenarios that represent common use-cases and operational tasks, such as remediation at scale, automation, forensics, incident response, AI/ ML, DevOps, compliance and many others. The event is gamified, with teams competing to score points by completing a series of challenges over the course of the event. AWS provides access to pre-created infrastructure that is based on common use cases that participants use to determine what happened, how to best respond, and deploy appropriate solutions. The challenges have varying degrees of difficulty and points associated with them. A live leader-board provides updates on stats and progress. Clues and guidance help your participants move through the challenges.

AWS Jam is based upon three core principles: play, learn, validate. It provides a practical, hands-on approach to learning on the AWS platform – and the ability to assess those skills in a way that reflects real-world usage of AWS. An AWS Jam is made up of a combination of challenges that allow participants to play around and experiment within the auto-provisioned AWS environments. While each challenge has a set of goals, the path to the solution is open-ended, allowing the participant freedom to play and learn by exploring different approaches and combinations of AWS services. Challenge hints are embedded in the scenario to prevent participants from wasting too much time or getting frustrated at a dead-end. AWS Jam not only has the ability to identify whether the goals were achieved, but can also programmatically validate that the solution captures best practices that are known to scale effectively. AWS Jam comes with over 140 challenges pre-created by subject matter experts to experience real-world problems. These challenges cover topics like security, DevOps, AI/ML, data analytics, migration tooling, and IoT. Customers also have the ability to design their own challenges – tailored to their particular environment and objectives. Upon the completion of an AWS Jam Event, event owners can access reports measuring the performance of their participants and suggestions on areas for improvement. The AWS Jam provides companies with the training and validation mechanisms they need to pursue their most important business outcomes and also provides individual employees an engaging, gamified way to develop and assess their skills.

It's my first time, what should I expect ?

AWS Jam is similar to an "escape room". You are going to challenge your AWS skills by solving various scenarios that are presented to you throughout your Jam experience. Like an "escape room," you choose to work with a team with different skills and strengths. Together with the team, you will have to build a strategy on which challenges you would like to take and choose who is doing what. Sometime you will have to do research, or you will be the one who hands-on in the environment. Also, similar to a real use case from your organization, you will work with colleagues that may have domain expertise in security, networking, or databases to reach the optimum solution and leverage their knowledge.

Jam Orientation - For each Jam event, there is typically a 20 minutes kick-off where you will need to participate and hear the facilitator instructions on the Jam and provide details on how to register and guidelines about getting support and start solving challenges. If it's your first time, it's a must for you to join this session.

Registration – You will be provided with a secret key, which allows you to register for the event at any time before or during the kickoff session. For some events you may be automatically assigned to a team, this will be done by an event facilitator after everyone has registered. For other events you will be prompted to either join an existing team or create a new team. We recommend that you find 2-3 teammates so you can practice the Jam together as a team. If you don't have a team, then it's recommended to try and join an existing team that has available places. It will also allow you to network with people you don't know.



The Jam Application – When you get into the Jam application, you will first have to register. Once done, you will have access to the event challenges that you have been designated to. When you are in the application and start the Jam, the session starts with the following:

1. **Team Chat** - Locate the team chat in the bottom right corner of the page and introduce yourself to the team. Share your skills and level of knowledge in AWS.
2. **Team Audio/Video meeting** - Locate the Team Video capability and video conference with your team as needed. To operate an audio/video meeting navigate to the team tab or within the team chat panel. A meeting can only be created by the team owner or if teams are auto assigned anyone can create a team meeting.
3. **Challenge sets** - Take 5-10 minutes to browse the challenges and see what area you have most chances to get points. The challenges are spread over a “world map” if you see a “lock” icon on the challenges, it’s not open, or the session has not started yet.
4. **Strategy** - Agree with your teammates if you want to work together jointly on challenges or split challenges to pairs or individuals based on your skills.
5. **Communication** - When you start work on a challenge , notify the other team members.
6. **Non-Active Members** - If you have a teammate who is not active and want to remove him from the team, please raise a chat request with a facilitator. So in case, there is a new person coming to the Jam, he may want to join your team and increase your chance to win. Please note if you don’t see the button, your event manager have not activated the support chat capability.
7. **Lab Details** - Once you start work on a challenge, please note the AWS Lab account details are at the bottom of the page, pay attention to the account number and the region associated with it.
8. **AWS Lab Access** - look for the "AWS Console" button at the top of the challenge page. You must start the challenge before you can access the lab environment.
9. **Output properties** – look for this TAB on the left side of the screen are additional links and parameters that have been created as part of the challenges, and in many challenges, you will need these in order to complete the challenge.
10. **CLI Access** - CLI access will be provided to you in multiple language scripts, locate those at the top of the page in the challenge page when you instructed to use those.
11. **Validate a Challenge** – Some challenges require submitting an answer, and some challenges are validated automatically to check for completion. You will get instructions on how to complete a challenge. When you have a button on the challenge page that says “Check my Progress,” you will know that the system will automatically verify that your challenge has been completed after you completed the challenge task.
12. **Game dashboards** – On the top of the screen, you will have tabs and access to the game dashboard; in those tabs, you can see your team ranking, points earned, and additional trends to understand your success in the game.

How should I Prepare ?

AWS Jam is built on real-life scenarios, and typically jam challenges require a level of understanding across multiple domains.

Pre-requisites:

1. You should have hands-on experience on the AWS console, and you should know how to navigate the AWS services and have some experience with basic services like S3, VPC, EC2, KMS, cloud watch, cloud trail. We would recommend having a practitioner level. Please note that challenges can also involve lambda scripting and additional services and deep domain expertise, in that case, please consult with the Jam event manager for additional details.



2. Typically, a Jam event is either on a specific domain like DevOps or Security but could be a mix of domains, and you should know that before approaching the Jam Event.
3. AWS Jam does not provide a material for preparing for a session; in most cases, you will be notified of the high-level theme. This will be a fair play among all of the participants.
4. It's highly recommended to work as a team to leverage the team skills as much as possible and widen the area of knowledge and ability to research.
5. In case you are not able to find a solution, don't worry. You can always use the clues provided to you as part of the challenge. There is a point deduction for using clues, but you will get the instructions on how to solve the challenge.
6. Please note that indifferent to a standard step-by-step, self-paced lab, the Jam challenges are not directly providing an answer to the solution, you should still use clues that will point you in the right direction to solve the challenges. As you unlock the clues, each clue will provide more and more precise details on how to approach the solution.

Should I work in a team or alone ?

The Jam challenges may be spread across multiple domains and skills set / knowledge, and each challenge can take one hour or more to solve. It's highly recommended to work as part of a team so you can brainstorm and maximize the points you can get by solving as many challenges as possible and winning the game.

What should I do at the registration phase ?

1. If you have not participated within an AWS Jam before, please register on the registration link provided above using your email and a password of your choice (please note, it's not the secret key). If you participated within a previous AWS Jam, just log in using your previously created credentials.
2. Once you have logged in, you will be asked to enter the secret key to the event. The secret key provided above will allow you to access the event.
3. Then you will have two options:
 - **Join an existing Team:** Find a team with open space for you (and possibly any of your colleagues that you want to work with) to join. Once you joined the team, reach out to the other members via the Team Page to introduce yourself!
 - **Create a new Team:** If there are no teams that have available space, or you want to be on a team with only specific individuals, you can create a new team. When creating a new team, if you do not want other participants to join, you can make it private and assign a Team Password.

I don't know AWS, is it something I can still use?

AWS Jam works based on hands-on experience on the AWS platform, so it's essential to know how to log in and navigate the services and features in the AWS console. At the minimum, we recommend having a practitioner level of knowledge with hands-on experience. This does not necessarily mean that You will be able to solve the challenges without clues . However, it will provide you the ability to use clues and follow up instruction to solve the challenges.

Have Questions ?

Please reach your Jam event organizer for additional questions, and in case you will need more information please contact aws-jam@amazon.com