

Note

Pay figures are approximate US averages from industry salary surveys — actual pay varies by market, experience, and role. Exam prices are current public list prices.

Disclaimer note block for salary sheet

The Heavy Hitters

CISSP approx \$130K-\$160K, exam \$749. Best for senior security roles, management track; needs 5 yrs experience

Google Cloud Professional Architect approx \$140K-\$160K, exam \$200. Best for cloud architects going all-in on GCP

AWS Solutions Architect Associate approx \$130K-\$155K, exam \$150. Best for the most broadly demanded cloud cert

CKA (Kubernetes Admin) approx \$125K-\$150K, exam \$395. Best for DevOps and platform engineers

Heavy Hitters block for salary sheet

Best ROI for Beginners

Security+ (SY0-701) approx \$95K-\$115K, exam \$404. The entry ticket to cybersecurity, DoD 8570 approved

CCNA (200-301) approx \$85K-\$100K, exam \$300. Still the most respected associate-level cert

Network+ (N10-009) approx \$75K-\$90K, exam \$404. Networking fundamentals before the CCNA

Linux+ (XK0-006) approx \$80K-\$100K, exam \$404. The underrated one; Linux runs the cloud

Best ROI block for salary sheet

The Math That Matters

Exam cost vs first-year pay a \$404 Security+ exam against a ~\$100K salary is 0.4% of year one

Experience multiplies certs open the door; 2-3 years of experience moves you up the ranges

Stack, don't collect Security+ to CySA+ to CISSP is a ladder; random certs are a pile

Cheapest entry a \$5 study guide plus a \$404 exam is the lowest-cost career change in tech

Math block for salary sheet

More from ByteBar

Security+ (SY0-701) Study Guide — \$5 Start with the best ROI in IT: get it at bytebarhq.com

ByteBar on YouTube Watch the money lane: "From Cert to Paycheck" playlist at youtube.com/@bytebarexamprep

Footer block for salary sheet



By **bytebar**
cheatography.com/bytebar/

Published 7th October, 2026.
Last updated 7th October, 2026.
Page 1 of 1.

Sponsored by **Readable.com**
Measure your website readability!
<https://readable.com>