✅ Checklist #1: AWS Free Tier Account Setup

Goal: Create a secure AWS Free Tier account and prepare for safe experimentation.

🧾 Account Setup

- Go to https://aws.amazon.com/free and click Create a Free Account
- Use a professional email address (not your school or personal spam email)
- Add credit card info (AWS requires this to verify identity, but you won't be charged if you stay in the Free Tier)
- Select Free Tier during signup
- Choose a strong password and set up an IAM user later (see below)

🔐 Security Setup

- Enable MFA (Multi-Factor Authentication) on your root account (guide here)
- Create a new IAM user (never use the root account for daily use!)
- Assign your IAM user to a group with AdministratorAccess (only for beginners and learning)
- Install the AWS CLI and configure it with aws configure

💸 Budget Protection

- Set a billing alert for $1.00/month to avoid surprise charges (guide here)
- Regularly check Billing Dashboard for any unusual charges

✅ Checklist #2: **First Lab – Launch and Connect to EC2 Linux Instance**

Goal: Launch your first free Linux server and connect to it.

🧱 Launch an EC2 Instance

- Go to EC2 Dashboard in the AWS Console
- Click Launch Instance
- Name your instance: my-first-linux
- Choose Amazon Linux 2023 (Free Tier Eligible) or Ubuntu 22.04
- Choose t2.micro instance type (free tier eligible)
- Click Create new key pair, download the .pem file (KEEP IT SAFE)
- In the network settings, allow SSH (port 22) from My IP
- Leave the storage as default (8GB)
- Launch the instance

💻 Connect to Your Instance

- Open your terminal (Mac/Linux) or WSL (Windows)
- Move the .pem file to your ~/.ssh/ folder and run chmod 400 keyname.pem
- **Connect using:**

  ssh -i ~/.ssh/keyname.pem ec2-user@

  (for Amazon Linux)

  or

  ssh -i ~/.ssh/keyname.pem ubuntu@

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(for Ubuntu)

🧪 First Commands to Try

- ls — list files

- pwd — print working directory

- top — show running processes

- sudo yum update -y or sudo apt update && sudo apt upgrade -y (depending on distro)