Exam Guide 18

CompTIA A+ Exam Guide

Prepare for Core 1 and Core 2 with real-world support scenarios.

01
Hardware

02
Systems

03
Support

What You Will Be Able to Explain

Outcome-focused, not tool-name memorization

01 **role lens**
Understand how A+ maps to entry-level IT support

02 **workflows**
Prepare for performance-based questions through hands-on labs

03 **evidence**
Build a troubleshooting portfolio around realistic support tickets

A+ Is About Support Judgment

The workplace pressure behind the career path

Current Friction

- Learners memorize parts without symptoms
- PBQs are treated as surprises
- Operational procedures are skipped
- Security is studied too late

Why This Role Matters

- Study by ticket scenario
- Practice hands-on configuration
- Document steps clearly
- Connect support work to user impact

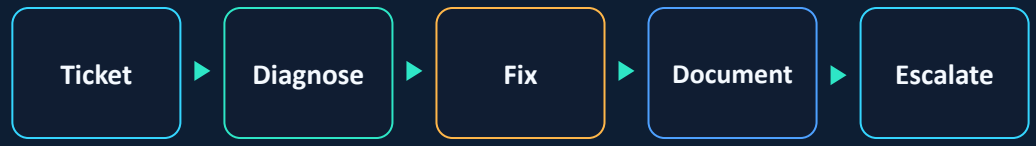
Scenario: First Week on the Help Desk

A technician handles five common user issues in one shift

Common User Tickets

- A laptop will not boot after a storage warning
- A user reports suspicious email
- A printer produces poor output
- A Windows service blocks an application
- A remote worker cannot connect securely

Support Workflow Sequence



Teaching Message

A+ validates structured support habits as much as technical vocabulary.

Role Reality Check

What employers actually expect you to do

Not enough	Workplace evidence	Employer signal
Parts memorization	Symptom-based troubleshooting	A+ support readiness
No documentation	Ticket notes and escalation	Workplace communication
Security last	Security in every device task	Core 2 awareness

Core Foundations

Skills that transfer across tools and platforms

Hardware & Infrastructure

- PC Hardware & Mobile Devices
- Printers & System Peripherals
- Wired & Wireless Networking
- Virtualization & Cloud Basics

Operating Systems & Security

- Windows, Linux & macOS
- Security Threats & Malware Mitigation
- Operational Procedures & Best Practices
- Systematic Troubleshooting Methodology

Core Objective

A+ is a practical foundation for help desk, desktop support and junior IT operations roles.

Support Ticket Flow

A realistic sequence you can explain in an interview

01 Receive ▸ **02** Question ▸ **03** Diagnose ▸ **04** Resolve ▸ **05** Document

Key Expectation

The exam rewards the same habits a support team expects: safe troubleshooting, clear notes and appropriate escalation.

Tools Connected to Tasks

Labels only matter when the task is clear

Core 1

TOOLS / RESOURCES

Hardware, mobile, networking

EVIDENCE TO PRODUCE

Device troubleshooting

Core 2

TOOLS / RESOURCES

OS, security, software

EVIDENCE TO PRODUCE

System support

PBQs

TOOLS / RESOURCES

Config and classification tasks

EVIDENCE TO PRODUCE

Hands-on confidence

Workplace

TOOLS / RESOURCES

Ticketing and communication

EVIDENCE TO PRODUCE

Support evidence

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Small misunderstandings create weak portfolios

Weak approach

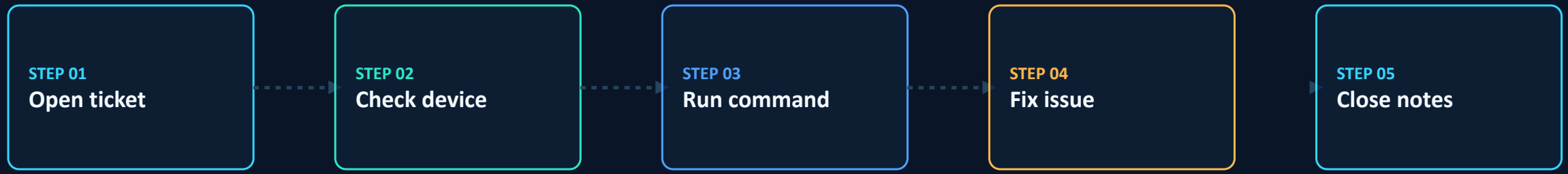
- Ignoring printers and mobile devices
- Skipping command-line tools
- Treating security as definitions only
- Not practicing ticket documentation

Correct approach

- Use short scenario drills
- Run basic Windows and Linux commands
- Classify phishing, malware and access risks
- Write concise support notes

Practical Lab Path

Build one connected case, not random screenshots



Lab Implementation Scope

Build a comprehensive, small home lab environment designed to replicate real-world enterprise scenarios:

- Practice critical system configurations and diagnostics (Windows settings, Linux commands).
- Simulate common workspace tickets (printer scenarios, network connectivity checks).
- Develop hands-on cybersecurity experience (malware-response practice, complete ticket documenting).

Intermediate Capabilities

Where learners become useful to real teams

Capability	Workplace Use	Validation / Proof
Hardware	Diagnose component symptoms	**Repair plan**
OS support	Services, accounts, files	**Configuration evidence**
Security	Phishing and malware basics	**Response notes**
Ops procedures	Safety and documentation	**Ticket sample**

Advanced or Emerging Capability

Learn this after the foundation is reliable

Target Concepts & Focus Areas

- **Performance-based simulation:** Interactive scenarios replicating certification environments.
- **Zero-touch deployment:** Remote support and modernized device-provisioning concepts.
- **Cloud productivity:** High-level management basics for enterprise SaaS environments.
- **Security-first mindset:** Integration of security safeguards into standard system diagnostics.
- **Professional communication:** Safe escalation procedures and structured client updates.

Core Hands-On Tools

- Windows tools
- Linux CLI
- Device Manager
- Services
- Event Viewer
- Ticket system
- VMs
- Practice PBQs

Portfolio Evidence

Show decisions, tests, and trade-offs

Artifact	What it proves	Interview angle
Ticket log	Support communication	**What did you try first?**
Command sheet	Practical operations	**Which command proves the issue?**
Security scenario	Risk awareness	**How did you protect the user?**
Hardware checklist	Troubleshooting method	**What changed after the fix?**

U.S. Job-Market Reality Check

Use job-board numbers as dated signals, not guarantees

Market Realities

- **Search Dynamics:** Counts change by search phrase, duplicate postings, recruiters, and remote filters.
- **Entry-Level Focus:** A+ supports entry-level IT support, help desk and desktop support pathways.
- **Soft Skills:** Employers still want communication, customer service and documentation evidence.
- **Foundation First:** Use A+ as a starting foundation before Network+, Security+ or cloud support.

Target Entry-Level Roles

- Help Desk Technician
- IT Support Specialist
- Desktop Support
- Field Technician
- Technical Support
- Junior SysAdmin

No salary figures included. Update exact posting counts again on the publish date.

How ITLearn360 Helps You Build Evidence

Workbook + labs + interview practice + portfolio artifacts

Step 01

Case Study

A+ workbook structured around real-world Core 1 & Core 2 ticket scenarios.

Step 02

Guided Labs

Hands-on PBQ-style practice and essential command-reference sheets.

Step 03

Artifacts

Professional troubleshooting notes and formal escalation templates.

Step 04

Interview Q&A

Rigorous practice covering scenario tests, trade-offs, and critical reasoning.

Step 05

Resume Story

Concrete portfolio evidence tailored specifically to target support roles.

Interview Conversation Practice

Translate your project into clear workplace reasoning

Interviewer asks

- “How do you handle a user who cannot boot?”
- “How do you identify phishing?”
- “When do you escalate a ticket?”

Strong answer includes

- Follow a safe step-by-step troubleshooting method
- Mention indicators, reporting and user protection
- Escalate when access, safety, scope or impact exceeds your role

30-Day Action Plan

A practical start without invented timelines

WEEK 01

BUILD

Study hardware and networking tickets

PROOF

Core 1 notes

WEEK 02

BUILD

Practice OS and command tasks

PROOF

Core 2 evidence

WEEK 03

BUILD

Simulate PBQs and security cases

PROOF

Ticket portfolio

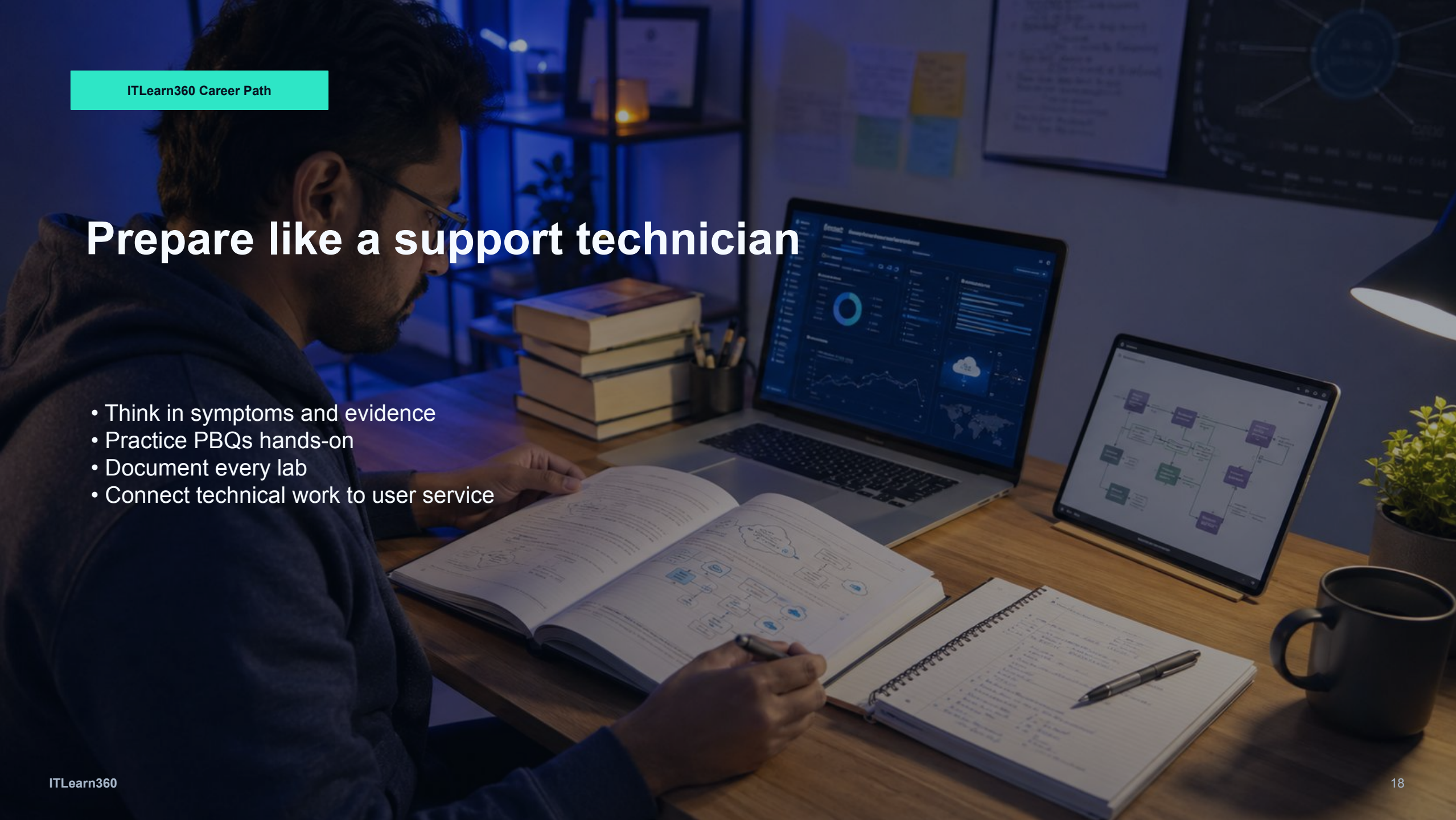
WEEK 04

BUILD

Review weak domains and interviews

PROOF

Readiness checklist



Prepare like a support technician

- Think in symptoms and evidence
- Practice PBQs hands-on
- Document every lab
- Connect technical work to user service