

Review the reasoning, not the diagram

Use this free self-scorecard after a timed mock. Record evidence from your answer, find the weakest skill, and choose one drill for your next round.

Date / system:

Rate each skill from 0 to 2

Circle one score: 0 = missing, 1 = attempted with gaps, or 2 = clear reasoning tied to the stated requirements. Write a specific moment or sentence as evidence; do not score yourself on confidence alone.

SKILL	SCORE	EVIDENCE FROM MY ANSWER
Trace Follow a request, event, or state change across the system.	0 1 2	
Explain Describe how a mechanism works, beyond naming a tool.	0 1 2	
Defend Compare an alternative and state the cost of your choice.	0 1 2	
Change Adapt when traffic or a requirement shifts.	0 1 2	
Break Predict a concrete failure and explain detection and recovery.	0 1 2	
Implement Connect a guarantee to the API, data model, or code that enforces it.	0 1 2	

Choose one drill

Pick the lowest-scoring skill, practise it once, then repeat the prompt with one changed requirement.

Debrief

Strongest evidence:

Biggest gap:

Lowest-scoring skill:

Focused practice

LOWEST SKILL	A FOCUSED PRACTICE DRILL
Trace	Draw one read and one write path. Name each boundary and the state it changes.
Explain	Explain one mechanism without naming a vendor. Say what state it keeps and how it handles retries or failure.
Defend	Compare two plausible designs. Choose one for a stated requirement and name the cost you accept.
Change	Multiply traffic by ten or add a new requirement. Change only the parts the new constraint affects.
Break	Stop a worker, duplicate a message, or time out a request. Explain detection, recovery, and user-visible behavior.
Implement	Write the API or state transition that enforces one guarantee. Include the condition that makes retries safe.

Next mock

Prompt / system:

Changed
requirement:

A practice aid, not an employer rubric

This scorecard helps you notice specific behaviors in your own practice. The scores do not predict a hiring outcome and are not a universal standard used by employers.

Start another free timed round at sysgeeks.com/system-design-mock-interview