

Oracle DBA Job Interview Questions And Answers



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Oracle DBA Interview Questions And Answers Guide.

Question - 1:

Explain FORCE LOGGING feature in 9i.

Ans:

By setting FORCE LOGGING to TRUE, all transactions will generate REDO. This is used for Data Guard, so no data will be missed (i.e. transactions that were run with NOLOGGING option) in Standby database

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Question - 2:

How can you tell if an index on particular table is USED or NOT USED in 9i?

Ans:

By turning MONITORING ON that index and querying into INDEX_USAGE table

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Question - 3:

How do you put database in ARCHIVELOG mode, explain procedure?

Ans:

1. Modify init.ora parameter START_ARCHIVE=TRUE
2. SQL> SHUTDOWN IMMEDIATE;
3. STARTUP MOUNT;
4. ALTER DATABASE ARCHIVELOG;
5. ALTER DATABASE OPEN;

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Question - 4:

If you had a tablespace, TEST_TABLESPACE, which consists of three files: TEST01.dbf, TEST02.dbf, and TEST03.dbf, and someone accidentally used the Unix command "rm" to delete the file TEST02.dbf, what else would you need in order to recover all the data that was present in TEST_TABLESPACE at the time that TEST02.dbf was deleted?

Ans:

All Archivelogs

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Question - 5:

Explain procedure to Change CHARACTERSET of a database.

Ans:

Can't change CHARACTERSET of a database, you will need to re-create the database with appropriate CHARACTERSET.

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Question - 6:

You see a wait on LMS process in statspack, what does that mean?

Ans:

Wait is due to Data Guard Broker.

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Question - 7:



How do you analyze table partition using Oracle provided package?

Ans:

DBMS_STATS.GATHER_TABLE_STATS with GRANULARITY => 'PARTITION' OPTION

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Question - 8:

What is PGA_AGGREGATE_TARGET?

Ans:

This parameter controls the maximum amount of memory PGA which can be used by the queries when WORKAREA_SIZE_POLICY is set to Auto.

The value you can be set in Bytes, kilobytes (K), megabytes (M) or gigabytes (G). The default value is 0

This parameter also has an effect on the execution plans of the cost based optimizer. The optimizer uses the value of the parameter PGA_AGGREGATE_TARGET to derive an estimate

for the minimum and maximum amount of memory which should be available at run-time for each sort, hash-join and bitmap operator in the query. Based on this minimum and maximum value, the optimizer selects the best plan.

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Question - 9:

List five most important parameter in 9i affecting performance?

Ans:

CURSOR_SHARING

DB_CACHE_SIZE

PGA_AGGREGATE_TARGET

DB_16K_CACHE_SIZE, DB_8K_CACHE_SIZE, DB_2K_CACHE_SIZE

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Question - 10:

Explain below wait events in STATSPACK report DB SCATTERED READ, DB SEQUENTIAL REAL, ENQUEUE?

Ans:

DB SCATTERED READ - FULL TABLE SCAN

DB SEQUENTIAL REAL - IO

ENQUEUE - LOCKING

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Question - 11:

Process you follow to start looking into Performance issue at database level

(If the application is running very slow, at what points do you need to go about the database in order to improve the performance?)

Ans:

* Run a TOP command in Unix to see CPU usage (identify CPU killer processes)

* Run VMSTAT, SAR, and PRSTAT command to get more information on CPU and memory usage and possible blocking

* Run STATSPACK report to identify:

1. TOP 5 WAIT EVENTS

2. RESOURCE intensive SQL statements

* See if STATISTICS on affected tables needs to be re-generated

* IF poorly written statements are culprit, run a EXPLAIN PLAN on these statements and see whether new index or use of HINT brings the cost of SQL down.

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Question - 12:

How do you install Statpack?

Ans:

By running \$ORACLE_HOME/rdms/admin/spcreate.sql script

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Question - 13:

Which RMAN command is used to create an exact replica of a database in new host?

Ans:

DUPLICATE DATABASE

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Question - 14:

A DBA had to remove some Archivelogs to free up space in filesystem. Now

when the RMAN job starts to backup Archivelogs, it complains about missing Archivelogs that were deleted by DBA. To resolve the issue and continue backing up remainder of Archivelogs, which RMAN command can be used so it wo not complain about missing Archivelogs.

**Ans:**

Crosscheck command

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Question - 15:

what is the difference between group by and order by?

Ans:

group by is used when we use aggregate functions on the columns in a query the other columns should be in group by query

example:

```
select empno,ename,sum(sal) from emp
```

```
group by empno,ename
```

Order by is used to sort values either in ascending or descending order

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Question - 16:

How would you pass hints to the SQL processor?

Ans:

USING COMMENT LINES WITH (+) SIGN YOU CAN PASS THE HINTS TO SQL ENGINE

For example

```
/* +PARALLEL() */
```

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Question - 17:

Do you need a commit after DDL statements?

Ans:

DDL IS A AUTO COMMIT, YOU DON'T NEED TO COMMIT AGAIN

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Question - 18:

What are the steps involved in Instance Recovery in Oracle?

Ans:

Rolling forward to recover data that has not been recorded in data files, yet has been recorded in the on-line redo log, including the contents of rollback segments.

Rolling back transactions that have been explicitly rolled back or have not been committed as indicated by the rollback segments regenerated in step a.

Releasing any resources (locks) held by transactions in process at the time of the failure.

Resolving any pending distributed transactions undergoing a two-phase commit at the time of the instance failure.

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Question - 19:

What is Oracle Log Switch?

Ans:

The point at which ORACLE ends writing to one online redo log file and begins writing to another is called a log switch.

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Question - 20:

What are the advantages of operating a database in ARCHIVELOG mode over operating it in NO ARCHIVELOG mode?

Ans:

Complete database recovery from disk failure is possible only in ARCHIVELOG mode.

Online database backup is possible only in ARCHIVELOG mode.

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Question - 21:

What is Oracle Archived Redo Log?

Ans:

Archived Redo Log consists of Redo Log files that have archived before being reused.

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Question - 22:

What is Oracle Partial Backup?

**Ans:**

A Partial Backup is any operating system backup short of a full backup, taken while the database is open or shut down.

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Question - 23:

What is Oracle Full Backup?

Ans:

A full backup is an operating system backup of all data files, on-line redo log files and control file that constitute ORACLE database and the parameter.

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Question - 24:

What are the different modes of mounting a Database with the Parallel Server?

Ans:

Exclusive Mode If the first instance that mounts a database does so in exclusive mode, only that Instance can mount the database.

Parallel Mode If the first instance that mounts a database is started in parallel mode, other instances that are started in parallel mode can also mount the database.

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Question - 25:

What are the steps involved in Database Start up?

Ans:

Start an instance, Mount the Database and Open the Database.

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Question - 26:

What operator tests column for the absence of data?

Ans:

IS NULL operator

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Question - 27:

Which function is used to find the largest integer less than or equal to a specific value?

Ans:

FLOOR

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Question - 28:

What is the advantage of specifying WITH GRANT OPTION in the GRANT command?

Ans:

The privilege receiver can further grant the privileges he/she has obtained from the owner to any other user.

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Question - 29:

Which date function is used to find the difference between two dates?

Ans:

MONTHS_BETWEEN

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Question - 30:

What is the use of the DROP option in the ALTER TABLE command?

Ans:

It is used to drop constraints specified on the table.

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Question - 31:



What operator performs pattern matching

Ans:

LIKE operator

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Question - 32:

How do I write a cron which will run a SQL query and mail the results to a group?

Ans:

Use DBMS_JOB for scheduling a cron job and DBMS_MAIL to send the results through email.

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Question - 33:

what is difference between Co-related sub query and nested sub query?

Ans:

Co-related sub query is one in which inner query is evaluated only once and from that result outer query is evaluated.

Nested query is one in which Inner query is evaluated for multiple times for getting one row of that outer query.

ex. Query used with IN() clause is Co-related query.

Query used with = operator is Nested query

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Question - 34:

What is the difference between RAID 5 and RAID 10? Which is better for Oracle?

Ans:

RAID 5 is striping with an extra disk for parity. If we lose a disk we can reconstruct from that parity disk.

RAID 10 is mirroring pairs of disks, and then striping across those sets.

RAID 5 was created when disks were expensive. Its purpose was to provide RAID on the cheap. If a disk fails, the IO subsystem will perform VERY slowly during the rebuild process. What's more your likelihood of failure increases dramatically during this period, with all the added weight of the rebuild. Even when it is operating normally RAID 5 is slow for everything but reading. Given that and knowing databases (especially Oracle's redo logs) continue to experience write activity all the time, we should avoid RAID5 in all but the rare database that is MOSTLY read activity. Don't put redologs on RAID5.

RAID10 is just all around goodness. If you lose one disk in a set of 10 for example, you could lose any one of eight other disks and have no troubles. What's more rebuilding does not impact performance at all since you're simply making a mirror copy. Lastly RAID10 perform exceedingly well in all types of databases.

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Question - 35:

What are the tradeoffs between many vs few indexes? When would you want to have many, and when would it be better to have fewer?

Ans:

Fewer indexes on a table mean faster inserts/updates. More indexes mean faster, more specific WHERE clauses possibly without index merges.

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Question - 36:

Why is SQL*Loader direct path so fast?

Ans:

SQL*Loader with direct path option can load data ABOVE the high water mark of a table, and DIRECTLY into the datafiles, without going through the SQL engine at all. This avoids all the locking, latching, and so on, and doesn't impact the db (except possibly the I/O subsystem) at all.

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Question - 37:

In PL/SQL, what is bulk binding, and when/how would it help performance?

Ans:

Oracle's SQL and PL/SQL engines are separate parts of the kernel which require context switching, like between unix processes. This is slow, and uses up resources. If we loop on an SQL statement, we are implicitly flipping between these two engines. We can minimize this by loading our data into an array, and using PL/SQL bulk binding operation to do it all in one go!

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Question - 38:

What are bind variables and why are they important?

Ans:

With bind variables in SQL, Oracle can cache related queries a single time in the SQL cache (area). This avoids a hard parse each time, which saves on various locking and latching resources we use to check objects existence and so on. BONUS: For rarely run queries, especially BATCH queries, we explicitly DO NOT want to use bind variables, as they hide information from the Cost Based Optimizer.

BONUS BONUS: For batch queries from 3rd party apps like peoplesoft, if we can't remove bind variables, we can use bind variable peeking!

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**Question - 39:**

What is the difference between RMAN and a traditional hotbackup?

Ans:

RMAN is faster, can do incremental (changes only) backups, and does not place tablespaces into hotbackup mode.

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Question - 40:

Tell me about standby database? What are some of the configurations of it? What should we watch out for?

Ans:

Standby databases allow us to create a copy of our production db, for disaster recovery. We merely switch mode on the target db, and bring it up as read/write. Can setup as master->slave or master->master. The latter allows the former prod db to become the standby, once the failure cause is remedied. Watch out for NO LOGGING!! Be sure we're in archivelog mode.

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Question - 41:

What does the NO LOGGING option do? Why would we use it? Why would we be careful of using it?

Ans:

It disables the logging of changes to the redologs. It does not disable ALL LOGGING, however as Oracle continues to use a base of changes, for recovery if you pull the plug on the box, for instance. However it will cause problems if you are using standby database. Use it to speed up operations, like an index rebuild, or partition maintenance operations.

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Question - 42:

What is the difference between a materialized view (snapshot) fast refresh versus complete refresh? When is one better, and when the other?

Ans:

Fast refresh maintains a change log table, which records change vectors, not unlike how the redo logs work. There is overhead to this, as with a table that has a LOT of indexes on it, and inserts and updates will be slower. However if you are performing refreshes often, like every few minutes, you want to do fast refresh so you don't have to full-table-scan the source table. Complete refresh is good if you're going to refresh once a day. Does a full table scan on the source table, and recreates the snapshot/mview. Also inserts/updates on the source table are NOT impacted on tables where complete refresh snapshots have been created.

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Question - 43:

What is the difference between Truncate and Delete? Why is one faster? Can we ROLLBACK both? How would a full table scan behave after?

Ans:

Truncate is nearly instantaneous, cannot be rolled back, and is fast because Oracle simply resets the HWM. When a full table scan is performed on a table, such as for a sort operation, Oracle reads to the HWM. So if you delete every single solitary row in 10 million row table so it is now empty, sorting on that table of 0 rows would still be extremely slow.

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Question - 44:

What is your favorite tool for day-to-day Oracle operation?

Ans:

Hopefully we hear some use of command line as the answer!

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Question - 45:

Name three SQL operations that perform a SORT.

Ans:

- a. CREATE INDEX
- b. DISTINCT
- c. GROUP BY
- d. ORDER BY
- f. INTERSECT
- g. MINUS
- h. UNION
- i. UNINDEXED TABLE JOIN

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Question - 46:

Explain two easy SQL optimizations.

Ans:

- a. EXISTS can be better than IN under various conditions
- b. UNION ALL is faster than UNION (not sorting)



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Question - 47:

How do you use automatic PGA memory management with Oracle 9i and above?

Ans:

Set the WORKAREA_SIZE_POLICY parameter to AUTO and set PGA_AGGREGATE_TARGET

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Question - 48:

When using Oracle export/import what character set concerns might come up? How do you handle them?

Ans:

Be sure to set NLS_LANG for example to "AMERICAN_AMERICA.WE8ISO8859P1". If your source database is US7ASCII, beware of 8-bit characters. Also be wary of multi-byte characters sets as those may require extra attention. Also watch export/import for messages about any "character set conversions" which may occur.

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