

WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

APPEARANCE

Clarity clear – hazy (faulty?)

Intensity pale – medium – deep

Colour

<i>white</i>	lemon-green – lemon – gold – amber – brown
<i>rosé</i>	pink – salmon – orange – onion skin
<i>red</i>	purple – ruby – garnet – tawny – brown

Other observations e.g. legs/tears, deposit, pétillance, bubbles

NOSE

Condition clean – unclean (faulty?)

Intensity light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced

Aroma characteristics e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary

PALATE

Sweetness dry – off-dry – medium-dry – medium-sweet – sweet – luscious

Acidity low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high

Tannin

<i>level</i>	low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
<i>nature</i>	e.g. ripe/soft vs unripe/green/stalky, coarse vs fine-grained

Alcohol low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
fortified wines: low – medium – high

Body light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – full

Flavour intensity light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced

Flavour characteristics e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary

Other observations texture (e.g. steely, oily, creamy, mouthcoating), pétillance (*still wines only*)

Finish short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long

CONCLUSIONS *(see Candidate Assessment Guide for further information)*

QUALITY

Assessment of quality faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding
then give reasons, assessing e.g. balance/integration, intensity, finish, complexity, mousse, varietal definition, potential for ageing, etc.

READINESS FOR DRINKING AND POTENTIAL FOR AGEING

Assessment of readiness for drinking and potential for ageing

too young	–	can drink now, but has potential for ageing	–	drink now: not suitable for ageing or further ageing	–	too old
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then give reasons, assessing e.g. concentration, acidity, tannin, development of aroma and flavour characteristics, etc.

THE WINE IN CONTEXT

Country and/or region of origin *state the country and/or region of origin, giving reasons when required*

Grape variety/(ies) *state the grape variety/(ies), giving reasons when required*

Style within the category *state the style within the category (for sparkling and fortified wines), giving reasons when required*

Method of production *state the method of production (for sparkling and fortified wines), giving reasons when required*

Notes to students:

For lines where the entries are separated by hyphens, you must select one and only one of the entries given.

For lines where the entries are separated by commas, the entries are points to consider. You may not need to comment on each entry for every wine and any descriptors are indicative only.

WSET Level 4 Wine-Lexicon: *supporting the WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®*

DESCRIBING AROMA AND FLAVOUR

Think in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary

Primary Aromas and Flavours

The aromas and flavours of the grape and alcoholic fermentation

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
Are the aromas and flavours delicate <i>or</i> intense? simple <i>or</i> complex? generic <i>or</i> well-defined? fresh <i>or</i> cooked? under-ripe <i>or</i> ripe <i>or</i> overripe?	Floral	acacia, honeysuckle, chamomile, elderflower, geranium, blossom, rose, violet
	Green fruit	apple, gooseberry, pear, pear drop, quince, grape
	Citrus fruit	grapefruit, lemon, lime, orange peel, lemon peel
	Stone fruit	peach, apricot, nectarine
	Tropical fruit	banana, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
	Red fruit	redcurrant, cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, red cherry, red plum
	Black fruit	blackcurrant, blackberry, bramble, blueberry, black cherry, black plum
	Dried fruit	fig, prune, raisin, sultana, kirsch, jamminess, baked/stewed fruits, preserved fruits
	Herbaceous	green bell pepper (capsicum), grass, tomato leaf, asparagus, blackcurrant leaf
	Herbal	eucalyptus, mint, medicinal, lavender, fennel, dill
	Pungent spice	black/white pepper, liquorice, juniper, ginger
	Other	flint, wet stones, wet wool, rubber

Secondary Aromas and Flavours

The aromas and flavours of post-fermentation winemaking

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
Are the aromas and flavours from yeast, MLF, and/or oak?	Yeast (lees, autolysis, flor)	biscuit, bread, toast, pastry, brioche, bread dough, cheese, yoghurt
	MLF	butter, cheese, cream, yoghurt
	Oak	vanilla, cloves, nutmeg, coconut, butterscotch, toast, cedar, charred wood, smoke, chocolate, coffee, resinous

Tertiary Aromas and Flavours

The aromas and flavours of maturation

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
Do the aromas and flavours show deliberate oxidation, fruit development and/or bottle age?	Deliberate oxidation	almond, marzipan, coconut, hazelnut, walnut, chocolate, coffee, toffee, caramel
	Fruit development (white)	dried apricot, marmalade, dried apple, dried banana, etc.
	Fruit development (red)	fig, prune, tar, dried blackberry, dried cranberry, etc. cooked blackberry, cooked red plum, etc.
	Bottle age (white)	petrol, kerosene, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, toast, nutty, cereal, mushroom, hay, honey
	Bottle age (red)	leather, forest floor, earth, mushroom, game, cedar, tobacco, vegetal, wet leaves, savoury, meaty, farmyard

Note to students: The WSET Level 4 Wine-Lexicon contains suggested descriptors for the aromas and flavours you may identify in a wine. It is not exhaustive but gives examples of appropriate vocabulary to use in the Level 4 tasting examinations.



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