

# Advanced Master Sommelier General Knowledge Level 1 Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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## **Questions**

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- 1. Which grape variety is used primarily in the production of Sherry?**
  - A. Tempranillo**
  - B. Palomino**
  - C. Syrah**
  - D. Grenache**
- 2. What is the term for a white champagne made from Pinot Noir and/or Meunier?**
  - A. Blanc de Noirs**
  - B. Blanc de Blancs**
  - C. Rosé Champagne**
  - D. Prosecco**
- 3. Which grape variety is associated with the Cote de Beaune region?**
  - A. Gamay**
  - B. Chardonnay**
  - C. Cabernet Sauvignon**
  - D. Merlot**
- 4. How does exposure to light affect wine?**
  - A. It enhances the wine's flavor profile**
  - B. It can cause the wine to age prematurely and result in off-flavors**
  - C. It has no effect on the wine**
  - D. It increases the wine's sweetness**
- 5. What general characteristic do wines from cooler climates typically exhibit?**
  - A. Higher sweetness and darker colors**
  - B. Higher acidity and typically white wines**
  - C. Lower alcohol content and stronger tannins**
  - D. Increased fruitiness and oaky flavors**

- 6. The Rias Baixas DO primarily produces what type of wine?**
- A. Sweet, still red**
  - B. Dry, still white**
  - C. Sweet, sparkling white**
  - D. Fortified, aromatized red**
- 7. What does it mean for a wine to be “corked”?**
- A. It has been exposed to extreme temperatures**
  - B. It has lost its carbonation**
  - C. It has been tainted by a chemical compound in the cork, resulting in musty odors**
  - D. It has high levels of sulfites**
- 8. What is the typical flavor profile of a Cabernet Sauvignon from California?**
- A. Light with floral notes**
  - B. Bold, with notes of blackberry, dark chocolate, and sometimes green bell pepper**
  - C. Fruity with hints of cherry and vanilla**
  - D. Earthy with mushroom and herb characteristics**
- 9. Which region in Australia is known for producing Shiraz?**
- A. Margaret River**
  - B. Barossa Valley**
  - C. Hunter Valley**
  - D. Yarra Valley**
- 10. In which country is the Chianti region located?**
- A. Italy**
  - B. Spain**
  - C. France**
  - D. Portugal**

## **Answers**

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1. B
2. A
3. B
4. B
5. B
6. B
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. A

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which grape variety is used primarily in the production of Sherry?**

- A. Tempranillo**
- B. Palomino**
- C. Syrah**
- D. Grenache**

The grape variety primarily used in the production of Sherry is Palomino. This white grape is most notable for its ability to produce a range of styles of Sherry, from dry to sweet. Palomino thrives in the unique terroir of the Jerez region in Spain, where it benefits from the chalky soils and the region's climate. It is particularly valued for its neutrality and ability to reflect the characteristics of the soil and the influence of solera aging, which is essential in the development of Sherry's complexity and flavor profile. Tempranillo, Syrah, and Grenache, while important in other wine regions and styles, are not the primary grapes used for Sherry production. Tempranillo is predominantly associated with red wines, particularly from Rioja and Ribera del Duero. Syrah is more commonly linked to regions like the Rhône Valley and Australia, whereas Grenache is often used in blends for both red and rosé wines, particularly in regions such as Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Spain's Garnacha. These varieties do not share the same role or importance in Sherry production as Palomino does.

**2. What is the term for a white champagne made from Pinot Noir and/or Meunier?**

- A. Blanc de Noirs**
- B. Blanc de Blancs**
- C. Rosé Champagne**
- D. Prosecco**

The term for a white champagne made from Pinot Noir and/or Meunier is Blanc de Noirs. This style of Champagne is crafted exclusively from dark-skinned grape varieties, specifically black grapes like Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Although it is produced without the skin contact that would typically impart color—hence it being a 'white' Champagne—Blanc de Noirs relies on these varieties for its flavor profile. Blanc de Blancs, in contrast, refers to Champagne made exclusively from white grapes, specifically Chardonnay, which offers a different set of characteristics, often lighter and more floral. Rosé Champagne includes some skin contact with red grapes, creating a pink hue and infusing the wine with additional fruity flavors. Prosecco is a sparkling wine from the Glera grape, primarily made in Italy, and is distinctively different in style and production method compared to Champagnes. Thus, knowing the specific grape varieties involved and how they influence the production of the wine helps clarify why Blanc de Noirs is the correct term for the question posed.

### 3. Which grape variety is associated with the Cote de Beaune region?

- A. Gamay
- B. Chardonnay**
- C. Cabernet Sauvignon
- D. Merlot

The Cote de Beaune region, part of the Burgundy wine production area in France, is most famously associated with Chardonnay. This grape variety thrives in the region's unique climate and terroir, allowing it to express its qualities effectively. Chardonnay from Cote de Beaune is known for producing some of the world's finest white wines, characterized by a balance of vibrant acidity and rich flavor profiles, which can include notes of stone fruits, citrus, and butter, particularly in wines that have undergone malolactic fermentation or oak aging. Gamay, while also a significant grape variety in Burgundy, is predominantly linked to the Cote de Nuits and the Beaujolais region, where it produces lighter, fruitier red wines. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are primarily associated with regions such as Bordeaux. Therefore, the connection between Chardonnay and the Cote de Beaune is particularly strong, which makes it the correct answer in identifying the grape variety associated with this specific region.

### 4. How does exposure to light affect wine?

- A. It enhances the wine's flavor profile
- B. It can cause the wine to age prematurely and result in off-flavors**
- C. It has no effect on the wine
- D. It increases the wine's sweetness

Exposure to light, particularly ultraviolet (UV) light, can have detrimental effects on wine quality. When wine is exposed to light, especially over extended periods, it can lead to chemical reactions that negatively impact its taste and aroma. The process known as "light strike" occurs when UV light interacts with certain compounds in wine, particularly riboflavin and the sulfur compounds used in winemaking. This phenomenon can create undesirable off-flavors such as skunky aromas or other unpleasant characteristics that detract from the wine's intended profile. The effects are particularly pronounced in delicate white wines and sparkling wines, which are more sensitive to light exposure. This is why many wine producers utilize dark glass bottles or packaging that protects the wine from light to preserve its integrity and quality. In contrast, the other options do not accurately reflect the impact of light on wine. Light does not enhance flavor, have no effect, or increase sweetness; rather, it is known to cause deterioration and compromise the wine's overall sensory qualities.

**5. What general characteristic do wines from cooler climates typically exhibit?**

- A. Higher sweetness and darker colors**
- B. Higher acidity and typically white wines**
- C. Lower alcohol content and stronger tannins**
- D. Increased fruitiness and oaky flavors**

Wines from cooler climates are known for exhibiting higher acidity and a predominance of white wines, which is largely influenced by the shorter growing season and cooler temperatures. The cooler climate slows down the ripening of grapes, allowing for the preservation of acidity, which is essential for balancing flavor and promoting freshness in the wine. In addition to acidity, cooler climates often produce a greater variety of white wines, as the grape varieties that thrive in such environments—like Chardonnay, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc—tend to flourish under these conditions. These grape varieties are well-suited to retaining their natural acidity, leading to crisp and lively wines with pronounced fruit characteristics. While some red wines can also be produced in cooler climates, they typically do not dominate the output, making the statement that cooler climates produce higher acidity and a prevalence of white wines accurate. The other characteristics mentioned in the other choices are not general traits associated with cooler climate wines.

**6. The Rias Baixas DO primarily produces what type of wine?**

- A. Sweet, still red**
- B. Dry, still white**
- C. Sweet, sparkling white**
- D. Fortified, aromatized red**

The Rías Baixas Denomination of Origin (DO) is well-known for primarily producing dry, still white wines, particularly from the Albariño grape variety. This region, situated in the northwest of Spain in Galicia, benefits from a unique microclimate that is conducive to growing high-quality white grapes. The wines from Rías Baixas are characterized by their aromatic profile, vibrant acidity, and a distinct minerality that reflects the coastal terroir. Albariño, which thrives in this region, offers flavors of stone fruits, citrus, and floral notes, contributing to its popularity and acclaim. The focus on white wine production aligns with the culinary heritage of the region, where seafood is predominant, enhancing the pairing potential of these wines. Understanding the specific characteristics and focus of Rías Baixas helps convey why dry, still white wines are the hallmark of this DO, making it essential knowledge for anyone studying advanced wine.

**7. What does it mean for a wine to be “corked”?**

- A. It has been exposed to extreme temperatures
- B. It has lost its carbonation
- C. It has been tainted by a chemical compound in the cork, resulting in musty odors**
- D. It has high levels of sulfites

When a wine is described as "corked," it specifically refers to a condition caused by a chemical compound called TCA (2,4,6-trichloroanisole), which can contaminate the cork used to seal the bottle. This contamination can result in undesirable musty or moldy odors, often reminiscent of wet cardboard or a damp basement, which significantly detracts from the wine's intended aromas and flavors. The presence of TCA masks the wine's true characteristics, making it a significant fault known in the wine industry. The other options relate to different issues that a wine might face but do not define the term "corked." For example, exposure to extreme temperatures might spoil a wine, but this does not relate to cork contamination. Losing carbonation is specific to sparkling wines and does not involve cork-related issues. High levels of sulfites, while they can influence a wine's profile, are not the cause of the "corked" condition. Thus, the correct answer accurately captures the essence of what it means for a wine to be tainted by a compromised cork.

**8. What is the typical flavor profile of a Cabernet Sauvignon from California?**

- A. Light with floral notes
- B. Bold, with notes of blackberry, dark chocolate, and sometimes green bell pepper**
- C. Fruity with hints of cherry and vanilla
- D. Earthy with mushroom and herb characteristics

The flavor profile of California Cabernet Sauvignon is characterized by its boldness and depth, making it a standout varietal in this region. The typical tasting notes of blackberry and dark chocolate reflect the grape's ability to develop rich, concentrated flavors, particularly in warm climates like those found in many parts of California. The region's soil and climate contribute to the robust nature of these wines, often resulting in complex layers of fruitiness and additional sensations. Furthermore, the mention of green bell pepper ties into Cabernet Sauvignon's inherent characteristics, especially when it is grown in regions that experience cooler temperatures or where vintage conditions may influence the grape ripeness. This can impart a herbal quality that adds nuance to the wine, contrasting beautifully with the fruit-forward notes. The other options are less representative of California's signature style for Cabernet Sauvignon. A lighter and floral profile would be more typical of varieties like Pinot Noir or certain white wines. Similarly, fruity hints of cherry and vanilla are more aligned with other varietals such as Merlot or Zinfandel rather than showcasing the bold character expected of Cabernet Sauvignon. Lastly, earthy flavors with mushroom and herb characteristics are generally associated with wines from regions that prioritize terroir over fruitiness, such as Bordeaux or certain Old World regions, rather than the

**9. Which region in Australia is known for producing Shiraz?**

- A. Margaret River
- B. Barossa Valley**
- C. Hunter Valley
- D. Yarra Valley

The Barossa Valley is renowned for its exceptional Shiraz production, which has made it one of the most celebrated wine regions in Australia. The climate and soil conditions in Barossa Valley are particularly favorable for growing robust and full-bodied Shiraz. The region benefits from a Mediterranean climate, which provides warm summers and a significant diurnal temperature variation that helps in developing the grape's flavor and complexity. Barossa Valley has a long history of winemaking, with some of the oldest Shiraz vines in the world, which contribute to the rich, concentrated flavors found in the wines. This legacy of craftsmanship, combined with the unique terroir, results in Shiraz that showcases ripe fruit characteristics, such as blackberry and plum, often accompanied by spicy, peppery notes and a velvety, lush mouthfeel. While other regions mentioned, like Margaret River, Hunter Valley, and Yarra Valley, also produce quality Shiraz, Barossa Valley holds a distinct reputation for its iconic Shiraz wines that continuously receive acclaim both in Australia and internationally.

**10. In which country is the Chianti region located?**

- A. Italy**
- B. Spain
- C. France
- D. Portugal

Chianti is a renowned wine region situated in Italy, specifically within the Tuscany region. This area is famous for producing high-quality red wines primarily made from the Sangiovese grape. The Chianti region, with its distinct landscape of rolling hills, vineyards, and olive groves, has a deep historical connection to winemaking that dates back centuries. The classification of Chianti wines also highlights its significance in Italian viniculture, with specific designations such as Chianti Classico, which indicates wines produced from grapes grown in the traditional heart of the Chianti region. As such, its identity is closely tied to Italy, distinguishing it from other wine-producing countries like Spain, France, or Portugal, which have their own unique regions and wine styles.