

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What is the minimum aging requirement for Vintage Champagne?**
 - A. 1 year
 - B. 2 years
 - C. 3 years
 - D. 4 years
- 2. Which region is noted as the driest in New Zealand?**
 - A. Marlborough
 - B. Hawkes Bay
 - C. Wairarapa
 - D. Gisborne
- 3. What is a requirement for Vintage Madeira regarding varietal content?**
 - A. Must include a blend of varietals
 - B. Must be 100% of the stated varietal
 - C. Must be produced from both red and white grapes
 - D. Must contain a minimum of 12% alcohol
- 4. What is the capacity, in standard bottles, of a Solomon bottle?**
 - A. 20 Bottles
 - B. 24 Bottles
 - C. 36 Bottles
 - D. 48 Bottles
- 5. Which of the following is NOT a recognized Macon appellation?**
 - A. Pouilly-Loche
 - B. Saint-Veran
 - C. Fleurie
 - D. Pouilly-Vinzelles
- 6. What type of soil is found in Gigondas?**
 - A. Sandy loam
 - B. Alluvial clays
 - C. Limestone
 - D. Clay and chalk

7. Which characteristic makes Sonoma County notable in wine production?

- A. Larger area than Napa Valley
- B. Exclusive use of old vine Zinfandel
- C. Only produces sparkling wine
- D. Highly urbanized growing regions

8. Which term refers to semi-sparkling wine?

- A. Spumante
- B. Frizzante
- C. Prosecco
- D. Sherry

9. Which of the following is NOT considered a major wine region in California?

- A. Central Valley
- B. Napa Valley
- C. North Coast Super AVA
- D. Rio Grande Valley

10. What grape varieties are primarily used to make Chianti?

- A. Barbera and Nebbiolo
- B. Sangiovese and Canaiolo
- C. Garganega and Trebbiano
- D. Merlot and Syrah

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the minimum aging requirement for Vintage Champagne?

- A. 1 year
- B. 2 years
- C. 3 years**
- D. 4 years

The minimum aging requirement for Vintage Champagne is indeed three years. This requirement is established by the regulations of the Champagne AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) in France. Vintage Champagne must be aged for at least three years on the lees after the secondary fermentation in the bottle. This period is crucial as it allows the wine to develop complex flavors and aromas, enhancing its overall quality and character. In contrast, Non-Vintage Champagne has a shorter aging requirement of just 15 months, of which at least 12 months must be spent on the lees. A longer aging period for Vintage Champagne results in a more refined product, showcasing the particular characteristics of the vintage year. Hence, the three-year minimum reflects a commitment to quality and a thorough expression of the grapes from that specific year's harvest.

2. Which region is noted as the driest in New Zealand?

- A. Marlborough
- B. Hawkes Bay**
- C. Wairarapa
- D. Gisborne

The Hawke's Bay region is recognized as the driest area in New Zealand, largely due to its unique climatic conditions. It has a semi-arid climate, with low annual rainfall compared to other wine regions in the country. Located on the eastern coast, Hawke's Bay benefits from a rain shadow effect created by the Central Plateau mountain range to the west, which blocks moist air from reaching the area. This results in drier conditions that are suitable for viticulture, allowing for the production of premium wines, particularly red varieties like Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Comparatively, other regions like Marlborough, Wairarapa, and Gisborne experience more rainfall, which contributes to their different viticultural profiles. Marlborough is known for its vibrant Sauvignon Blanc, Wairarapa for its Pinot Noir, and Gisborne for its Chardonnay production, all benefiting from greater moisture which influences their climate and grape growing conditions. Thus, Hawke's Bay stands out for its low precipitation, making it the driest region in New Zealand.

3. What is a requirement for Vintage Madeira regarding varietal content?

- A. Must include a blend of varieties
- B. Must be 100% of the stated varietal**
- C. Must be produced from both red and white grapes
- D. Must contain a minimum of 12% alcohol

For Vintage Madeira, the requirement is that it must be composed of 100% of the stated varietal. This means if a label indicates that the Madeira is made from a particular grape variety, that grape must constitute the entirety of the wine. Vintage Madeira is made from specific, high-quality grapes and typically reflects the unique characteristics of the varietal used, so this singular varietal composition is crucial in maintaining the integrity and distinction of the wine. The other options do not accurately describe the regulations surrounding Vintage Madeira. While various types of Madeira can be blends or include different grapes, Vintage Madeira is explicit in its varietal content. The stipulation about a minimum alcohol level is relevant to many fortified wines, but it is not specific to the varietal content requirement. Understanding these nuances is important for anyone studying for sommelier certification, as it reflects the broader regulations and quality standards governing the production of fortified wines.

4. What is the capacity, in standard bottles, of a Solomon bottle?

- A. 20 Bottles
- B. 24 Bottles**
- C. 36 Bottles
- D. 48 Bottles

The capacity of a Solomon bottle is indeed 24 standard bottles. A Solomon bottle is a large-format wine bottle typically used for special events or occasions. It is named after King Solomon and is primarily used for serving and aging wine in larger quantities. Understanding the capacity of large-format bottles is important in the wine industry, especially for sommeliers, as it influences both storage considerations and serving sizes at events. The determination of a Solomon bottle's capacity reflects its use as a vessel to enhance the wine's aging process and presentation. The other capacities mentioned do not correspond to a Solomon bottle, as they often refer to other large formats with different names and uses. This distinction is crucial for anyone working in wine service or education to accurately grasp the terminology and implications of bottle sizes.

5. Which of the following is NOT a recognized Macon appellation?

- A. Pouilly-Loche
- B. Saint-Veran
- C. Fleurie**
- D. Pouilly-Vinzelles

The selection of Fleurie as the option that is not a recognized Macon appellation is based on the geographical and administrative classifications within French wine regions. The Macon appellations are part of the broader Burgundy wine region, specifically located in the southern part of Burgundy. They are known for their white wines made primarily from Chardonnay and are named after towns and villages within the Macon area. Fleurie, on the other hand, is classified as a Beaujolais appellation, which is distinct from Macon. Beaujolais is known for its Gamay grape production, and its appellations are separate from those found in Burgundy, despite their proximity. Thus, it does not belong in the list of recognized Macon appellations. In contrast, the other options—Pouilly-Loche, Saint-Veran, and Pouilly-Vinzelles—are all indeed recognized Macon appellations. They each produce their signature wines, predominantly Chardonnay, and are classified under the Mâconnais subregion of Burgundy, highlighting their connection to the Macon area.

6. What type of soil is found in Gigondas?

- A. Sandy loam
- B. Alluvial clays**
- C. Limestone
- D. Clay and chalk

In Gigondas, the predominant soil type is alluvial clays, which play a significant role in the region's wine production. These clays are deposited by streams and rivers, providing excellent drainage and water retention properties that benefit vine health and grape quality. The use of alluvial clays contributes to the development of rich, structured wines that often exhibit a strong terroir expression. The other types of soils listed can indeed be found in various wine regions, but they do not characterize Gigondas as significantly. Sandy loam can offer good drainage but lacks the unique qualities that alluvial clays bring. Limestone is prevalent in many regions, particularly in Burgundy and Chablis, but not as a defining characteristic of Gigondas. Similarly, clay and chalk is more representative of regions like Champagne rather than Gigondas. Understanding the soil types in Gigondas helps to appreciate how they influence the characteristics of the wines produced there.

7. Which characteristic makes Sonoma County notable in wine production?

- A. Larger area than Napa Valley
- B. Exclusive use of old vine Zinfandel
- C. Only produces sparkling wine
- D. Highly urbanized growing regions

Sonoma County is indeed notable in wine production largely due to its larger geographical area compared to Napa Valley. This vast expanse allows for a diverse range of microclimates and soil types, which contributes to the variety of wine styles produced in the region. Sonoma County is known for its variety of wine grapes, including Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, and Cabernet Sauvignon, which thrive due to the diverse conditions present. The size and geographic diversity enable winemakers to experiment with different varietals and styles, leading to a rich tapestry of wines that showcase the terroir. Regarding the other options, the exclusive use of old vine Zinfandel does not accurately represent the full breadth of Sonoma's wine production, as multiple varietals are cultivated. Similarly, the notion that Sonoma only produces sparkling wine is misleading, as the region is known for a broad range of both still and sparkling wines. Lastly, while there are urbanized areas within Sonoma County, the presence of highly urbanized growing regions is not a defining characteristic of its wine production landscape; rural and scenic vineyard landscapes are much more prevalent throughout the county, supporting its identity as a significant wine-producing region.

8. Which term refers to semi-sparkling wine?

- A. Spumante
- B. Frizzante
- C. Prosecco
- D. Sherry

The term that refers to semi-sparkling wine is indeed Frizzante. This category of wine typically has a light effervescence and a lower level of carbonation compared to fully sparkling wines. Frizzante wines often appeal to those who enjoy a little bit of fizz without the intensity of larger bubbles found in fully sparkling options. Spumante refers to fully sparkling wines, which are characterized by a higher level of carbonation and pronounced bubbles. Prosecco is a specific type of wine, often associated with the sparkling style, but not all Prosecco is classified as semi-sparkling; it is primarily known for its brut or spumante versions. Sherry, on the other hand, is a fortified wine from Spain and does not fit into the category of sparkling or semi-sparkling wines at all. Thus, Frizzante is the appropriate term for semi-sparkling wine.

9. Which of the following is NOT considered a major wine region in California?

- A. Central Valley
- B. Napa Valley
- C. North Coast Super AVA
- D. Rio Grande Valley

The Rio Grande Valley is indeed not recognized as a major wine region in California. California's most prominent wine regions, such as Napa Valley and the North Coast Super AVA, have a long-standing reputation for producing high-quality wines and are well-established within the wine industry. The Central Valley, while not as globally famous as Napa Valley, is one of the largest wine-producing areas in the state and is crucial for its agricultural output. In contrast, the Rio Grande Valley is located in Texas and is not associated with California's notable wine regions. This distinction underscores why the Rio Grande Valley does not belong to the list of major wine regions within California.

10. What grape varieties are primarily used to make Chianti?

- A. Barbera and Nebbiolo
- B. Sangiovese and Canaiolo**
- C. Garganega and Trebbiano
- D. Merlot and Syrah

Chianti is primarily made from Sangiovese grapes, which are the backbone of the wine, contributing to its characteristic flavors and acidity. While Canaiolo is often used in conjunction with Sangiovese in traditional Chianti blends to add softness and additional fruit characteristics, it is Sangiovese that dominates the blend and defines the style of the wine. This combination allows Chianti to exhibit a range of flavors, including cherry, plum, and sometimes floral notes, along with a distinct earthiness that can arise from the region's terroir. The laws governing Chianti require a minimum percentage of Sangiovese in the blend, which further solidifies its role as the primary grape variety in the wine. Other grape varieties listed in the options are either not used in Chianti production or are more emblematic of different Italian wine regions or styles.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

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We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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