

# Guild of Sommeliers Certified Sommelier (US and Canada) Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

**This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,**

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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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.**

## **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.**

## **7. Use Other Tools**

**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!**

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## Questions

- 1. Which varietal is known for its light body and crispness?**
  - A. Cabernet Sauvignon**
  - B. Shiraz**
  - C. Pinot Grigio**
  - D. Merlot**
- 2. What impact does residual sugar have on a wine's taste?**
  - A. It makes the wine more acidic**
  - B. It contributes to the sweetness of the wine**
  - C. It decreases the wine's complexity**
  - D. It enhances the tannin structure**
- 3. What wine style is the Andrew Will "Ciel du Cheval Vineyard" known for?**
  - A. Sauvignon Blanc**
  - B. Cab Franc-Merlot blend**
  - C. Pinot Noir**
  - D. Chardonnay**
- 4. What are the characteristics of Pinot Grigio?**
  - A. Full body, low acidity, and flavors of oak and vanilla**
  - B. Medium body, balanced acidity, and flavors of cherry and plum**
  - C. Light body, high acidity, and flavors of citrus and pear**
  - D. Rich body, low acidity, and flavors of dark berries**
- 5. What is the southernmost AVA in Oregon?**
  - A. Columbia Valley**
  - B. Applegate Valley AVA**
  - C. Umpqua Valley**
  - D. Rogue Valley**
- 6. What is the primary characteristic of Nebbiolo grape?**
  - A. High acidity and tannin**
  - B. Low sugar content**
  - C. Medium body with herbaceous notes**
  - D. Sweet flavor profile**



- 7. What is the origin of the Shiraz variety?**
- A. Australia, particularly South Australia**
  - B. United States, especially California**
  - C. France, specifically the Rhône Valley**
  - D. Italy, particularly Tuscany**
- 8. In which county is the Sonoma Valley AVA located?**
- A. Napa County**
  - B. Santa Barbara County**
  - C. Sonoma County**
  - D. Lake County**
- 9. What is the required percentage of grapes that must come from Ontario or British Columbia to label as VQA?**
- A. 85%**
  - B. 95%**
  - C. 100%**
  - D. 90%**
- 10. Opus One is a joint venture between which two wineries?**
- A. Château Lafite Rothschild and Robert Mondavi**
  - B. Baron Philippe de Rothschild and Robert Mondavi**
  - C. Château Mouton Rothschild and Constellation Brands**
  - D. Silver Oak and Domain Chandon**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which varietal is known for its light body and crispness?**

- A. Cabernet Sauvignon**
- B. Shiraz**
- C. Pinot Grigio**
- D. Merlot**

Pinot Grigio is recognized for its light body and crispness, which are defining characteristics of the varietal. This white wine typically features refreshing acidity and is often enjoyed for its bright, clean flavors, making it an ideal choice for warm weather and seafood pairings. Its profile often includes notes of green apple, pear, and citrus, contributing to its perception of lightness on the palate. In contrast, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz are both full-bodied red wines. These varietals tend to have bolder flavors and more tannins, which give them a richer mouthfeel that is distinctively heavier than Pinot Grigio. Merlot, while often softer and more approachable than Cabernet Sauvignon, still exhibits more body than Pinot Grigio. The overall lighter style and brisk nature of Pinot Grigio set it apart as the correct answer in this context.

**2. What impact does residual sugar have on a wine's taste?**

- A. It makes the wine more acidic**
- B. It contributes to the sweetness of the wine**
- C. It decreases the wine's complexity**
- D. It enhances the tannin structure**

Residual sugar significantly contributes to the sweetness of wine. This leftover sugar remains in the wine after fermentation is complete, imparting a sweet taste that can vary depending on the level of residual sugar present. In sweeter wines, this added sugar balances the acidity, creating a more harmonious profile that is often appreciated in dessert wines or certain varietals that are known for their sweetness, like some Rieslings or late-harvest wines. Furthermore, the presence of residual sugar can also enhance the perception of fruit flavors in the wine, making them seem more pronounced and lush. This is particularly important in wine tasting, where sweetness can influence the overall enjoyment and pairing possibilities with different foods. Hence, the correct choice highlights the direct relationship between residual sugar and the sweetness experienced in the wine.

**3. What wine style is the Andrew Will "Ciel du Cheval Vineyard" known for?**

- A. Sauvignon Blanc**
- B. Cab Franc-Merlot blend**
- C. Pinot Noir**
- D. Chardonnay**

The Andrew Will "Ciel du Cheval Vineyard" is known primarily for its Cab Franc-Merlot blends, which have become emblematic of the terroir and style of this vineyard. This wine style showcases the characteristics of both grape varieties, with Cabernet Franc contributing to the wine's aromatic complexity, perfumed notes, and vibrant acidity, while Merlot adds richness, plushness, and depth to the palate. The microclimate and soil composition of the Ciel du Cheval Vineyard create an ideal environment for these varietals to thrive, resulting in a harmonious and well-structured wine that reflects the unique attributes of the region. In contrast, the other grape varieties listed do not accurately represent the flagship style of this vineyard. Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay are celebrated for their crispness and mineral qualities in white wines, distinct from the fuller-bodied red blends of Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Pinot Noir is typically known for its lighter body and brighter fruit profile, which is also quite different from the intended style of this vineyard's offerings.

**4. What are the characteristics of Pinot Grigio?**

- A. Full body, low acidity, and flavors of oak and vanilla**
- B. Medium body, balanced acidity, and flavors of cherry and plum**
- C. Light body, high acidity, and flavors of citrus and pear**
- D. Rich body, low acidity, and flavors of dark berries**

Pinot Grigio is known for its refreshing and vibrant profile, which typically includes a light body and high acidity. These characteristics contribute to its crisp taste, making it particularly enjoyable as a warm-weather wine. The flavors often associated with Pinot Grigio include citrus, such as lemon and lime, as well as stone fruits like pear. This combination of a light body and high acidity allows the wine to maintain its freshness and pairs well with a variety of foods, enhancing its versatility. In contrast, the other options describe profiles that do not align with the typical expressions of Pinot Grigio. The descriptions involving full body or rich body suggest a heavier wine style that is more characteristic of varietals such as Chardonnay or Zinfandel. Additionally, flavors of oak and vanilla indicate a level of barrel aging not common in typical Pinot Grigio. The option concerning cherry and plum hints at red varietals or fuller-bodied whites, which further confirms that these profiles do not accurately reflect the characteristics of Pinot Grigio.

**5. What is the southernmost AVA in Oregon?**

- A. Columbia Valley**
- B. Applegate Valley AVA**
- C. Umpqua Valley**
- D. Rogue Valley**

The Applegate Valley AVA is recognized as the southernmost American Viticultural Area (AVA) in Oregon. It is located within Jackson County and is part of the larger Rogue Valley AVA, which also encompasses other wine-producing areas. The significance of the Applegate Valley AVA lies in its unique climate and geography, which support the cultivation of a diverse range of grape varieties. The valley benefits from a warmer and drier climate compared to other regions in Oregon, which is especially conducive to growing full-bodied red wines and a variety of whites. Its southern location allows for extended growing seasons, which further enhances the potential for ripe, flavor-packed grapes. Understanding the geographical distinctions of Oregon's AVAs is essential for sommeliers, as the terroir significantly influences the characteristics and quality of the wines produced there. This is why the Applegate Valley AVA is correctly identified as the southernmost in Oregon.

**6. What is the primary characteristic of Nebbiolo grape?**

- A. High acidity and tannin**
- B. Low sugar content**
- C. Medium body with herbaceous notes**
- D. Sweet flavor profile**

The primary characteristic of the Nebbiolo grape is its high acidity and tannin. This grape variety is well-known for producing structured wines that often have a pronounced acidity which helps in the aging process and contributes to the wine's ability to develop complex flavors over time. The high tannin levels also provide a firm backbone to the wine, making Nebbiolo a favorite for aging, particularly when produced in regions like Barolo and Barbaresco. In contrast to the other options, Nebbiolo typically does not exhibit low sugar content, as it is not particularly noted for sweetness or a sweet flavor profile. It also does not have a medium body; rather, it is often considered full-bodied, and while herbaceous notes can sometimes be found depending on specific winemaking styles and terroir, they are not the defining characteristic of the grape itself. Thus, the correct identification of high acidity and tannin as defining traits of Nebbiolo highlights its unique profile and suitability for producing complex, age-worthy wines.

**7. What is the origin of the Shiraz variety?**

- A. Australia, particularly South Australia**
- B. United States, especially California**
- C. France, specifically the Rhône Valley**
- D. Italy, particularly Tuscany**

Shiraz, known for its bold flavors and rich character, originates from the Rhône Valley in France. This varietal is particularly associated with regions like Hermitage and Côte-Rôtie, where it has been cultivated for centuries. The Rhône Valley is recognized for its distinct terroir, which allows Shiraz to express unique characteristics such as dark fruit flavors, spiciness, and pepper notes, influenced by the climate and soil. While Shiraz has gained worldwide popularity, particularly in Australia where it has been adopted and adapted into a distinctive style, its roots firmly lie in the French winemaking tradition. The usage of the name "Syrah" in France contrasts with "Shiraz" in Australia, but both refer to the same grape variety. In addition, countries like the United States and Italy have their own wine-producing regions that may cultivate Syrah/Shiraz, but they do not represent the grape's origin. Thus, the correct answer highlights the historical and geographical context of Shiraz's development and significance in French viticulture.

**8. In which county is the Sonoma Valley AVA located?**

- A. Napa County**
- B. Santa Barbara County**
- C. Sonoma County**
- D. Lake County**

The Sonoma Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area) is situated within Sonoma County, which is known for its diverse range of wine styles and exceptional grape growing conditions. Sonoma County hosts a variety of microclimates and terroirs that contribute to the uniqueness of its wines, making it an important region in California's wine production. Recognizing the geographical classification of wine regions is crucial for understanding the nuances of viticulture and winemaking practices in these areas. Each county has its own distinct characteristics that influence the style and quality of the wines produced there, so knowing that Sonoma Valley is specifically located in Sonoma County helps in grasping these regional differences in wine education. The other counties listed, such as Napa, Santa Barbara, and Lake, are recognized for their own AVAs and wine profiles, but they do not encompass the Sonoma Valley AVA. This contextual knowledge enhances the understanding of California's wine landscape.



**9. What is the required percentage of grapes that must come from Ontario or British Columbia to label as VQA?**

- A. 85%**
- B. 95%**
- C. 100%**
- D. 90%**

To label a wine as VQA (Vintners Quality Alliance) in Canada, it is essential that 100% of the grapes used in the production of that wine originate from the designated region specified on the label, whether it be from Ontario or British Columbia. This stringent requirement ensures that the wine reflects the unique terroir and characteristics of the region it claims to represent. The VQA system is designed to protect the integrity of Canadian wines and to guarantee quality standards. As a result, producers must adhere to these regulations to maintain the VQA designation and uphold consumer trust in the authenticity and quality of their products. The requirement for 100% of the grapes being locally sourced is a hallmark of the VQA certification, distinguishing it from other designations that may allow blending with grapes from outside the specified region.

**10. Opus One is a joint venture between which two wineries?**

- A. Château Lafite Rothschild and Robert Mondavi**
- B. Baron Philippe de Rothschild and Robert Mondavi**
- C. Château Mouton Rothschild and Constellation Brands**
- D. Silver Oak and Domain Chandon**

Opus One is indeed a joint venture between Baron Philippe de Rothschild and Robert Mondavi. Founded in 1979, this collaboration aimed to create a premium Napa Valley wine that embodies the style of Bordeaux while incorporating the rich character of California. Both partners brought their unique expertise to the project: Mondavi with his knowledge of California winemaking and Rothschild with his prestigious Bordeaux legacy. This partnership not only integrated the best practices from both regions but also highlighted the blending of Old World traditions with New World innovation. The resulting wine has gained global acclaim, representing a pinnacle of winemaking in Napa Valley.

# 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

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

**<https://guildsommuscanada.examzify.com>**

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