Sommelier Level 2 Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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

1. What is the correct order of the vine growth stages from budbreak to harvest?

A. Budbreak, Veraison, Flowering, Fruit Set, Harvest

B. Budbreak, Flowering, Veraison, Fruit Set, Harvest

C. Budbreak, Flowering, Fruit Set, Veraison, Harvest

D. Flowering, Budbreak, Fruit Set, Veraison, Harvest

2. Which bands of latitude are best for viticulture?

A. 15-30

B. 30-50

C. 0-15

D. 50-70

3. What is chapeau?

A. The cap of pomace in red wine making

B. A type of cork

C. A fermentation vessel

D. A wine label

4. The drained juice from saignée may be used to produce which style of wine?

A. Rosé

B. Fortified wine

C. Sparkling wine

D. Fortified dessert wine

5. Which statement about soil fertility and wine quality is supported by practice?

A. High fertility produces better wines

B. Fertility has no impact on wine quality

C. Low fertility produces better wines

D. Medium fertility produces the best wines

6. What is saignée (bleeding) in winemaking?

A. The process of gently warming wine before fermentation.

B. Draining of juice from contact with skins to concentrate extraction; the bled wine may be used for Rosé.

C. A method of clarifying wine by cold stabilization.

D. A technique to introduce oxygen during maturation.

7. To convert Northern to Southern Hemisphere month, how many months should be added?

A. 3 months

B. 9 months

C. 6 months

D. 12 months

8. What is a byproduct of malolactic fermentation?

A. Acetic acid

B. Oxygen

C. Ethyl acetate

D. Diacetyl

9. How many fruiting canes does each spur produce each year in spur pruning?

A. One

B. Two

C. Three

D. Four

10. Which compound is primarily responsible for buttery aromas in wine?

A. Diacetyl

B. Ethyl acetate

C. Lactic acid

D. Acetic acid

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What is the correct order of the vine growth stages from budbreak to harvest?

A. Budbreak, Veraison, Flowering, Fruit Set, Harvest

B. Budbreak, Flowering, Veraison, Fruit Set, Harvest

C. Budbreak, Flowering, Fruit Set, Veraison, Harvest

D. Flowering, Budbreak, Fruit Set, Veraison, Harvest

Understanding the sequence of grapevine development is about how the plant progresses from bloom to ripe fruit. It starts with budbreak, when the winter buds burst and growth begins in spring. After shoots develop, flowering occurs as the flowers open and pollination takes place, which then leads to fruit set where berries start to form. Once the berries begin to mature, veraison marks the onset of ripening, with changes such as color development in red varieties and a rise in sugar content. Finally, harvest happens when the grapes have reached the desired balance of sugars, acids, and flavors. So the proper order is budbreak, flowering, fruit set, veraison, then harvest. Placing veraison before flowering isn't possible because ripening depends on having fruit formed through flowering and fruit set, and harvesting cannot occur before the grapes have fully ripened.

2. Which bands of latitude are best for viticulture?

A. 15-30

B. 30-50

C. 0-15

D. 50-70

Vineyards thrive where there is a warm, defined growing season with cool nights to preserve acidity, and mid-latitude climates provide that balance. The band around 30 to 50 degrees latitude tends to offer reliable sunshine and seasonal variation: summers are warm enough to ripen grapes, while nights cool down enough to help retain aroma and acidity, leading to balanced wines. If you go much closer to the equator, conditions often bring heavy rainfall and humidity that promote diseases and can disrupt ripening. If you go much farther toward the poles, growing seasons become shorter and frost risk increases, making reliable ripening tougher for many varieties. So the mid-latitude zone strikes the right mix of heat, seasonality, and manageable risk, which is why it's favored for viticulture globally.

3. What is chapeau?

A. The cap of pomace in red wine making

B. A type of cork

C. A fermentation vessel

D. A wine label

Chapeau is the cap of grape skins and solids that floats to the top of the fermenting must during red-wine production. This "hat" forms as skins rise with fermentation, and winemakers manage it by punching down or pumping over to keep juice in contact with the skins, which drives color and tannin extraction. It's not a cork, a fermentation vessel, or a wine label.

4. The drained juice from saignée may be used to produce which style of wine?

A. Rosé

B. Fortified wine

C. Sparkling wine

D. Fortified dessert wine

Saignée is the practice of bleeding off a portion of juice from red grape must after some skin contact to concentrate the remaining must. That drained juice has had only brief exposure to the skins, so it picks up little color and tannin. When that pale juice is fermented, it becomes a pink wine—rosé. Meanwhile, the remaining must is richer in color and structure, producing a deeper red wine. Fortified or dessert styles require additional steps (adding spirit or sugar), and sparkling wine involves separate fermentation steps, but the drained juice from saignée is specifically used to make rosé.

5. Which statement about soil fertility and wine quality is supported by practice?

A. High fertility produces better wines

B. Fertility has no impact on wine quality

C. Low fertility produces better wines

D. Medium fertility produces the best wines

Vine quality and wine flavor hinge on how much vigor the soil allows the vines to express. When nutrients are limited, the vines grow less vigorously and set fewer grapes, which tends to concentrate sugars, phenolics, and flavor compounds in each berry. That concentration often leads to better balance, more intense aroma and structure, and ultimately higher-quality wine. The practice of deficit or restricted fertility aims to keep yields in check so the fruit ripens fully without becoming diluted by excessive foliage or overly lush growth. Of course, pushing fertility too far the other way can stress the vines or reduce yield too much, so the aim is a controlled limitation rather than starvation. This is why the statement that low fertility produces better wines aligns with observed practice: restricted nutrients can enhance grape concentration and wine quality.

6. What is saignée (bleeding) in winemaking?

A. The process of gently warming wine before fermentation.

B. Draining of juice from contact with skins to concentrate extraction; the bled wine may be used for Rosé.

C. A method of clarifying wine by cold stabilization.

D. A technique to introduce oxygen during maturation.

Saignée is a bleeding technique in red winemaking: a portion of juice is drained from the fermenting must after skin contact has begun. This lowers the juice-to-skin ratio in the remaining must, concentrating color, tannin, and flavor compounds in the wine that continues to ferment. The juice that's bled off, being lighter in color and tannins, is often used to make rosé (and can sometimes be used for sparkling wines). This is not about warming the wine, cold-stabilizing for clarification, or introducing oxygen during maturation.

7. To convert Northern to Southern Hemisphere month, how many months should be added?

A. 3 months

B. 9 months

C. 6 months

D. 12 months

Seasons are opposite in the two hemispheres, so months are offset by six months. To map a month from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, you add six months. For example, January (winter in the North) becomes July in the South (winter there). May (spring in the North) becomes November in the South (spring there). This six-month shift lines up the same season across hemispheres, which is why six months is the correct amount. Adding three or nine months would land in a different season, and adding twelve months would bring you back to the same month rather than the opposite season.

8. What is a byproduct of malolactic fermentation?

A. Acetic acid

B. Oxygen

C. Ethyl acetate

D. Diacetyl

Malolactic fermentation is the process where lactic acid bacteria convert malic acid into lactic acid and carbon dioxide, softening acidity and shaping wine's flavor. A common byproduct produced during this metabolism is diacetyl, a compound responsible for buttery aromas in some wines. This byproduct comes from the bacteria's pathways during malolactic activity and can contribute noticeable flavors, especially in certain varieties. Acetic acid and ethyl acetate are not typical byproducts of malolactic fermentation. Acetic acid is more associated with oxidation processes involving acetobacter, while ethyl acetate is an ester formed through other fermentation pathways involving ethanol and acetic acid. Oxygen is not produced by malolactic fermentation, which proceeds without generating oxygen.

9. How many fruiting canes does each spur produce each year in spur pruning?

A. One

B. Two

C. Three

D. Four

In spur pruning, a spur is a short piece of wood left on the cordon with two buds. Those two buds break in the next growing season and each forms a shoot that can carry fruit, so one spur yields two fruiting canes (two shoots bearing fruit). This setup helps balance the vine's vigor and provides multiple fruiting options while keeping renewal wood manageable. After harvest, growers prune the shoots back again to the two-bud spur, continuing the cycle.

10. Which compound is primarily responsible for buttery aromas in wine?

A. Diacetyl

B. Ethyl acetate

C. Lactic acid

D. Acetic acid

Butter aromas in wine come mainly from diacetyl, a diketone produced during malolactic fermentation by lactic acid bacteria as they convert malic acid into lactic acid. Diacetyl has a characteristic creamy, buttery scent that wine producers and tasters associate with certain white wines, especially Chardonnay aged on lees or after malolactic fermentation. In small amounts it adds complexity, but too much can overwhelm other aromas. The other compounds play different roles: ethyl acetate can contribute fruity or solvent-like notes at low levels but may smell like nail polish remover at higher levels; lactic acid mainly affects mouthfeel and sweetness of perceived acidity rather than aroma; acetic acid gives a vinegar-like aroma.

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:

https://sommelierlevel2.examzify.com

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