

# Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 3 Award in Sake 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. During which stage of brewing is the koji mold introduced?**
  - A. Fermentation**
  - B. Washing**
  - C. Steaming**
  - D. Preparation of shubo**
- 2. What characteristics in sake are believed to give it more ageing potential?**
  - A. Lower acidity and sweetness**
  - B. Higher levels of sugar and acidity**
  - C. Large grain size**
  - D. High alcohol content only**
- 3. What is a potential disadvantage of bottle pasteurisation?**
  - A. It requires less space for storage**
  - B. It is less labor-intensive**
  - C. It takes more space for storing bottles**
  - D. It damages delicate aromas less than bulk pasteurisation**
- 4. Why are low levels of amino acids and peptides necessary for ginjo fermentations?**
  - A. They prevent yeast from producing alcohol**
  - B. They stress the yeast and enhance ginjo aromas**
  - C. They increase the sweetness of the sake**
  - D. They contribute to a smoother texture**
- 5. How is rice loaded into a traditional batch steamer?**
  - A. In single layers without cloths**
  - B. In layers separated by cloths**
  - C. Directly into the steamer without organization**
  - D. In bulk to maintain heat**

- 6. What percentage of amylose contributes to the texture of rice in sake production?**
- A. 15%**
  - B. 20%**
  - C. 25%**
  - D. 30%**
- 7. Are there any limits on the categories and grades of sake that can be made into a nigori-zake?**
- A. No, none at all**
  - B. Yes, only certain grades**
  - C. Yes, only sparkling sake**
  - D. No, but only still sake can be used**
- 8. If the moisture level of the grains is too high, what problem may occur during fermentation?**
- A. Slower enzymatic digestion**
  - B. Creation of too few enzymes**
  - C. Uncontrolled fermentation process**
  - D. Excessive starch gelatinization**
- 9. What is the primary function of allowing dead vegetation in the paddy to access oxygen?**
- A. To encourage insect activity**
  - B. To enable proper decomposition and nutrient release**
  - C. To enhance surface water temperature**
  - D. To improve the visual quality of the crop**
- 10. What is a key characteristic of middle temperature sokujo-moto compared to standard sokujo-moto?**
- A. The starter is chilled to lower temperatures**
  - B. The process is completed in the same amount of time**
  - C. The starter remains at higher temperatures for the entire second day**
  - D. The yeast is added at lower temperatures**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. During which stage of brewing is the koji mold introduced?**

- A. Fermentation**
- B. Washing**
- C. Steaming**
- D. Preparation of shubo**

The koji mold, known scientifically as *Aspergillus oryzae*, is introduced during the steaming stage of sake brewing. This step follows the washing and soaking of the rice, where the rice is then steamed to create a suitable environment for the mold to grow. The steamed rice is spread out and inoculated with koji spores, allowing the mold to convert the rice's starches into sugars, a crucial part of the sake fermentation process. During this stage, the koji mold establishes itself by breaking down the rice and preparing it for the fermentation that follows, where yeast converts those sugars into alcohol. The timing and conditions of introducing koji are critical, as it directly impacts the flavor profile and overall quality of the sake produced. The subsequent stages after steaming involve fermentation and shubo preparation, which rely on the successful growth of koji prior to their processes.

**2. What characteristics in sake are believed to give it more ageing potential?**

- A. Lower acidity and sweetness**
- B. Higher levels of sugar and acidity**
- C. Large grain size**
- D. High alcohol content only**

The belief that higher levels of sugar and acidity in sake contribute to its ageing potential is supported by several factors. When sake has increased acidity, it helps preserve the beverage by acting as a natural preservative, similar to how acidity aids in the longevity of certain wines. A higher sugar content also provides additional nutrients that can enhance the complexity of flavor development as the sake ages. As sake matures, various chemical reactions occur, including oxidation and the alteration of flavor compounds, which can lead to the emergence of more complex and subtle flavors over time. The presence of both sugar and acidity creates a balance that can help sustain the sake's character as it evolves, allowing it to develop a rich depth of flavor while maintaining its freshness. The other options do not reflect the same potential for ageing. For instance, lower acidity might not provide the necessary structure for longevity, while large grain size and high alcohol content alone do not necessarily guarantee that a sake will benefit from ageing. Therefore, the combination of higher sugar and acidity represents a more conducive environment for the ageing process in sake.

### 3. What is a potential disadvantage of bottle pasteurisation?

- A. It requires less space for storage
- B. It is less labor-intensive
- C. It takes more space for storing bottles**
- D. It damages delicate aromas less than bulk pasteurisation

Bottle pasteurisation is a process that involves heating sealed bottles of sake to eliminate yeast and bacteria, ensuring stability and prolonging shelf life. One potential disadvantage of this method is that it requires more storage space for the bottles. This is because each bottle needs to be packed and stored individually after pasteurisation, which results in a larger overall footprint compared to bulk pasteurisation, where larger containers or tanks are processed altogether. Consequently, the efficiency of storage is decreased, as many individual bottles occupy more space than fewer large containers. In contrast to the other options, which highlight benefits such as reduced labor intensity or storage efficiency, the specific nature of bottle pasteurisation leads to a greater spatial requirement, thus making the correct choice clear. Additionally, the statement regarding damage to delicate aromas identifies a comparative advantage of bottle pasteurisation over bulk methods, which strengthens the case for understanding the logistical implications of the bottling process itself.

### 4. Why are low levels of amino acids and peptides necessary for ginjo fermentations?

- A. They prevent yeast from producing alcohol
- B. They stress the yeast and enhance ginjo aromas**
- C. They increase the sweetness of the sake
- D. They contribute to a smoother texture

Low levels of amino acids and peptides during ginjo fermentations are necessary because they stress the yeast, which in turn enhances the production of complex and desirable aromas associated with ginjo sake. In ginjo production, the goal is to achieve a delicate balance that promotes the development of fruity and floral notes. When yeast is slightly stressed, it can produce more aromatic compounds, contributing to the characteristic profile of ginjo sake. This method of managing yeast health is critical to achieving the sought-after aromas that define this style of sake, distinguishing it from others that rely on different fermentation conditions. Although the other options might seem plausible, they do not accurately reflect the role of amino acids and peptides in this specific fermentation process. For instance, preventing alcohol production would contradict the primary goal of fermentation, which is to convert sugars into alcohol. Increasing sweetness or smoothing texture does not inform the unique sensory profile sought in ginjo sake as effectively as the enhancement of aromatic complexity does.

**5. How is rice loaded into a traditional batch steamer?**

- A. In single layers without cloths**
- B. In layers separated by cloths**
- C. Directly into the steamer without organization**
- D. In bulk to maintain heat**

The rice is loaded into a traditional batch steamer in layers that are separated by cloths. This method is essential for a couple of key reasons. First, layering the rice with cloths ensures even steaming throughout the batch. The cloth allows steam to pass through while preventing the rice from becoming too sticky or clumping together, which facilitates uniform cooking. Additionally, this approach helps to maintain the texture and quality of the rice, which is crucial in the sake production process. Properly steamed rice is necessary for achieving optimal starch conversion during fermentation, as the texture impacts the accessibility of the starches to the enzymes involved in alcoholic fermentation. Other methods, such as loading rice in single layers without cloths, may lead to uneven cooking and a compromised end product. Similarly, direct loading without organization or in bulk can result in uneven heat distribution and texture issues, thus negatively affecting the quality of the steamed rice for sake brewing.

**6. What percentage of amylose contributes to the texture of rice in sake production?**

- A. 15%**
- B. 20%**
- C. 25%**
- D. 30%**

The correct answer is 20%, as this percentage of amylose plays a critical role in determining the texture of rice used in sake production. Amylose is a component of starch, and it influences the gelatinization and viscosity of the starch granules during the brewing process. In sake brewing, the texture of the rice affects not just mouthfeel but also the clarity of the final product. A higher amylose content often results in a drier and clearer sake, while lower amylose content can contribute to a creamier mouthfeel. Approximately 20% amylose is typical for sake rice, striking a balance that is favorable for traditional brewing methods and achieving the desired characteristics in the finished sake. Understanding this concept is fundamental for anyone studying sake, as it connects the biochemical properties of rice to the sensory outcomes in the final product.

**7. Are there any limits on the categories and grades of sake that can be made into a nigori-zake?**

- A. No, none at all**
- B. Yes, only certain grades**
- C. Yes, only sparkling sake**
- D. No, but only still sake can be used**

The correct answer indicates that there are no restrictions on the categories and grades of sake that can be made into nigori-zake. Nigori-zake is a type of sake that is coarsely filtered, resulting in a cloudy appearance. It can be produced from any grade of sake, including junmai, honjozo, ginjo, and daiginjo, allowing for a broad range of flavor profiles and characteristics. This flexibility encourages experimentation and innovation in producing nigori-zake, as it can showcase different rice polishing ratios and brewing techniques. Regardless of the sake's original category or grade, the process of creating nigori-zake is accessible to all, making it an inclusive expression of sake artistry. The other options imply various limitations that do not apply to nigori-zake, which is fundamentally about the method of filtration rather than the quality of the sake being used. Therefore, the absence of restrictions on the grades and categories allows for a diverse range of nigori-zake offerings in the marketplace.

**8. If the moisture level of the grains is too high, what problem may occur during fermentation?**

- A. Slower enzymatic digestion**
- B. Creation of too few enzymes**
- C. Uncontrolled fermentation process**
- D. Excessive starch gelatinization**

When the moisture level of the grains used in sake production is too high, it can significantly affect the fermentation process. The ideal moisture content is crucial for maintaining a controlled fermentation environment. Excessive moisture can lead to an uncontrolled fermentation, where the activity of the yeast may become irregular and unpredictable. This can result in off-flavors or undesirable compounds being produced, which can adversely impact the quality of the sake. During fermentation, yeast converts sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide, and this process requires a certain balance of conditions, including moisture. If the moisture level is too high, it may create an environment conducive to unwanted microorganisms, which can compete with the yeast for nutrients and lead to spoilage. Thus, an uncontrolled fermentation process becomes a significant risk, making it vital to monitor and manage the moisture content of the grains carefully. While slower enzymatic digestion, too few enzymes, and excessive starch gelatinization are all concerns related to the fermentation process, they do not directly relate to the consequences of high moisture content in grains as significantly as uncontrolled fermentation does. Hence, focusing on moisture management is essential in ensuring a successful fermentation.

**9. What is the primary function of allowing dead vegetation in the paddy to access oxygen?**

- A. To encourage insect activity**
- B. To enable proper decomposition and nutrient release**
- C. To enhance surface water temperature**
- D. To improve the visual quality of the crop**

The primary function of allowing dead vegetation in the paddy to access oxygen is to enable proper decomposition and nutrient release. When dead plant material is left in the fields, it becomes a source of organic matter that, when oxygen is present, can be decomposed by microorganisms. This process not only breaks down the plant material but also releases essential nutrients back into the soil, which can then be taken up by new rice plants. This practice enhances soil fertility and overall crop health, contributing to a more productive and sustainable agricultural system. The other options do not accurately reflect the primary role of allowing dead vegetation access to oxygen. Encouraging insect activity is more of a secondary benefit and not the main reason behind this practice. Improving surface water temperature may have some impact on growth, but it is not a direct function of managing dead vegetation. Enhancing the visual quality of the crop is also not related to the need for oxygen access for decomposition; it's primarily about aesthetics rather than ecological or agricultural function.

**10. What is a key characteristic of middle temperature sokuji-moto compared to standard sokuji-moto?**

- A. The starter is chilled to lower temperatures**
- B. The process is completed in the same amount of time**
- C. The starter remains at higher temperatures for the entire second day**
- D. The yeast is added at lower temperatures**

A key characteristic of middle temperature sokuji-moto is that the starter remains at higher temperatures for the entire second day. In this fermentation method, the emphasis on maintaining a consistent, higher temperature allows for robust fermentation activity, which can enhance the development of flavor and aroma compounds in the sake. This method stands in contrast to other starter processes that may allow for variations in temperature or timing. The other options do not capture the essence of middle temperature sokuji-moto as effectively. For example, chilling the starter to lower temperatures or adding yeast at lower temperatures would not align with the objective of enhancing fermentation activity through higher temperatures. Additionally, the time it takes to complete the process may differ from traditional methods, but maintaining a higher temperature during the second day is crucial for the fermentation profile desired in this style of sake. Understanding the dynamics of temperature control is essential for manipulating the flavors and aromas of sake, hence the significance of this characteristic.

## 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://wsetlevel3awardinsake.examzify.com>**

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