

WSET Level 1 Award in Wines

Paper 01 — Answer Key & Explanations

1. C — Full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignon

Grilled steak's rich, protein-heavy character pairs excellently with full-bodied, tannic red wines like Cabernet Sauvignon, which matches the weight and complements the flavor.

2. C — Off-dry or slightly sweet white wines

Off-dry or slightly sweet wines help balance the heat of spicy dishes, while high alcohol and tannins can intensify the burning sensation.

3. B — Acidity cuts through and cleanses the palate

High acidity in wine cuts through fat and oil, cleansing the palate and refreshing the mouth between bites, creating a balanced experience.

4. B — Tannins bind with proteins, softening the wine's astringency

Tannins bind with proteins in meat and cheese, reducing the astringent sensation and making both the wine and food taste smoother.

5. B — Compounds from grape skins that create a drying sensation

Tannins come from grape skins, seeds, and oak; they create a drying, astringent sensation in the mouth and are primarily found in red wines.

6. C — Syrah

Syrah is the signature red grape of the Northern Rhône, producing famous wines like Hermitage and Côte-Rôtie.

7. C — Aromas developed during bottle aging

Tertiary aromas develop as wine ages in the bottle, producing complex notes like dried fruit, leather, tobacco, and earthy mushroom.

8. B — 10-15°C (50-59°F)

Wine should be stored at a consistent cool temperature around 10-15°C to age properly; temperature fluctuations and heat can damage wine.

9. C — High acidity and range from dry to sweet

Riesling is characterized by its high acidity and versatility in producing wines across the sweetness spectrum, from bone-dry to intensely sweet.

10. A — Yeast converts sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide

During alcoholic fermentation, yeast consumes the sugar in grape juice and converts it into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas.

11. C — Room temperature (15-18°C / 59-64°F)

Red wines are best served at cool room temperature (15-18°C); serving too warm can make the alcohol taste harsh, while too cold can mute flavors.

12. A — Well chilled (6-10°C / 43-50°F)

White wines are best served well chilled to preserve freshness and acidity, though very cold temperatures can mute complex aromas.

13. B — The acidity of the dressing

Vinegar-based dressings are very acidic and can clash with wine; consider the dressing's acidity and choose wines with high acidity to match, or use less acidic dressings.

14. B — High acidity, citrus fruit, and green apple flavors

Cool-climate Chardonnay has higher acidity and fresher flavors like lemon, lime, and green apple, as opposed to the riper tropical fruit of warm climates.

15. B — The food can overpower and mask the wine's flavors

Strongly flavored foods can dominate delicate wines, making the wine taste thin or flavorless; intensity should be matched between food and wine.

16. C — Port

Port is a classic fortified wine from Portugal, made by adding grape spirit during fermentation to stop the process and retain sweetness.

17. B — The wine is free from suspended particles

Clarity refers to the absence of cloudiness or suspended particles; most wines should be clear and bright, indicating proper winemaking and storage.

18. A — Chardonnay

Chardonnay is the primary white grape of Burgundy, producing wines ranging from crisp Chablis to rich Meursault.

19. C — Pale pink to deep salmon

Rosé wines range from very pale pink (almost colorless) to deep salmon or orange-pink, depending on grape variety and skin contact time.

20. B — Its high acidity and bubbles cleanse the palate

Champagne's high acidity and effervescence cut through rich foods, cleanse the palate, and refresh between bites, making it highly versatile for many dishes.

21. B — Full body with black fruit flavors and high tannins

Cabernet Sauvignon produces full-bodied red wines with pronounced black currant flavors, firm tannins, and excellent aging potential.

22. B — On their side to keep the cork moist

Wine should be stored horizontally to keep the cork moist and swollen, preventing air from entering and spoiling the wine.

23. B — Light to medium body with red fruit and delicate tannins

Pinot Noir produces elegant wines with lighter body, red fruit flavors like cherry and strawberry, and silky tannins.

24. C — Pinot Gris

Pinot Gris (Pinot Grigio in Italy) can produce wines with a relatively neutral, subtle flavor profile, especially in the Italian style.

25. B — Crisp acidity with herbaceous and citrus flavors

Sauvignon Blanc is known for its high acidity and distinctive green, herbaceous aromas alongside citrus and tropical fruit notes.

26. B — To allow more oxygen contact and aroma release

Larger bowls allow red wines more surface area for oxidation and provide space for complex aromas to develop and concentrate.

27. B — Bold, ripe black fruit with pepper and spice

Australian Shiraz is known for its bold, full-bodied style with ripe blackberry flavors, black pepper, and spicy notes.

28. B — Spain

Sherry is a fortified wine from the Jerez region of southern Spain, made in styles ranging from bone-dry to very sweet.

29. B — Pairing wines and foods with similar flavor profiles

Complementary pairings match similar flavors and characteristics, such as earthy wine with mushroom dishes or buttery wine with creamy sauces.

30. C — Sweet fortified wine like Port

Rich chocolate desserts pair well with sweet fortified wines like Port or sweet red wines, which match the intensity and sweetness of the chocolate.

