

WSET Level 1 Award in Wines

Paper 02 — Answer Key & Explanations

1. B — Carbon dioxide is produced during fermentation

Carbon dioxide is a natural byproduct of fermentation; in sparkling wine production, this CO₂ is trapped in the bottle or tank to create bubbles.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. B — The salt and sweet contrast creates a balanced pairing

The contrast between salty cheese and sweet wine creates a harmonious balance, with each element enhancing the other through opposition.

7. C — Traditional method (Méthode Traditionnelle)

The traditional method involves a second fermentation in the bottle, creating fine bubbles and complex flavors; this is the method used for Champagne.

8. B — Wine with added grape spirit (alcohol)

Fortified wines have grape spirit added during or after fermentation, raising the alcohol level to typically 15-20 percent.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. B — 11-14 percent

Most table wines fall in the 11-14 percent alcohol range, with variations based on climate, grape variety, and winemaking style.

13. 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.

14. B — Aromas from the grape variety and fermentation

Primary aromas come directly from the grape variety itself and the fermentation process, such as fruity, floral, or herbal notes.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. B — Age, grape variety, and winemaking techniques

Wine color provides clues about age (red wines lighten, white wines darken), grape variety, climate, and winemaking methods like oak aging.

21. C — Pinot Gris

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

22. B — Pair with full-bodied wines that match the richness

Cream-based sauces are rich and coating, so they pair best with fuller-bodied wines that have enough weight and structure to stand up to the richness.

23. A — The level of residual sugar in the wine

Sweetness in wine refers to the amount of residual sugar left after fermentation; it is detected on the tip of the tongue.

24. B — Plum and black cherry with soft, velvety tannins

Merlot is known for its soft, approachable tannins and flavors of plum, black cherry, and chocolate, making it more immediately accessible than Cabernet Sauvignon.

25. B — It provides freshness and makes your mouth water

Acidity gives wine freshness, makes your mouth water, and provides balance; it is detected on the sides of the tongue.

26. 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.

27. B — The length and quality of flavors after swallowing

The finish is the persistence and quality of flavors that remain in your mouth after swallowing; a long finish is generally a sign of quality.

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. C — They are the same grape with different regional names

Syrah and Shiraz are the same grape variety; Syrah is used in France and cooler regions, while Shiraz is the name used in Australia and New World regions.

30. 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.

