WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

APPEARANCE

Clarity		clear – hazy (faulty?)
Intensity		pale – medium – deep
Colour	white	lemon-green – lemon – gold – amber – brown
	rosé	pink – pink-orange – orange
	red	purple – ruby – garnet – tawny – brown
Other observations		*e.g.* legs/tears, deposit, pétillance, bubbles

NOSE

Condition	clean – unclean (faulty?)
Intensity	light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Aroma characteristics	e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary

PALATE

Sweetness		dry – off-dry – medium-dry – medium-sweet – sweet – luscious
Acidity		low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
Tannin	level	low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
	nature	e.g. ripe, soft, smooth, unripe, green, coarse, stalky, chalky, fine-grained
Alcohol		low – medium – high
Body		light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – full
Flavour intensity		light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Flavour characteristics		e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary
Other observations		e.g. texture (e.g. oily, creamy, austere, luscious), pétillance (still wines only)
Finish		short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long

CONCLUSIONS

Quality assessment	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding (an explanation supporting the assessment of a wine's quality will be required)
Bottle ageing	suitable for bottle ageing – not suitable for bottle ageing (an explanation supporting the assessment of a wine's suitability for bottle ageing will be required)

Notes to students:

For lines where the entries are separated by a hyphen – You must select one and only one of these options.

For lines starting with 'e.g.' where the entries are separated with commas – These are entries that you should consider when writing your tasting note. You may not need to comment on each entry for every wine.

WSET Level 4 Wine-Lexicon:

supporting the WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

DESCRIBING AROMA AND FLAVOUR

Primary Aromas and Flavours
The aromas and flavours of the grape and alcoholic fermentation

Floral	blossom, elderflower, honeysuckle, jasmine, rose, violet
Green fruit	apple, pear, gooseberry, grape
Citrus fruit	grapefruit, lemon, lime, orange
Stone fruit	peach, apricot, nectarine
Tropical fruit	banana, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
Red fruit	redcurrant, cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, red cherry, red plum
Black fruit	blackcurrant, blackberry, blueberry, black cherry, black plum
Herbaceous	green bell pepper (capsicum), grass, tomato leaf, asparagus
Herbal	eucalyptus, mint, fennel, dill, dried herbs (e.g. thyme, oregano)
Spice	black/white pepper, liquorice, cinnamon
Fruit ripeness	unripe fruit, ripe fruit, dried fruit, cooked fruit
Other	e.g. simple, wet stones, candy

Secondary Aromas and Flavours
The aromas and flavours of post-fermentation winemaking

Yeast (lees, autolysis, flor)	biscuit/graham cracker, bread, toasted bread, pastry, brioche, bread dough, cheese, yogurt, acetaldehyde
Malolactic conversion	butter, cheese, cream
Oak	vanilla, cloves, coconut, cedar, charred wood, smoke, chocolate, coffee

Tertiary Aromas and Flavours
The aromas and flavours of maturation

Red wine	dried fruit (e.g. prune, raisin, fig), cooked fruit (e.g. cooked plum, cooked cherry), leather, earth, mushroom, meat, tobacco, wet leaves, forest floor, caramel
White wine	dried fruit (e.g. dried apricot, raisin) orange marmalade, petrol (gasoline), cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, almond, hazelnut, honey, caramel
Deliberately oxidised wines	almond, hazelnut, walnut, chocolate, coffee, caramel

Note to students:

The WSET Level 4 Wine-Lexicon is designed to be a prompt and a guide which you do not need to memorise. You can pass the tasting examination if you use the descriptors in the Wine-Lexicon but you do not need to limit yourself to these terms and the examiners will accept other descriptors so long as they are accurate.