CERTIFIED SOMMELIER PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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.

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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!

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Questions

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1. Which grape variety is NOT a primary red grown in Sardinia?

A. Cannonau

B. Carignano

C. Merlot

D. Nuragua

2. What does the term "Denominacao de Origem Controlada" (DOC) signify in Portuguese wine?

A. A type of dessert wine

B. A classification for regional wines

C. A regulation for grape growing and wine production

D. A designation for vintage wines

3. What is the minimum percentage of Touriga Nacional required in red wines produced in the Dao region?

A. 10%

B. 20%

C. 50%

D. 90%

4. What is the volume in standard bottles for a Salmanazar?

A. 8 Bottles

B. 12 Bottles

C. 16 Bottles

D. 20 Bottles

5. Which region is located in the southern part of Alsace?

A. Bas Rhin

B. Haut Rhin

C. Alsace Centrale

D. Alsace Septentrionale

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6. What is the primary basis for the Burgundy AOC classification?

A. Climate

B. Terroir

C. Grape variety

D. Soil type

7. What is the generic term used to describe sparkling wine?

A. Spumante

B. Frizzante

C. Cava

D. Moscato

8. Which varietal is NOT typically used for white wines in the Northern Rhone?

A. Viognier

B. Marsanne

C. Sauvignon Blanc

D. Roussanne

9. What is the maximum percentage of Grenache allowed in Gigondas red wines?

A. 70%

B. 75%

C. 80%

D. 85%

10. Which Australian wine region is known for its predominance of white wines and was established in the 1960s?

A. Hunter Valley

B. Barossa Valley

C. Margaret River

D. Coonawarra

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which grape variety is NOT a primary red grown in Sardinia?

A. Cannonau

B. Carignano

C. Merlot

D. Nuragua

The grape variety that is not a primary red grown in Sardinia is Merlot. Sardinia is known for its indigenous grape varieties, with Cannonau and Carignano being two of the most significant red grapes cultivated on the island. Cannonau is actually synonymous with Grenache and has deep roots in Sardinia's history, while Carignano is particularly noted for its use in the island's coastal wine regions. Nuraghe, while less recognized internationally, is also a native varietal grown in Sardinia, contributing to the local wine identity. Merlot, on the other hand, is a well-known international varietal that is grown in various wine regions around the world, including Bordeaux and parts of California; however, it is not indigenous to Sardinia and is not among the primary red varieties that define the island's viticulture.

2. What does the term "Denominacao de Origem Controlada" (DOC) signify in Portuguese wine?

A. A type of dessert wine

B. A classification for regional wines

C. A regulation for grape growing and wine production

D. A designation for vintage wines

The term "Denominacao de Origem Controlada" (DOC) in Portuguese wine signifies a classification that regulates grape growing and wine production within a designated region. This designation ensures that wines adhere to specific standards, including grape varieties, production methods, and geographical boundaries. The primary purpose of the DOC system is to protect the integrity of the wines being produced, maintaining quality and promoting traditional practices associated with the region. The DOC designation is akin to other quality assurance systems found in wine-producing countries, such as the French AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée). It requires producers to follow strict guidelines, ensuring that the wine is characteristic of its designated area. This involves oversight on factors such as yield limits and aging requirements, which are vital in preserving the quality and reputation of wines from that region. While other choices refer to different aspects of wine classification or style, DOC specifically addresses the regulations and standards associated with wine production, making it the accurate interpretation of the term within the context of Portuguese wine.

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3. What is the minimum percentage of Touriga Nacional required in red wines produced in the Dao region?

A. 10%

B. 20%

C. 50%

D. 90%

In the Dao region of Portugal, the minimum percentage of Touriga Nacional required in red wines is indeed 20%. Touriga Nacional is one of the key grape varieties cultivated in this region, known for its quality and contribution to the complexity and character of the wines produced there. The regulation stipulates that in order to be labeled as a Dao red wine, producers must include at least 20% of this variety in their blends. This establishes a requirement that aims to preserve the regional identity and ensure a baseline quality associated with the wine's characteristics. The other percentages listed do not align with the current regulations for red wines from the Dao region. A threshold lower than 20% would not guarantee the distinctive qualities that Touriga Nacional provides. Similarly, higher percentages like 50% or 90% do not reflect the flexibility allowed in blending, which often involves other local grape varieties to create a well-rounded product while still emphasizing Touriga Nacional's importance in the blend.

4. What is the volume in standard bottles for a Salmanazar?

A. 8 Bottles

B. 12 Bottles

C. 16 Bottles

D. 20 Bottles

A Salmanazar is a large-format wine bottle that holds 9 liters of wine. To understand how this translates into standard 750 mL bottles, one can perform the following calculation: First, convert the volume of the Salmanazar into milliliters: 9 liters = 9,000 milliliters. Next, divide this volume by the volume of a standard bottle: 9,000 mL ÷ 750 mL per bottle = 12 bottles. Therefore, a Salmanazar is equal to 12 standard bottles. The correct answer is derived from recognizing the proper calculation and understanding that each type of large-format bottle corresponds to specific quantities of standard bottles based on their volume. The other options miscalculate or misinterpret the relationship between larger and standard bottle sizes.

5. Which region is located in the southern part of Alsace?

A. Bas Rhin

B. Haut Rhin

C. Alsace Centrale

D. Alsace Septentrionale

The correct region located in the southern part of Alsace is Haut Rhin. This region is well-known for its rich viticultural heritage, producing a variety of excellent wines, particularly from grape varieties such as Riesling, Gewürztraminer, and Pinot Gris. Haut Rhin encompasses picturesque villages and vineyards that benefit from a favorable climate and diverse soil types, contributing to the quality of the wines produced here. In contrast, Bas Rhin is situated to the north of Haut Rhin, making it geographically the northern region of Alsace. Alsace Centrale does not exist as a formal wine region; the name could imply an area in the middle, but it lacks the recognition of the traditionally defined Alsace wine regions. Alsace Septentrionale, referring to the northern part of Alsace, also does not accurately describe the southern region of Alsace. Therefore, Haut Rhin is definitively recognized as the correct answer, representing the southern part of Alsace and its acclaimed wine production area.

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6. What is the primary basis for the Burgundy AOC classification?

A. Climate

B. Terroir

C. Grape variety

D. Soil type

The primary basis for the Burgundy AOC classification is terroir. Terroir encompasses the unique characteristics of a specific vineyard site, including the climate, soil, topography, and the influence of local winemaking traditions. In Burgundy, this concept is especially crucial because it reflects how these variables combine to influence the growth of the grapevines, ultimately affecting the flavor and quality of the wine produced. In Burgundy, producers are deeply focused on the expression of terroir, which is why the region is divided into a hierarchy of appellations based on specific vineyard sites and their distinctive qualities. This classification system allows consumers to understand the nuances of each wine, which can vary significantly even between vineyards that are geographically close to one another. While climate, grape variety, and soil type play important roles in viticulture and wine production, the overarching principle that governs the Burgundy AOC classification is the concept of terroir, which integrates all these factors into a cohesive understanding of the vineyard's identity and its resultant wines.

7. What is the generic term used to describe sparkling wine?

A. Spumante

B. Frizzante

C. Cava

D. Moscato

The term "spumante" refers specifically to fully sparkling wine, typically characterized by a significant level of effervescence due to carbonation. This classification is predominantly used in Italian wine terminology, where "spumante" distinguishes sparkling wines that undergo full fermentation in a controlled environment to develop their bubbles, such as Prosecco or Asti Spumante. While "frizzante" also describes a type of sparkling wine, it indicates a lower level of effervescence compared to "spumante," which is why it is not the generic term used to refer to all sparkling wines. "Cava" is a specific type of sparkling wine from Spain, primarily made using the traditional method of fermentation in the bottle, which also does not encompass all sparkling wines. "Moscato" refers to a sweet wine that can be either still or sparkling, but it is not a term that generically describes sparkling wines overall. Thus, "spumante" appropriately serves as the broader term that encompasses fully sparkling wines, making it the correct choice.

8. Which varietal is NOT typically used for white wines in the Northern Rhone?

A. Viognier

B. Marsanne

C. Sauvignon Blanc

D. Roussanne

Sauvignon Blanc is not typically used for white wines in the Northern Rhône. This region is known for its specific white varietals that are predominantly planted. Viognier, Marsanne, and Roussanne are the primary varieties cultivated here. Viognier is notably used in the prestigious Condrieu and Château-Grillet appellations, while Marsanne and Roussanne are key components in the blends of the Hermitage and St.-Péray. Sauvignon Blanc, on the other hand, is more associated with regions like Bordeaux and the Loire Valley, where it thrives and is used to produce some of the country's most acclaimed white wines.

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9. What is the maximum percentage of Grenache allowed in Gigondas red wines?

A. 70%

B. 75%

C. 80%

D. 85%

The maximum percentage of Grenache allowed in Gigondas red wines is indeed 80%. This regulation ensures that Grenache, which is a key varietal known for its fruit-forward flavor profile and smooth texture, can be a dominant player in the blend but also allows for the inclusion of other grape varieties that contribute to the complexity and character of the wine. In the Southern Rhône region where Gigondas is located, typical blends can include varieties such as Syrah and Mourvèdre alongside Grenache. The regulations regarding the proportion of Grenache help maintain the traditional style of Gigondas wines while permitting winemakers the flexibility to create wines with balanced flavor and aroma profiles. Understanding these regulations is crucial for recognizing the regions' winemaking practices and the resulting wine characteristics.

10. Which Australian wine region is known for its predominance of white wines and was established in the 1960s?

A. Hunter Valley

B. Barossa Valley

C. Margaret River

D. Coonawarra

The region known for its predominance of white wines and established in the 1960s is Margaret River. This southwestern Australian wine region has gained international acclaim, particularly for its high-quality Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. The region's unique climate, which benefits from cooling ocean breezes, allows for the production of vibrant and aromatic white wines. Hunter Valley, while famous for its Semillon, is not primarily recognized for its white wines compared to Margaret River. The Barossa Valley is predominantly celebrated for its rich red wines, particularly Shiraz, and Coonawarra is known for its exceptional Cabernet Sauvignon. Hence, Margaret River stands out as the Australian region focusing more significantly on white wine production, alongside its establishment timeline in the 1960s.

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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:

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

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