

# WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

## APPEARANCE

**Clarity** clear – hazy (faulty?)

**Intensity** pale – medium – deep

**Colour**

<i>white</i>	lemon-green – lemon – gold – amber – brown
<i>rosé</i>	pink – salmon – orange – onion skin
<i>red</i>	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**

<i>level</i>	low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
<i>nature</i>	e.g. ripe/soft vs unripe/green/stalky, coarse vs fine-grained

**Alcohol** low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high  
**fortified wines:** 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** texture (e.g. steely, oily, creamy, mouthcoating), pétillance (*still wines only*)

**Finish** short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long

## CONCLUSIONS *(see Candidate Assessment Guide for further information)*

**QUALITY**

**Assessment of quality** faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding  
*then give reasons, assessing e.g. balance/integration, intensity, finish, complexity, mousse, varietal definition, potential for ageing, etc.*

## READINESS FOR DRINKING AND POTENTIAL FOR AGEING

**Assessment of readiness for drinking and potential for ageing**

too young	–	can drink now, but has potential for ageing	–	drink now: not suitable for ageing or further ageing	–	too old
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*then give reasons, assessing e.g. concentration, acidity, tannin, development of aroma and flavour characteristics, etc.*

## THE WINE IN CONTEXT

**Country and/or region of origin** *state the country and/or region of origin, giving reasons when required*

**Grape variety/(ies)** *state the grape variety/(ies), giving reasons when required*

**Style within the category** *state the style within the category (for sparkling and fortified wines), giving reasons when required*

**Method of production** *state the method of production (for sparkling and fortified wines), giving reasons when required*

### Notes to students:

**For lines where the entries are separated by hyphens**, you must select one and only one of the entries given.

**For lines where the entries are separated by commas**, the entries are points to consider. You may not need to comment on each entry for every wine and any descriptors are indicative only.

## WSET Level 4 Wine-Lexicon: *supporting the WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®*

### DESCRIBING AROMA AND FLAVOUR

*Think in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary*

#### Primary Aromas and Flavours

*The aromas and flavours of the grape and alcoholic fermentation*

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
<b>Are the aromas and flavours</b> delicate <i>or</i> intense? simple <i>or</i> complex? generic <i>or</i> well-defined? fresh <i>or</i> cooked? under-ripe <i>or</i> ripe <i>or</i> overripe?	<b>Floral</b>	acacia, honeysuckle, chamomile, elderflower, geranium, blossom, rose, violet
	<b>Green fruit</b>	apple, gooseberry, pear, pear drop, quince, grape
	<b>Citrus fruit</b>	grapefruit, lemon, lime, orange peel, lemon peel
	<b>Stone fruit</b>	peach, apricot, nectarine
	<b>Tropical fruit</b>	banana, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
	<b>Red fruit</b>	redcurrant, cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, red cherry, red plum
	<b>Black fruit</b>	blackcurrant, blackberry, bramble, blueberry, black cherry, black plum
	<b>Dried fruit</b>	fig, prune, raisin, sultana, kirsch, jamminess, baked/stewed fruits, preserved fruits
	<b>Herbaceous</b>	green bell pepper (capsicum), grass, tomato leaf, asparagus, blackcurrant leaf
	<b>Herbal</b>	eucalyptus, mint, medicinal, lavender, fennel, dill
	<b>Pungent spice</b>	black/white pepper, liquorice, juniper, ginger
	<b>Other</b>	flint, wet stones, wet wool, rubber

#### Secondary Aromas and Flavours

*The aromas and flavours of post-fermentation winemaking*

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
<b>Are the aromas and flavours from</b> yeast, MLF, and/or oak?	<b>Yeast (lees, autolysis, flor)</b>	biscuit, bread, toast, pastry, brioche, bread dough, cheese, yoghurt
	<b>MLF</b>	butter, cheese, cream, yoghurt
	<b>Oak</b>	vanilla, cloves, nutmeg, coconut, butterscotch, toast, cedar, charred wood, smoke, chocolate, coffee, resinous

#### Tertiary Aromas and Flavours

*The aromas and flavours of maturation*

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
<b>Do the aromas and flavours show</b> deliberate oxidation, fruit development and/or bottle age?	<b>Deliberate oxidation</b>	almond, marzipan, coconut, hazelnut, walnut, chocolate, coffee, toffee, caramel
	<b>Fruit development (white)</b>	dried apricot, marmalade, dried apple, dried banana, etc.
	<b>Fruit development (red)</b>	fig, prune, tar, dried blackberry, dried cranberry, etc. cooked blackberry, cooked red plum, etc.
	<b>Bottle age (white)</b>	petrol, kerosene, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, toast, nutty, cereal, mushroom, hay, honey
	<b>Bottle age (red)</b>	leather, forest floor, earth, mushroom, game, cedar, tobacco, vegetal, wet leaves, savoury, meaty, farmyard

**Note to students:** The WSET Level 4 Wine-Lexicon contains suggested descriptors for the aromas and flavours you may identify in a wine. It is not exhaustive but gives examples of appropriate vocabulary to use in the Level 4 tasting examinations.



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 For more information contact [wset@wset.co.uk](mailto:wset@wset.co.uk)