LEVEL 1 SOMMELIER PRACTICE TEST

40 questions at the level of the Introductory Sommelier exam, from grape growing to sake. Time yourself, circle one answer per question, then check the answer key on the last pages.

40 questions

26 minutes, to keep exam pace

24 correct is 60%, a pass

Name _____

Score _____ / 40

GRAPE GROWING AND WINEMAKING

1 Which process turns sharp malic acid into softer lactic acid?

- **A** Chaptalization
- **B** Malolactic conversion
- **C** Carbonic maceration
- **D** Fining

2 Carbonic maceration is most closely linked to which wine?

- **A** Beaujolais
- **B** Barolo
- **C** Rioja Gran Reserva
- **D** Sauternes

3 What is chaptalization?

- **A** Adding sugar to the grape juice to raise the final alcohol
- **B** Adding acid to the grape juice
- **C** Removing sediment from a finished wine
- **D** Blending wines from different vintages

4 Which fungus causes the noble rot behind Sauternes and Tokaji Aszú?

- **A** Phylloxera
- **B** Oidium
- **C** Botrytis cinerea
- **D** Flor

5 In which method does the second fermentation happen in the same bottle the wine is sold in?

- **A** Tank (Charmat) method
- **B** Traditional method
- **C** Transfer method
- **D** Carbonation

6 What is phylloxera?

- **A** A fungal disease of the leaves
- **B** An insect that feeds on vine roots
- **C** A way of pruning vines
- **D** A wild yeast

TASTING AND SERVICE

7 At what temperature do you serve a full-bodied red, such as a Bordeaux?

- **A** 6–8 °C (43–46 °F)
- **B** 10–12 °C (50–54 °F)
- **C** 15–18 °C (59–64 °F)
- **D** 22–24 °C (72–75 °F)

8 How do you open a bottle of sparkling wine at the table?

- **A** Remove the cage, then pull the cork straight out
- **B** Keep a thumb on the cork, hold the bottle at about 45° and turn the bottle, not the cork
- **C** Point the bottle at the ceiling and let the cork pop
- **D** Twist the cork quickly while holding the bottle upright

9 Why do you decant an old red wine?

- **A** To chill it
- **B** To separate the wine from its sediment
- **C** To remove sulfites
- **D** To make it sweeter

10 Who tastes a bottle first to approve it?

- **A** The oldest guest
- **B** The host who ordered it
- **C** The sommelier only
- **D** Whoever sits nearest

11 **A wine smells of wet cardboard and a damp cellar, and the fruit is muted. What is the most likely fault?**

- **A** Oxidation
- **B** Cork taint (TCA)
- **C** Brettanomyces
- **D** Volatile acidity

12 **Which part of a red wine gives the drying feeling on your gums?**

- **A** Acidity
- **B** Tannin
- **C** Alcohol
- **D** Residual sugar

FRANCE

13 **White Burgundy, such as Meursault, is made from which grape?**

- **A** Sauvignon Blanc
- **B** Chardonnay
- **C** Chenin Blanc
- **D** Viognier

14 **White Sancerre is made from which grape?**

- **A** Chenin Blanc
- **B** Sauvignon Blanc
- **C** Melon de Bourgogne
- **D** Chardonnay

15 **Which part of Bordeaux is led by Merlot?**

- **A** Pauillac
- **B** Margaux
- **C** Saint-Émilion and Pomerol
- **D** Sauternes

16 **The 1855 Classification ranked the red wines of which area?**

- **A** The Médoc
- **B** Saint-Émilion
- **C** Pomerol
- **D** Entre-Deux-Mers

17 **Where is Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and which grape usually leads its red blend?**

- **A** Northern Rhône, Syrah
- **B** Southern Rhône, Grenache
- **C** Burgundy, Pinot Noir
- **D** Loire Valley, Cabernet Franc

18 **Côte-Rôtie and Hermitage reds are based on which grape?**

- **A** Grenache
- **B** Syrah
- **C** Merlot
- **D** Gamay

19 **Which three grapes make most Champagne?**

- **A** Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Meunier
- **B** Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris
- **C** Pinot Noir, Gamay, Chardonnay
- **D** Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc

20 **What does Brut mean on a Champagne label?**

- **A** Very sweet
- **B** Dry
- **C** Medium sweet
- **D** Made without grapes from the best villages

21 **Which grape is not one of the four classic Alsace Grand Cru grapes?**

- **A** Riesling
- **B** Gewurztraminer
- **C** Pinot Gris
- **D** Chardonnay

ITALY

22 Barolo and Barbaresco are made from which grape?

- **A** Sangiovese
- **B** Nebbiolo
- **C** Barbera
- **D** Corvina

23 Amarone della Valpolicella is made from grapes that are:

- **A** Frozen on the vine
- **B** Dried after harvest before fermenting
- **C** Aged under a layer of flor
- **D** Fortified with grape spirit

24 Brunello di Montalcino is made from 100% of which grape?

- **A** Sangiovese
- **B** Montepulciano
- **C** Nebbiolo
- **D** Aglianico

25 Prosecco is made mainly from which grape?

- **A** Glera
- **B** Trebbiano
- **C** Moscato
- **D** Pinot Grigio

26 Soave is made mainly from which grape?

- **A** Vermentino
- **B** Garganega
- **C** Fiano
- **D** Cortese

GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

27 Which German Prädikat level needs the ripest grapes?

- **A** Kabinett
- **B** Spätlese
- **C** Auslese
- **D** Trockenbeerenauslese

28 The Mosel is most famous for which grape?

- **A** Müller-Thurgau
- **B** Riesling
- **C** Silvaner
- **D** Pinot Noir

29 What is Austria's signature white grape?

- **A** Grüner Veltliner
- **B** Welschriesling
- **C** Chardonnay
- **D** Sauvignon Blanc

30 In the Wachau, which category is the richest and fullest dry wine?

- **A** Steinfeder
- **B** Federspiel
- **C** Smaragd
- **D** Kabinett

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

31 Which grape makes most Sherry?

- **A** Tempranillo
- **B** Palomino
- **C** Garnacha
- **D** Albariño

32 What is the main red grape of Rioja?

- **A** Garnacha
- **B** Tempranillo
- **C** Monastrell
- **D** Mencía

33 In which valley is Port made?

- **A** The Douro
- **B** The Tagus
- **C** The Minho
- **D** The Dão

THE NEW WORLD

34 **Marlborough, in New Zealand, is most famous for which grape?**

- **A** Pinot Noir
- **B** Sauvignon Blanc
- **C** Chardonnay
- **D** Riesling

35 **Mendoza, in Argentina, is best known for which red grape?**

- **A** Carménère
- **B** Malbec
- **C** Tannat
- **D** Zinfandel

36 **Barossa Valley, in South Australia, is best known for which red grape?**

- **A** Shiraz
- **B** Pinot Noir
- **C** Merlot
- **D** Cabernet Franc

37 **Napa Valley, in California, is best known for which red grape?**

- **A** Zinfandel
- **B** Pinot Noir
- **C** Cabernet Sauvignon
- **D** Syrah

PAIRING, SPIRITS AND SAKE

38 **Which wine is the classic regional match for a goat's cheese such as Crottin de Chavignol?**

- **A** Sancerre
- **B** Barolo
- **C** Tawny Port
- **D** Amarone

39 **Tequila must be made from at least 51% of which plant?**

- **A** Sugar cane
- **B** Blue Weber agave
- **C** Rye
- **D** Rice

40 **Sake is brewed from which main ingredient?**

- **A** Barley
- **B** Rice
- **C** Grapes
- **D** Plums

ANSWERS

Mark your paper first, then check. Each answer has the reason, so a wrong one teaches you something.

1	B	Bacteria do it after the alcoholic fermentation. It softens the wine and can add a buttery note. Most red wines and many Chardonnays go through it.
2	A	Whole bunches ferment inside a tank full of carbon dioxide. The result is fruity and low in tannin: think young Beaujolais.
3	A	The added sugar becomes alcohol, not sweetness. Some cool regions allow it; many warm regions do not.
4	C	Botrytis shrivels the grapes and concentrates their sugar. Phylloxera is an insect, oidium is powdery mildew, and flor is a yeast used for Sherry.
5	B	Champagne, Cava and Crémant use the traditional method. The transfer method also ferments in bottle, but then moves the wine to a tank before rebottling.
6	B	It destroyed most of Europe's vineyards in the late 1800s. The main defence is still grafting vines onto American rootstocks.
7	C	Slightly below room temperature. Too warm and the alcohol stands out; too cold and the tannins taste harsh.
8	B	The cork should leave with a quiet sigh, not a bang. Never point the bottle at anyone.
9	B	Pour slowly over a light source and stop when the sediment reaches the neck. Young wines are decanted for a different reason: air.
10	B	The host gets a small taste. Once they approve, the guests are served and the host's glass is filled last.
11	B	TCA usually comes from the cork. Offer the guest another bottle.
12	B	Tannin comes mostly from the grape skins and seeds, and also from oak.
13	B	Burgundy's whites are Chardonnay, its reds Pinot Noir. Aligoté is the third, smaller grape.
14	B	Sancerre is in the eastern Loire Valley. Its reds and rosés are Pinot Noir.
15	C	The Right Bank. On the Left Bank, in the Médoc, Cabernet Sauvignon leads.
16	A	Plus one château from Graves: Haut-Brion. The sweet wines of Sauternes and Barsac were classified the same year. Mouton Rothschild was promoted to First Growth in 1973.
17	B	Many grapes are permitted, but Grenache is the backbone, often with Syrah and Mourvèdre.
18	B	These are Northern Rhône appellations. Côte-Rôtie may add a little white Viognier to the red.
19	A	A few other grapes are allowed but rarely used. Blanc de Blancs is Chardonnay only.
20	B	Brut has under 12 grams of sugar per litre. Extra Brut and Brut Nature are drier; Demi-Sec and Doux are sweeter.
21	D	The fourth is Muscat. In Alsace, Chardonnay is allowed only in Crémant d'Alsace.
22	B	Both are in Piedmont. Nebbiolo gives pale wines with high tannin and high acidity.
23	B	The drying is called appassimento. Corvina leads, and the wine is rich and high in alcohol. It comes from the Veneto.
24	A	Montalcino is in Tuscany. Careful: Vino Nobile di Montepulciano is a Sangiovese wine too, named after a town, not the grape.
25	A	Most Prosecco gets its bubbles in a tank, which keeps the fresh fruit aromas.
26	B	Soave is in the Veneto. Cortese makes Gavi in Piedmont; Fiano is from Campania.
27	D	Trockenbeerenauslese is made from shrivelled, usually botrytised grapes. The order from least to most ripe: Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, with Eiswein made from frozen grapes.
28	B	Steep slate slopes above the river, light alcohol, high acidity, from dry to sweet.

29	**A**	It is Austria's most planted grape. Look for white pepper on the nose.
30	**C**	Smaragd has at least 12.5% alcohol. Steinfeder is the lightest, Federspiel sits in the middle.
31	**B**	Palomino makes the dry styles. Pedro Ximénez and Moscatel are used for the sweet ones.
32	**B**	Garnacha, Graciano and Mazuelo often join it. Crianza, Reserva and Gran Reserva tell you about ageing.
33	**A**	Grape spirit is added during fermentation. That stops it and keeps natural sweetness in the wine.
34	**B**	Intense passion fruit, gooseberry and fresh-cut grass. Marlborough is also known for Pinot Noir, but Sauvignon Blanc made its name.
35	**B**	Malbec came from south-west France, where it is called Côt. Carménère is Chile's signature, Tannat Uruguay's.
36	**A**	Barossa has some of the oldest Shiraz vines in the world. Grenache and Mataro (Mourvèdre) grow there too.
37	**C**	For cooler-climate Pinot Noir in California, look to Sonoma Coast, Carneros or Santa Barbara.
38	**A**	Chavignol is a village in Sancerre. Sauvignon Blanc's high acidity cuts through the cheese's richness: what grows together goes together.
39	**B**	The best bottles say 100% agave on the label. Mezcal can be made from many other agaves.
40	**B**	Polished rice, water, yeast and koji, a mould that turns the rice starch into sugar.

Practice questions written by Alper Billik, Advanced Sommelier. They are not real exam questions: real questions are confidential. Always check your exam's current format with your Court. Online version, playable with a timer: sommdigi.com/blog/level-1-sommelier-practice-test