

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type       | comments   | Example  |
|------------|--|---------------|------------|--|--|
| January-10 | With reference to the Americas, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Malbec<br>b) Fetzer<br>c) UC Davis<br>d) Okanagan Valley<br>e) Pacific Ocean<br>f) Italian grape varieties   | Americas      | short-form | Many didn't restrict their answer to "THE AMERICAS" which was the focus of the question. Particularly a problem for f)   | Okanagan Valley GOOD response is given (2009-10 pp 77) |
| January-08 | With reference to the Americas, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Mendoza<br>b) Gallo<br>c) Fog<br>d) Carmenere<br>e) Oregon<br>f) Brazil  | Americas      | short-form | The stem clearly states that these should be in reference to the AMERICAS – so a discussion of Europe is simply incorrect. An example of the key points for Mendoza are given in the ER.   | 2007-08 pp 66 (key points on Mendoza)                  |
| January-05 | With reference to the Americas, write a paragraph of EACH of the following<br>a) Torrontes<br>b) Central Valley, California<br>c) Ice Wine<br>d) Carmenere<br>e) Yakima Valley<br>f) Pierce's disease  | Americas      | short-form | Only answers which deal with the Americas are of any concern; therefore, including, as one candidate did, information on Eiswein in Germany scored no points, and wasted time.   |  |
| January-19 | Discuss how factors in the vineyard contribute to the style and quality of the wines of Mendoza.<br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)  | Argentina     | essay      |  |  |
| June-11    | Give an account of the development of the Argentinean wine industry from its creation through to modern times (70% weighting).<br><br>What are the prospects for the next 25 years? (30% weighting)<br><br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question) | Argentina     | essay      | There were two distinct parts, the first very factual and the second far more speculative. Many candidates failed to address the first part of the question as set, giving an account of the "current" Argentinean industry rather than the "development from creation to modern times".<br><br>To answer the second part of the question well, candidates needed a good understanding of the current wine industry in Argentina, and also commercial awareness of global trends and developments. This section required speculation, original thought and analysis of data rather than simply repeating "facts" from the study notes. | 2010-11 pp 101 (fail)                                  |

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| June-06    | Describe Argentina as a wine producing country with specific reference to altitude, grape varieties, viticulture and export markets.   | Argentina     | essay/open-response | <p>Where candidates used the subheadings defined within the question (altitude, grape varieties, viticulture, export markets), these helped to structure the essay and ensure that no key points were missed. It is extremely unlikely that a single side of text will contain enough detail to gain 55% of the marks available.</p> <p>The majority of candidates were good on the basics such as listing the grape varieties grown, describing the two key varieties (Malbec and Torrontes), and irrigation in general, but most lacked the extra detail necessary for achieving a high grade. For example, there was little awareness of the problems encountered with hail and the need for netting. There was also a misconception or lack of awareness of the importance of the local market with only a handful aware of the fact that Argentina only exports around a quarter of its production, (and maybe even less than this in reality).</p> <p>A large number of candidates described how vines are planted on the “slopes of the Andes” to improve drainage or sun exposure. This is a vast oversimplification as most vineyards are on flat land or very gentle slopes at most, (not unlike the topography in Burgundy), and if anything, water retention rather than drainage and shading of grapes rather than sun exposure are more desirable. Only a few candidates fully appreciated the effect of altitude on the style of wine produced such as acid retention, fruit profile and anthocyanins.</p> |   |
| January-14 | <p>Western Australia often boasts that it only makes 3% of the country’s wine but wins 30% of the awards.</p> <p>What are the reasons behind this success (40% weighting).</p> <p>Describe the leading styles of premium wine that have made Western Australia famous (60% weighting).</p> | Australia     | essay/open-response | <p>Far too many were unaware of the climate in this region or were able to debate what role it plays in contributing to wine quality, with most of them simply describing it incorrectly as “Mediterranean”. Responses were also simplistic when it came to describing the leading styles of premium wine, with very few thinking beyond generic Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.</p>   | 2013-14 pp 53                           |
| January-11 | <p>In relation to Australia, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:</p> <p>a) McLaren Vale<br/>b) Cabernet Sauvignon<br/>c) Len Evans<br/>d) Blending<br/>e) Oak<br/>f) Penfold’s Grange</p>  | Australia     | short-form          | <p>The weakest section of the question was on “Len Evans” which was only attempted by four candidates, all of whom addressed this section badly. Many responses were also far too generic – specifically the sections on “Cabernet Sauvignon”, “blending” and “oak”. It was not enough to simply describe the characteristics of Cabernet Sauvignon, unless this was specifically explaining how these differ when grown in Australia compared to other locations. However, the best marks were achieved by candidates who explained how the variety differs when grown in the various classic locations in Australia such as Margaret River, Coonawarra etc, or those who illustrated their answer with reference to specific producers renowned for their Cabernet Sauvignon wines</p>  | 2010-11 pp 81 (high result)             |
| June-10    | <p>Areas of Australia have seen excessive temperatures, drought and bush fires in recent vintages. Discuss how these affect wine production (60% weighting).</p> <p>How is the Australian wine industry responding? (40% weighting)</p>  | Australia     | essay               | <p>commercial knowledge would increase score -- see bordering distinction essay</p>   | 2009-10 pp 88 (low scoring distinction) |
| January-08 | <p>What are the strengths and weaknesses of Australia as a wine producing country?</p> <p>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question.)</p>   | Australia     | Essay               | <p>A good introduction should have defined Australia’s market position giving an indication of the size of the area under vine and the range of wine styles produced.</p>   | 2007-08 pp 61 (basic pass)              |
| June-05    | How important is regional identity in the Australian wine industry? (an essay format is COMPULSORY for this question).   | Australia     | essay               | <p>The examiners’ report has all the key points, including some examples/ key points.</p>   | 2004-05 pp 34                           |

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| January-12 | In relation to Australia and/or New Zealand, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Hawkes Bay<br>b) Grenache<br>c) 2011 harvest in Australia<br>d) Tasmania<br>e) Screw cap<br>f) Pinot Noir  | Australia / New Zealand         | short-form    | 2011 harvest – too much flooding<br><br>There were inevitably candidates who forgot to link their answers to New Zealand and Australia, particularly in the case of the “generic” topics such as the grape varieties and screw cap where many candidates wrote about other parts of the world.<br><br>Many candidates who fail, simply do not write enough. This candidate has written an average of one side of text on each of the five sections (the exception being Hawkes Bay, which is shorter). Many candidates who fail, struggle to fill two sides of paper for all five sections in total and are surprised that this is not sufficient for a pass grade | 2011-12 pp 111 (good) |
| January-11 | Assess Austria’s strengths and weaknesses as a producer of still, light wines. (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)  | Austria                         | essay         | Far too many responses were simplistic and in many instances, without knowing what the specific wording of the question was, the reader would have had no idea which country was being written about. There were also far too many candidates who simply “grouped” Austria and Germany together, assuming that they both suffered from the same problems. This showed a lack of understanding of Austria’s wine industry.<br><br>Austria NOT Australia!!!  |                       |
| January-16 | With reference to the wines of Germany, Austria or Hungary as appropriate, write about FIVE of the following:<br>a) Silvaner<br>b) Grosses Gewächs<br>c) Blaufränkisch<br>d) Süssreserve<br>e) Furmint<br>f) Pfalz<br>g) Burgenland<br>h) Nahe<br>i) Weinviertel<br>j) Rheingau | Austria/<br>Germany/<br>Hungary | short-form    |  |                       |
| June-18    | Wine made at top châteaux in Pauillac can be sold under different labels or appellations ranging from Grand Vin to generic AC Bordeaux. Identify and describe all the options and explain why they might be used. (Weighting will vary for each option)                         | Bordeaux                        | open-response |  |                       |
| January-19 | With reference to grape growing and winemaking, explain how and why the following wines differ in style and price.<br>a) Chablis Premier Cru AC<br>b) Le Montrachet Grand Cru AC<br>c) Mâcon Blanc AC<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)                                 | Burgundy                        | short-form    |  |                       |
| January-19 | Discuss wine production in Canada with regard to regions, climates, grape varieties and resulting styles of wine. (Weighting will vary between the sections)  | Canada                          | open-response |  |                       |

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| January-13 | In the past Chile has been primarily a producer of simple, inexpensive wines. Discuss how this is changing.<br><br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question) | Chile           | essay         | <p>many of the 91 candidates who achieved fail grades did so because they did not answer the question that had been set</p> <p>Far too many candidates simply wrote an essay about wine production in Chile, often describing how the climate is perfect for grape growing and that there is no phylloxera. This was not the focus of this question.</p> <p>To answer this well, look beyond the obvious facts that allow Chile to produce good wine and explore what they are doing NOW to move on from being a producer of simple, inexpensive wines. This meant considering -- planting in the right place in terms of climate and soil. Not simply Maipo and Casablanca, but the newer regions (Itata and Bio-Bio) or those planted at altitude (e.g. Luis Filipe Edwards in Colchagua and Falernia in Elqui),</p> <p>Soil is something that was hardly given any thought in the earlier days of wine production in Chile (in the 70's and 80's) but now viticultural experts like Pedro Parra are bringing the "terroir" concept to Chile. Producers as far apart as Viñedo Chadwick (Quaternary gravels) and Maycas de Limari (presence of lime) are working to understand the influence of soil on their wines.</p> <p>Yield management was also worthy of discussion, particularly in the context of irrigation, since over-irrigation and astronomical yields had been the norm in the past. The move from flood irrigation to drip has made yield management possible and vineyards aiming to make premium wines are now judiciously irrigated and yields are much lower. Green harvesting and a trend towards higher density plantings have also helped to moderate yields.</p> <p>The elimination of inferior plant material was something else that has contributed to increased quality.</p> <p>The best of them also described how varieties and clones completely new to Chile have been planted over the last twenty years (e.g. Syrah, Pinot Noir and more recently Tempranillo) and how a few happy rediscoveries have also been made such as O. Fournier: Cabernet Franc planted in 1890s and Carignan in the 1940s. It is always a good idea to illustrate such statements with specific examples such as Vignadores de Carignan (Vigno) which was established in 2009 to champion Maule's old vine Carignan.</p> <p>Something that many candidates did comment on was the ethical wine sector that has slowly emerged in Chile allowing them to move away from the "bulk wine" image of the past. (Fairtrade movement)</p> <p>Better candidates explained how the first wave of post-Pinochet investment was mainly focussed on installing all the latest vinification equipment (stainless steel vats, refrigeration, new oak barrels) on an industrial scale, but that today's premium producers are now looking at small batch, almost artisanal,</p> <p>PR and marketing was another topic worthy of mention</p> | 2012-13 pp 84 (merit & fail) |
| June-09    | Account for the success of Chile as a wine producer and exporter. (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)  | Chile           | essay         | Poorer candidates placed emphasis on the fact that Chile is "phylloxera free" rather than examining the more important reasons for the COMMERCIAL success of the country.  | 2008-09 pp75 (pass)          |
| January-07 | Describe the classification systems for each of the following:<br><br>a) Bordeaux<br>b) Germany<br>c) Italy  | classifications | open-response | <p>In many instances, scripts lacked detail, listing the classification categories for each region but offering no further details. Bordeaux appeared to be the easiest part of this question, but even here, there was confusion over the difference between districts and communes and some candidates mistakenly placed Chateau d'Yquem or Pétrus in the Medoc or cited them incorrectly as 1st Growths. Knowledge on the classification system of Italy was weakest, with a significant number confusing it with Spain. There was also a tendency to focus only on the upper levels of the classification system and forgetting therefore to comment for example on generic Bordeaux or table wine in Germany and Italy.</p> <p>The usual confusion was still evident in terms of the German system, with too many candidates still believing this to be based on the sweetness of the wine rather than the ripeness of the grapes.</p>  |                              |

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| June-15    | Discuss the following red wines from the south of France.<br>a) IGP / Vins de Pays<br>b) Corbières<br>c) Bandol  | France        | open-response | This suggests that the south of France is a part of the syllabus candidates overlook in their revision plans  |                 |
| January-15 | With reference to the wines of the Loire, write about FIVE of the following:<br>a) Rosé d'Anjou<br>b) Cabernet Franc<br>c) Savennières<br>d) Soils in Touraine<br>e) Botrytis<br>f) Menetou Salon<br>g) Fungal Diseases<br>h) Quincy<br>i) Soils in the Nantais<br>j) Reuilly<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)                    | France        | short-form    | Responses on Savennières ranged from generic descriptions of Chenin Blanc and incorrect descriptions of botrytised wine to more accomplished answers which distinguished between the traditional and more modern styles of wine produced here. The best candidates wrote knowledgeably about the two sub-appellations of Coulée de Serrant and La Roche-aux-Moines and about key producers such as the Joly family.   |                 |
| June-14    | Describe the AOC system of the vineyards of the Cote d'Or (70% weighting). Outline the advantages and disadvantages of this system for the consumer (30% weighting).   | France        | open-response | Very few candidates extended the scope of their description of the AC system beyond Village wines, Premier Cru and Grand Cru. These are certainly the key wines of the Côte d'Or, but the regional wines should also have formed part of any discussion of the AC system of this area.<br><br>A number of candidates wrote in very general terms about advantages and disadvantages of Côte d'Or wines rather than advantages / disadvantages of the AOC system itself. |                 |
| June-14    | With reference to Alsace, write about FIVE of the following:<br>a) Alsace Grand Cru<br>b) Climate<br>c) Gewurztraminer<br>d) Hugel<br>e) Muscat<br>f) Pinot Gris<br>g) Pinot Noir<br>h) Rhine Rift Valley<br>i) Selection de Grains Nobles<br>j) soils<br>k) Trimbach<br>l) Vendange Tardive<br><br>(Each section carries equal weighting) | France        | short-form    | There was a surprisingly high incidence of confusion between SGN and VT although these two topics never appeared together on the same paper since the various sub-sections of this question varied depending on the location of the examination. The sections on producers (Hugel and Trimbach) were inevitably vague and superficial   | 2013-14<br>pp70 |

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| January-14 | Discuss the various factors that account for the differences in quality, style and price of the red wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.<br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)  | France        | essay               | Very few candidates actually discussed HOW and WHY various factors account for differences in the wines. It is not enough to simply state what the climate is, what type of soil is found, which grapes are grown etc. Candidates needed to discuss how the climate defines the style of wine, why wines produced from grapes grown on "galets" differ from those produced from grapes grown on other soil types.<br><br>only good candidates took this question to encompass other aspects of production such as commercial factors like packaging, marketing strategies, type of producer etc. These were the candidates who covered the whole spectrum of the question, considering issues relating to quality and price rather than just wine style.  |                  |
| January-14 | Discuss the diversity of still wines produced in Anjou Saumur with reference to:<br><br>a) Grape varieties (30% weighting)<br>b) Vineyard factors (40% weighting)<br>c) Winemaking (30% weighting)  | France        | open-response       | Many of them lost marks because they confused the areas of Anjou-Saumur and Touraine and wrote about the wrong wines as a result. Many also paid no attention to the question weighting, for example, simply listing grape varieties with no further discussion despite the 30% weighting of this section.  | 2013-14 pp<br>61 |
| June-13    | Describe the annual cycle of work in a typical Médoc vineyard   | France        | essay/open-response | terms such as bud rubbing, green harvesting and canopy management were often used without showing any real understanding of how they differ and when each is appropriate.<br><br>Knowledge of frost damage was often also extremely simplistic, with a failure to differentiate between the very limited damage caused by frost in winter as opposed to the considerable damage that results from frost occurring during bud break.<br><br>A number of candidates also failed to read the question carefully enough and wrote about the work that takes place in the winery as well as in the vineyard. This was pointless, as there was no allocation of marks available for this, irrespective of how accurate it might have been. The wording of the question itself dictated the most obvious structure for responses and the majority of candidates realised that the best approach was a seasonal one, taking each of the four seasons in turn and discussing the work that takes place in each. It was not sufficient however to simply state what is done, examiners were looking for discussion of the various tasks, such as describing what they entail, why they are done, what equipment is used, what the benefits are, what the dangers of not doing the work might be etc. It was this discussion and demonstration of understanding that was often missing in candidates' responses. |                  |
| January-13 | In relation to Burgundy, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Boisset<br>b) Climate<br>c) Grand Cru<br>d) Hospice de Beaune<br>e) Limestone<br>f) Volnay   | France        | short-form          | The sections on climate and Grand Cru were generally answered well by most candidates, but Volnay and Hospice de Beaune were the sections that caused some to achieve lower marks   |                  |
| January-13 | Describe the climate, topography, soils and grapes of the Northern Rhône. (40% weighting).<br><br>Indicate how these are responsible for the different styles and qualities of wines produced in the various appellations. (60% weighting). | France        | essay/open-response | The first part of the question was very straight-forward, simply describing climate, topography, soils and grapes. However, far too many candidates failed to take this to the next level in the second part of the question and simply described the various wines of the Northern Rhône rather than explaining how climate, topography, soil and grape <b>determine</b> and influence the quality and style of these wines For example, in the case of Côte Rôtie, most candidates wrote about steep, narrow terraced vineyards, but did not explain the significance of these in terms of yields and therefore the quality of the wine produced. Similarly, when it came to soil, very few were able to write knowledgeably about the way in which soil determines the difference in style between the wines of the Côte Brune and those from the Côte Blonde for example.<br><br>number of candidates forgetting to mention wines such as St Joseph and Cornas.   |                  |

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| June-12    | What are the similarities of (50% weighting) and differences between (50% weighting) the Beaujolais and Mâconnais districts.  | France        | essay/open-response      | Generally candidates knew the basic facts relating to climate, main grapes and soil in the two regions, but were weak at pulling out the finer detail required to answer this question well. They were particularly weak in terms of viticulture, use of oak and commercial aspects with many believing the wines of the Mâconnais to be of higher quality levels than the majority of them realistically are.  | 2011-12 pp 131 (fail & pass)     |
| June-12    | With reference to France, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Viognier<br>b) Muscadet Sur Lie<br>c) Mourvèdre<br>d) Jurançon<br>e) Guigal<br>f) Bourgueil   | France        | short-form               | shockingly low scores!  |                                  |
| January-12 | What are the strengths (50% weighting) and weaknesses (50% weighting) of Languedoc-Roussillon as a wine producing region?   | France        | essay/open-response      | there was evidence of a general lack of commercial awareness, with many missing obvious weakness such as competition from new world wines, the drop in consumption in the domestic market, rising costs of production etc.  | 2011-12 pp 103 (high score)      |
| June-11    | From the point of view of the consumer, what are the strengths (50% weighting) and weaknesses (50% weighting) of the wines of Alsace?   | France        | essay/open-response      | Many candidates placed a disproportionate emphasis on the problems associated with the Grand Cru system, which is simply not an issue for the vast majority of consumers. There were far more relevant weaknesses that were overlooked in favour of this (see page 117 -8 for more details)   | 2010-11 pp 117 (fail & ok)       |
| January-11 | Describe the climate, main soil types and key grape varieties found in the four districts of the Loire Valley (40% weighting).<br><br>Explain how these factors, and others, combine to produce Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, Bonnezeaux, Chinon and Sancerre. (60% weighting) | France        | short-form               | having identified the four sub regions as Nantais, Anjou-Saumur, Touraine and Central Vineyards, candidates should have referred to a number of different soil types and grape varieties when writing about Anjou-Saumur in the first part of the question, not just those that relate to Bonnezeaux.   | 2010-11 pp 88 (fail)             |
| January-11 | Describe the roles growers (33% weighting), négociants (33% weighting) and co-operatives (33% weighting) play in the production and distribution of Burgundy's wines.   | France        | open-response            | Candidates generally knew that négociants were important to the trading of Burgundy wines, but were often naive in their understanding of the role of co-operatives and generally simplistic in terms of growers. In fact, most answers went no further than stating that very few growers make their own wine, but sell grapes to negociants who produce and distribute the majority of wine, while co-operatives have very little importance. This is certainly true, but extremely simplistic. | 2010-11 pp96 (fail & key points) |
| January-10 | Discuss the FIVE major black grape varieties currently used for AC wines in Languedoc, such as Minervois and Coteaux du Languedoc.  | France        | open-response/short-form | The five grapes being: Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, Mourvedre and Carignan. Most responses were short and shallow. Key points are provided in the ER (2009-10 pp. 74)   | 2009-10 pp 74 (key points)       |

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| June-06    | <p>With reference to France, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:</p> <p>a) Muscadet sur Lie<br/>b) Hospice de Beaune<br/>c) Madiran<br/>d) Coteaux du Languedoc<br/>e) En Primeur (futures)<br/>f) Petit Chablis</p>   | France        | short-form    | <p>this report warns candidates not to attempt this style of question unless they can confidently write a good paragraph (around 12 – 15 lines of text) on ALL FIVE sections.</p> <p>Hospice de Beaune – what it is, where it is, when it takes place, what it produces, why it is significant, who the beneficiaries are etc.<br/>Madiran – what it is, where it is, what it produces, how it produces it, what the style of wine is, details of the region that contribute to this (grape, climate etc).<br/>Coteaux du Languedoc – a similar approach to the previous section.<br/>En Primeur (futures) – what is it, what the process involves (ie the key stages), where it is practiced and why (ie the advantages/disadvantages for both the buyer and the seller).</p> <p>Petit Chablis – This really divided those with sketchy knowledge from those who really understood the region. The facts the examiner was looking for were:<br/>The most northerly of Burgundy's vineyards.<br/>Accounts for approx. 23% of the total Chablis AOC (1562 ha).<br/>Lowest level of AOC in Chablis.<br/>Wines come from lesser vineyards sites - hill tops or north facing.<br/>Yields restricted to 60hl/ha.<br/>Climate: semi-continental with no maritime influence, danger of spring frosts.<br/>Soil: Portlandian limestone.<br/>Training method: variation of Guyot-Taille Chablis.<br/>Wine-making: Fermentation in stainless steel, no oak used, 100% Chardonnay.<br/>Style of wine - dry, high acidity with citrus fruit character.<br/>Simple, easy drinking, lacks minerality and complexity of higher AOC Chablis wines.</p> |         |
| January-06 | <p>With reference to the wines of France, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:</p> <p>a) Pomerol AC<br/>b) Tuffeau<br/>c) Tannat<br/>d) Cru Bourgeois<br/>e) Hermitage AC<br/>f) Vinexpo</p>  | France        | short-form    | <p>Since d) Cru Bourgeois has changed since this exam, I am not including examiners' comments made on this topic.</p> <p><b>Vinexpo</b><br/>A bi-annual 5 day international trade fair in Bordeaux at Parc des Expositions. Regarded as very important within the wine and spirit trade worldwide. Attended by all sectors of the trade. Showcase for wines of the world not just Bordeaux. Established in 1981 by the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Since 1990 it has had a more international focus. Now there are other offshoots of Vinexpo in other parts of the world: e.g. the Americas, AsiaPacific. It has had its share of controversy in 2005: - NZ Winegrowers, Wines of South Africa and Australian Wine Bureau pulled out because of high cost of stands, ICE and Moet &amp; Chandon cancelled their stands.</p>  |         |
| January-05 | <p>France is renowned for the variety of its terroir. Select THREE regions from the list below. Explain how terroir is believed to determine the style of TWO different wines from each of your chosen regions.</p> <p>a) Alsace<br/>b) Bordeaux<br/>c) Burgundy<br/>d) Loire<br/>e) Rhone</p> | France        | open-response | <p>In order to answer this question well, candidates needed to demonstrate a clear understanding of what terroir actually means (ie., the natural elements: soil (geology &amp; hydrology), topography (altitude, slope, aspect), region climate (latitude, temperature, sunlight), mesoclimate (macro-) (lakes, rivers, mountains, hills)).</p> <p>Good choices might have been -- Bordeaux: Medoc AC v. Sauternes AC; Loire: Muscadet &amp; Vouvray; Rhone – Cote Rotie and Chateauneuf de Pape.</p>   |         |



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| January-10 | For EACH of the Alsace wines listed below, describe the wine using the format of a tasting note and comment on the factors in the vineyard and in the winery that determine the style of the wine.<br><br>a) Muscat d'Alsace AC<br>b) Pinot Gris Grand Cru AC<br>c) Gewurztraminer Selection de Grains Nobles AC<br>d) Pinot Noir d'Alsace AC | France (Alsace)   | open-response       | Candidates could write a tasting note, but failed to explain WHY the wines taste the way they do, and this is what this question is all about. A short plan for Pinot Gris Grand Cru could have been:<br><br>Climate: rainfall, ripening conditions<br>Soils: rich in clay, particles of volcanic rock<br>Grand Cru Vineyards – better aspect<br>Vine density<br>Yield – max yield, more restricted, also prone to problems with fruit set<br>Winery – whole bunch press, reduce skin contact, ferment in stainless steel or large, old oak asks (retains aromatics), maturation on lees (gives complexity)  |   |
| June-09    | Outline the rules governing the production of Grand Cur wines in Alsace. (60% weighting)<br>Why has this category not met with universal approval in the region? (40% weighting)  | France (Alsace)   | open-response       | see key points in ER pp 79-80  | 2008-09 pp 79 (key points)              |
| June-15    | Account for the differences in wine style, quality and price between the following appellations:<br><br>Version 1: Pauillac, Barsac & Entre-Deux-Mers<br>Version 2: Pauillac, Barsac & Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux<br>Version 3: Pomerol, Barsac & Entre-Deux-Mers  | France (Bordeaux) | open-response       | but to explain these differences by reference to key grape growing and winemaking practices in each region. Some candidates failed to grasp this and simply wrote all they knew about e.g. Pauillac, without acknowledging the question at all.<br><br>The structure should have been categorised by regions (not by wines style; quality; price)<br><br>--> between the cost of viti/vini techniques, resulting quality level and price. For the Barsac question, most candidates noted how multiple tries are required to harvest botrytised grapes but few explained why and even fewer went on to make the point that the wines are expensive as a result  |   |
| January-10 | Discuss the various options for blending in the Bordeaux region (50% weighting). For each option, explain why each of these might be used (50% weighting).  | France (Bordeaux) | essay/open-response | Candidates answered this question as though it had read: discuss the various GRAPE varieties used." However, this was too narrow for this question. To make matters worse, some only discussed RED wines, rather than red and WHITE.<br><br>To answer this question well discuss blending from both vineyard & winery. So: blending of grapes, different parcels of grapes from different vineyards, communes/areas; different producers/growers. For sweet wines: picking of individual botrytised grapes, different soil types. In the winery: different pressings, use of free run juice and first pressing, different vinification techniques (different parcels and grape varieties vinified separately). For red wines: maceration of fruit, fruit selection prior to fermentation, addition of stalks, chaptalisation, reverse osmosis, choice of fermentation vessel, fermentation temperature and for whites: selection of fruit (particularly for sweet wiens), fermentation in oak of staineless steel, for all wines different oak treatments such as fermentation or ageing in oak, blending of different vintages (extremely import in Bordeaux) particularly for generic blends and white wine blends in Entre-Deux-Mers<br><br>Having identified all these options, the second part of the question should have considered the reasons for their use | 2009-10 pp67 (Fail)                     |
| January-08 | Describe the contribution that the grape varieties grown in Bordeaux make to the character of the Appellation Controlee wines in which they are used. Illustrate your answer with examples of wines from the region.  | France (Bordeaux) | essay/open-response | 8 grapes (5 red, 3 white). Some forgot the white, and subsequently failed.   | 2007-08 pp 59 (pass)                    |
| January-12 | Describe the classification systems of St-Emilion and Cru Bourgeois. (50% weighting). Discuss the changes that have taken place in the last 10 years. (50% weighting)   | France (Bordeaux) | essay/open-response | The Results Panel were appalled by the quality of the majority of responses to this question given the mainstream subject matter and the fact that half the marks were awarded for simple factual recall in the form of a description of the classification systems in both areas. Given that this is taught in varying levels of detail at both levels of WSET qualifications that precede this one, these should have been easy marks, yet it was alarming to see how many were unable to describe the systems with any authority.   | 2011-12 pp 116 (one of the better ones) |

| Date       | Question  | general topic     | type                | comments   | Example   |
|------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|--|---|
| June-11    | The retail prices of Bordeaux Rouge and Cru Classé Haut-Médoc are very different.<br><br>Discuss the differences in production (50% weighting) and marketing (50% weighting) that are responsible for this.   | France (Bordeaux) | essay/open-response | In general, candidates were better at describing the production of the wines than they were at discussing marketing, which required a good understanding of the marketplace for these wines. Responses were also considerably weaker on the Bordeaux Rouge, where observations tended to be simplistic and naïve.<br><br>Candidates with sound commercial knowledge of the market for Bordeaux wines were considerably more thorough in respect of the marketing of these two wines.   | 2010-11 pp 108 (borderline merit)                               |
| June-10    | Describe the two wines (Grands Echezeaux Grand Cru Jadot & Fleurie G. Duboeuf) under the following headings:<br><br>a) Climate and soil<br>b) Viticulture and grape varieties<br>c) Vinification<br>d) Scale of production and quality of wine                      | France (Burgundy) | open-response       | mixed results; though generally high (67% pass)  | 2009-10 pp83 (high grade)                                       |
| January-09 | Explain how vinification and maturation of red wine varies throughout the Burgundy region.  | France (Burgundy) | essay/open-response | There were the inevitable candidates who had not read the question properly and wrote about white wines as well as red, and there were far too many vague reference to "traditional vinification" without explaining what this actually meant. Even where better marks were obtained, scripts tended to be short and rather superficial, in many instances covering no more than the Cote d'Or and Beaujolais Nouveau.   |   |
| June-07    | Select three white wines from Burgundy that illustrate the range of styles and qualities available. Explain the factors in the vineyard and the winery that result in these differences.<br><br>(No more than two of the wines should be produced from Chardonnay.) | France (Burgundy) | essay/open-response | The key thing here was to cover a range of quality levels in addition to at least two different grape varieties. So, for example, the candidate who selected two Grand Cru wines would have been penalised for lack of diversity. Most candidates opted for Bourgogne Aligoté in the case of the third wine. Sauvignon de Saint Bris was another valid contender. Chablis (at varying quality levels) was another popular choice and was usually described with a good level of detail. Candidates who included a sparkling wine such as Crémant de Bourgogne were also penalised as these lie outside the scope of the Unit 3 syllabus.<br><br>Candidates who described the wines and clearly wrote a paragraph about vineyard factors, followed by a separate paragraph about winery factors did very well provided they explained how the factors affect the style of the wine (eg cool, marginal ripening conditions leads to light alcohol and body and high acid, or high yields lead to low levels of flavour concentration and little complexity etc.) | 2006 - 07 pp 45 (high mark despite misreading part of question) |

| Date       | Question  | general topic     | type                | comments  | Example |
|------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|---|---------|
| January-07 | Describe Beaujolais Villages and Chambertin Clos de Bèze Grand Cru under the following headings:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Soil<br>c) Pruning and training<br>d) Fermentation<br>e) Maturation  | France (Burgundy) | open-response       | <p>a) Climate<br/>Many candidates did not go much beyond stating “continental” for both wines, with the comment that “Beaujolais is warmer than the Côte d’Or”. It is disappointing that so few were able to give any detail, particularly in the case of the Chambertin where local conditions can be so variable year on year.</p> <p>b) Soil<br/>There were varied accounts here – some right and some obviously guesses or “hedging their bets”. Most cited a basic “granite” for Beaujolais Villages and “limestone” for Chambertin, but few went on to give the kind of detail that would lead to anything more than a very basic pass.</p> <p>c) Pruning and training<br/>Once again, the basics were mentioned in terms of “gobelet” and “guyot”, but very few bothered to describe these. A couple of the better candidates commented on the difference between spur and cane pruning and went on to describe how these principles are applied in these two locations, but on the whole responses were very simplistic.</p> <p>d) Fermentation<br/>A significant number of candidates had a good understanding of carbonic maceration and this information boosted marks in a number of cases. There were some good descriptions of the process, but equally some hazy comments with candidates simply aware that it was not a “normal fermentation”. When it came to the Chambertin, responses were much weaker, with far too many indiscriminate references to “traditional fermentation” without explaining what this actually amounted to (eg, selection, crush, partial destemming to retain tannin and ease drainage of juice through the cap, period of maceration, chaptalisation, fermentation in open vats, pumping over and pumping down, malolactic fermentation).</p> <p>e) Maturation<br/>Once again, responses tended to be basic such as minimal ageing for Beaujolais and ageing in barrique for the Chambertin. Very few considered that some Beaujolais Villages undergo ageing in large oak vats (with minimal influence on the wine) and none considered the period of maturation in bottle for Chambertin.</p> |         |
| June-09    | Describe the factors that have led to top quality wines being produced in Chablis (40%).<br>What are the challenges of producing wine there? (30%)<br>What does the region offer the consumer in terms of wine style and quality level? (30%) | France (Chablis)  | essay/open-response | <p>Don’t just explain Chablis without relating HOW that relates to quality in the wines. For example stating “limestone soil results in quality wines”, but not explaining what this contribute to wines in terms of finesse or longevity. Global warming not a good thing, but rather could threaten the purity of classic Chablis. Challenges were limited to climatic issues (frost and hail) rather than looking beyond the study notes and considering other commercial issues such as the controversial expansion of the area and the effect this has on reputation of region or wine quality, or the threat posed by other chardonnay wines produced in the Chablis style.</p> <p>In terms of quality levels a list was not sufficient. Candidates with a good understanding of the wines of the region pointed out that Petit Chablis tends to come from the areas of expansion (on the less good Portlandian clay soil), describing how the wines can be very austere. Higher marks were awarded to candidates who explained WHY premier Cru wines are better quality (riper fruit, aspect; elements of citrus rather than tart green apple; softer creamier texture and notes of minerality). Grand Cru more likely to have oak influence (either partial fermentation or ageing in oak). Some could name all seven Grand Cru sites.</p>  |         |
| January-16 | Account for the diversity of wines produced in the Loire Valley. (70% weighting) What are the challenges of selling these wines outside France? (30% weighting)   | France (Loire)    | open-response       |   |         |

| Date       | Question  | general topic    | type                      | comments  | Example |
|------------|---|------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
| June-08    | Select ONE still AC wine from the Loire Valley made wholly or predominately from EACH of the grape varieties listed below. Describe its style and the factors contributing to that style.<br>a) Muscadet<br>b) Chenin Blanc<br>c) Sauvignon Blanc<br>d) Cabernet Franc  | France (Loire)   | open-response             | A small number of candidates misread the question and selected one region rather than one wine from each of the FOUR regions. Candidates were less adept at explaining what factors accounted for the style of each wine. With this kind of question the best approach is once again to consider the "six factors" taught at the lower level WSET qualifications – climate, annual weather, soil, grape variety, viticulture, and vinification. This will usually provide the information that examiners are looking for.                                 |         |
| June-10    | Describe how the factors in the vineyard, winery and marketplace influence the style and quality and price of:<br>a) Condrieu AC<br>b) Gigondas AC<br>c) White Chateauneuf du Pape AC<br>d) Tavel AC  | France (Rhône)   | open-response             | Vineyard: candidates needed to consider things like: climate, weather, topography, choice of grape variety, harvesting, trellising and training etc.<br><br>Winery: method of production, including issues such as processes pre fermentation, choice of fermentation vessel and method of fermentation and processes post fermentation, including ageing where relevant<br><br>Marketplace: indication of the level of production, the perceived positioning of the product in the market place and some discussion of whether or not this is justified. |         |
| January-14 | Describe the regions of Chablis and Baden under the following headings:<br>a) Classification system<br>b) Grape variety(ies) and styles of wine<br>c) Climate, soil and topography<br><br>variation 2: Chablis and Rheingau<br>variation 3: Alsace and Rheingau.  | France / Germany | open-response             | Whilst responses on the Rheingau tended to be better when writing about the fundamentals of soil, grape variety, topography etc, very few candidates remembered, or were even aware, that VDP wines needed to form part of any discussion of the classification system. In a similar vein, Petit Chablis was also largely ignored when discussing the classification system in Chablis.   |         |
| January-08 | With reference to the maps enclosed, answer the following:<br><br>For EACH of the wines listed below, state the number which correctly locates the area of production, briefly describe the wine using the format of a tasting note and comment on the factors in the vineyard and in the winery that determine the style of the wine.<br>a) Chianti Classico DOCG<br>b) Frascati DOC<br>c) Tavel AC<br>d) Hermitage Rouge AC | France/ Italy    | open-response/ short-form | This was originally the format of the compulsory question pre-2002; this has since changed (and seems in many ways to have been disbanded by WSET). Candidates placed too much emphasis on the tasting note (they were asked to BRIEFLY describe the wine), at the expense of the far more challenging content relating to the factors in the vineyard and winery. Common pitfalls were confusing Chianti Classico and Chianti Classico Riserva; what is exactly meant by Mediterranean climates and their influences.                                    |         |
| January-05 | Compare and contrast the following Paris of wine:<br>a) Vouvray Sec AC and Coteaux du Layon AC<br>b) Frascati DOC and Vine Santo  | France/Italy     | open-response             | a) Similarities: location, grape variety and climate; contrast: sub regions, soil, microclimate, viticulture, vinification and style<br>b) Compare: location & grapes; contrast: region, quality levels, viticulture, vinification, DOC regulations (Vin Santo does not generally regulated), and style of wine   |         |

| Date       | Question  | general topic    | type                | comments   | Example                    |
|------------|---|------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| June-14    | With reference to the wines shown (Mosel Riesling Eiswein / Smaragd Grüner Veltliner), write about the following:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Soil and topography<br>c) Grape variety<br>d) Harvesting<br>e) Winemaking<br><br>(Each section carries equal weighting)               | Germany/ Austria | open-response       | whilst the best candidates not only explained what Smaragd is but also explained how it determines winemaking decisions etc<br><br>Responses were often superficial with insufficient detail to differentiate between the two wines, for example writing the same response for both in terms of soil and winemaking despite clear differences actually being the case  |                            |
| January-18 | Identify and discuss the factors in the vineyard that give the wines of the Mosel Valley their unique character.<br>(Weighting will vary for each factor)   | Germany          | open-response       |  |                            |
| June-12    | What are the factors that contribute to the diversity of wine styles produced in Germany? (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)   | Germany          | essay               | far too many candidates simply writing everything they knew about German wine, with very little thought about what it is that defines the many styles being produced.<br><br>Discussion of just Prädikat levels made for an "out-dated" essay; VDP important to mention as well as an increase in red wine production; Grosses Gewächs and Erstes Gewächs  | 2011-12 pp 124             |
| June-10    | Describe the style and outline the principle selling points of:<br>a) Black Tower Rivaner Deutscher Tafelwein Rhein 2008<br>b) Schloss Johannisberger Erstes Gewächs Riesling 2007<br>c) Berncastler Doctor Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 2006, Weingut Witwe Dr H Thanisch | Germany          | open-response       | Candidates overlooked the stem of the question, and produced extended tasting notes, or answering questions such as where the wines were sold (eg., the supermarket). This is not what the question was asking. A discussion of how the wines are made needs to be related to their selling points. Rivaner is the grape variety. Erstes Gewächs was misunderstood by many, and the effects this has in terms of selling points. Very few thought to comment on the significance of the named producers or vineyards.  | 2009-10 pp93 (fail & pass) |
| June-08    | With reference to the wines of Germany, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Spätburgunder<br>b) Rheinhessen<br>c) Geisenheim Institute<br>d) Wehlener Sonnenuhr<br>e) Silvaner<br>f) Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA)   | Germany          | short-form          | Silvaner and Geisenheim were the weakest sections. Silvaner: vigorous, budding earlier than Riesling, susceptible to spring frost and not known for its disease resistance. It is reliable and high yielding. Some were aware that it is a parent variety in a number of modern vine crossings such as Bacchus, Optima, Rieslander, Scheurebe, Morio-Muscat and Ehrenfelser. The best come from Franken, and are often referred to as Franken Riesling, producing concentrated wines and also some late harvest sweet wines, despite its tendency towards rather mediocre wines in other parts of Germany. |                            |
| June-06    | Contrast the regions of Rheingau and Baden with specific reference to climate, soil, grape varieties and wine industry structures.  | Germany          | essay/open-response | The important thing to remember here is that in order to contrast as requested, the candidate needed to identify how the two regions differ. It is not enough to simply describe them in isolation. The best way to approach this question therefore is to take each of the four specific headings in turn, and explain how these differ in the two regions.<br><br>Key points for each are provided in the ER   | 2005-06 pp 39 (key points) |

| Date       | Question   | general topic                | type           | comments  | Example |
|------------|--|------------------------------|----------------|---|---------|
| January-06 | <p>With reference to Germany, Alsace and/or Austria as appropriate, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:</p> <p>a) Pinot Gris<br/>b) Halbtrocken<br/>c) Grand Cru<br/>d) Eiswein<br/>e) Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter (VDP)<br/>f) Steiermark (Styria)</p> | Germany/ Alsace/ Austria     | short-form     | <p>Some candidates also overlooked the fact that the question asked them to consider each paragraph with reference to Germany, Alsace and/or Austria as appropriate.</p> <p><b>Pinot Gris:</b> This section was generally answered quite well, although there was a general failure to comment briefly on Germany or Austria where this variety is also found.</p> <p><b>Halbtrocken:</b> Responses here were very simplistic. Although very important, only a few candidates mentioned that this is linked to residual sugar and few were able to give the actual figure in gm/litre even though this is taught at Advanced Certificate level. Very few also acknowledged that this could be applied to Austrian wines as well.</p> <p><b>Grand Cru:</b> A significant number failed to mention that this term can be applied to the sites where grapes are grown or to the four grape varieties permitted in Grand Cru wines. However, on the whole, this section was answered well with some even going into considerable detail of the German equivalent.</p> <p><b>Eiswein:</b> Answers were surprisingly basic with only a few mentioning the risks involved or the inevitable fermentation difficulties. Even fewer included mention that these wines may also be produced in Austria.</p> <p><b>VDP:</b> Candidates who attempted this paragraph clearly struggled. Several were aware that it was a growers' organisation and gained a basic pass as a result, but virtually no-one gave accurate additional information. Some mistakenly thought the VDP administered wine law.</p> <p><b>Styria:</b> Quite a number of candidates attempting this paragraph were guessing wildly. At best, they knew it was in Austria, but little else. However, at the other extreme were a small number of candidates who were well informed and gained high marks as a result.</p> |         |
| June-13    | <p>Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:</p> <p>a) AP Number<br/>b) DAC<br/>c) Dornfelder<br/>d) Rudesheim<br/>e) Valais<br/>f) VDP</p>  | Germany/Austria/ Switzerland | short-form     | <p>The average script is around 3 sides of text therefore, with the best candidates submitting considerably more, with 5 or 6 sides not unusual. Anything less than 2 sides of text is unlikely to contain enough detail for a pass grade.</p>  |         |
| January-19 | <p>Why has Syrah / Shiraz become such a popular grape variety in the vineyard, winery and marketplace?<br/>(Each section carries equal weighting)</p>  | grape                        | open-response  |   |         |
| June-18    | <p>Outline the origins of the Zinfandel grape variety (25% weighting). Explain how it came to play such an important part in the California wine industry (75% weighting).</p>   | grape                        | open-responses |   |         |
| June-18    | <p>Describe the characteristics of the Riesling grape variety (50% weighting). How do producers use Riesling to make wines of different styles? (50% weighting)</p>  | grape                        | open-responses |   |         |
| January-18 | <p>What are the advantages and disadvantages of Merlot in each of the following?<br/>a) Vineyard (40% weighting)<br/>b) Winery (30% weighting)<br/>c) Marketplace (30% weighting)</p>  | grape                        | short-form     |   |         |
| January-16 | <p>Is Grenache Noir (Garnacha Tinta) more successful as a blended or varietal wine? Illustrate your answer with examples from around the world.<br/><br/>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)</p>   | grapes                       | essay          |   |         |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type          | comments  | Example                           |
|------------|---|---------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| January-16 | Describe how Chardonnay produces different styles of wine around the world with reference to:<br>a) the vineyard<br>b) winemaking techniques<br>c) market trends<br><br>(Each section carries equal weighting)  | grapes        | open-response |   |                                   |
| June-15    | "Riesling ... could claim to be the finest white grape variety in the world" (Oxford Wine Companion). Why is this the case? (60% weighting) Why has Riesling been unfashionable in some markets? (40% weighting) (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)  | Grapes        | essay         | Many candidates listed sound reasons why Riesling has quality potential and could describe where it is grown successfully, but few used these reasons and origins to justify why it could be considered the finest grape. Those that did were rewarded with highmarks<br><br>Many candidates who were awarded a fail grade gave comprehensive answers to the first part of the question but struggled with the second. This was disappointing as it was a clear opportunity for personal commentary with credit available for logical deductions/sensible observations about the obstacles Riesling faces.<br><br>Candidates should avoid the use of casual or colloquial language in their work. Statements such as "great fruit aromatics" and "beautiful acidity" serve little purpose as they fail to convey to the examiner that the candidate understands the wine being described. | 2014-15 pp<br>57                  |
| January-15 | The Syrah based wines of the Northern Rhône vary significantly in quality and price. Why is this? (60% weighting)<br>Comment on the use of this variety in each of the following (20% weighting for each location):<br>Version 1: Hunter Valley & Hawke's Bay<br>Version 2: Hunter Valley & California<br>Version 3: California & Hawke's Bay | Grapes        | open-response | When considering the issues that affect quality and price in the Northern Rhône candidates were better on those relating to production (soils, topography, production costs, yield management, vintage variation, harvesting techniques) but there were some key omissions such as age of vines or vinification techniques. Very few thought beyond production to other factors such as market forces, economies of scale, supply and demand, cost of land, etc   |                                   |
| January-14 | With reference to the wines of Europe, write about FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Aglianico<br>b) Albarino<br>c) Assyrtiko<br>d) Blaufrankisch<br>e) Dolcetto<br>f) Dornfelder<br>g) Gruner Veltliner<br>h) Harslevelu<br>i) Mencia<br>j) Scheurebe<br>k) Verdejo   | grapes        | short-form    | Many candidates also wrote too much about the method of production for Tokaji Aszu rather than concentrating on the characteristics of the Harslevelu grape itself.   |                                   |
| June-13    | What are the characteristics of Sauvignon Blanc that make it such a success with producers and consumers? Illustrate your answer with examples produced in both northern and southern hemispheres.<br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)   | grapes        | essay         | The key to success here was concentrating on the characteristics of these wines that make them so popular with consumers and producers. It was important to include examples of specific wines, but these should only have been used to illustrate the points made about the characteristics of the grape. A loose essay based on a number of tasting notes would not have been sufficient  | 2012-13 pp<br>103 (FAIL<br>grade) |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type                 | comments   | Example                           |
|------------|---|---------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| January-12 | What are the characteristics of Merlot that have made it such a success with producers and consumers? Illustrate your answer with examples from Europe and the New World. (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question) | Grapes        | essay                | this question needed plenty of detail relating to the grape and good examples of specific wines for a sound pass grade.<br><br>The examiner commented that too many candidates allocated too much space in their essay to listing where Merlot is grown rather than using examples of wines to illustrate why it is such a successful variety.   | 2011-12 pp 107 (good but not top) |
| June-10    | With reference to the wines of continental Europe, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Blaufrankisch<br>b) Corvina<br>c) Colcetto<br>d) Mencia<br>e) Petit Verdot<br>f) Tannat                            | Grapes        | short-form           | A tendency to write too much about Valpolicella (the wine) rather than Corvina (the grape variety). There is a subtle difference to the focus of the question which required candidates to write primarily about the characteristics of the grapes and then secondly about the wines in which it is used.  |                                   |
| June-09    | What are the advantages and disadvantages of Cabernet Sauvignon in the:<br><br>a) Vineyard<br>b) Winery<br>c) Marketplace   | grapes        | open-response        | good marks   | 2008-09 pp 73 (key points)        |
| January-09 | Discuss the use of Semillon in each of the following wines:<br><br>a) Sauternes<br>b) Graves<br>c) South Eastern Australia blend  | Grapes        | open-response        | Too many scripts were simplistic and lacking detail. Many candidates simply launched into the three sections without any discussion of Semillon as a grape variety in general. A number of candidates also lost marks because they did not read the question properly and wrote about Australian Semillon rather than its use in a SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA blend. This wine was specifically chosen to provide a clear quality differential and those who wrote about Hunter Valley Semillon missed this and earned no marks for this section of the question. |                                   |
| January-09 | Why have Pinot Grigio wines become so fashionable? Will sales continue to grow?<br><br>(an essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)  | Grapes        | essay                | Candidates were generally weak at the second half of the question, which relied more heavily on person input. It is recommended to write a short plan before starting the essay question.  |                                   |
| January-09 | With reference to the wines of Europe, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Barbera<br>b) Graciano<br>c) Furmint<br>d) Muller Thurgau<br>e) Savatiano<br>f) Blaufrankisch                                  | Grapes        | short-form           | There were a number of reasons for low marks – failing to read the question and writing about New World wines rather than those from EUROPE. Savatiano was often confused with Santorini   |                                   |
| June-08    | Explain why the Pinot Noir wines from Nuits-Saint-Georges, Chile and Central Otago are so different.  | Grapes        | essay/open-responses | The question was not HOW they differed, but WHY they differ. Key differences should have been identified as relating to quality and style and were attributable to factors such as soil, climate, viticulture and vinification. Candidates needed to show an understanding of this to answer this question competently.  |                                   |



| Date    | Question   | general topic | type                | comments  | Example                    |
|---------|--|---------------|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| June-08 | "What is the future of New World Chardonnay?" Discuss with reference to the wines of California and Australia giving examples of specific styles and price points to illustrate your observations.   | grapes        | essay/open-response | On the whole the scripts were rather predictable. Far too many simply described the styles of wine produced in California and Australia with little discussion of trends. Where trends were identified, there was a tendency for oversimplification. See ER for details required to pass.   | 2007-08 pp 76 (key points) |
| June-07 | Select FIVE of the grape varieties listed below. For each, describe the style(s) of wine produced and state the characteristics of the variety that contribute to that style. (Each paragraph carries equal marks)<br>a) Pinotage<br>b) Torrontés<br>c) Grüner Veltliner<br>d) Dornfelder<br>e) Tannat<br>f) Xynomavro | Grapes        | short-form          | there was very little in the way of acknowledgement of the characteristics of the variety that contribute to that style. There was also a tendency to think only in terms of one style of wine rather than considering how styles might vary, where for example varieties are cultivated in differing climates or handled in other ways. Pinotage was a case in point here, where the style of wine can vary from light, simple juicy reds or rosé to serious, full-bodied structured reds commanding high prices.<br>Taking Grüner Veltliner as an example, candidates should have aimed to cover the following in their paragraph:<br><br>A white grape which is the most commonly planted variety in Austria (approx 1/3 of vineyard plantings) with a small amount grown elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The style of wine is typically pale in colour, dry, with high acidity, medium (+) alcohol, medium to full bodied with flavours of spice or white pepper, citrus, green grapes, salad and mineral notes. Not dissimilar to the wines of Alsace. Some may improve with bottle age and develop honey and toasty characteristics, not unlike Burgundy. Good examples may be oaked and a little is used for the production of sweet wines. Large quantities are also drunk very young in Viennese Heurigen bars. The characteristics of the grape that can influence style are yields (it tends to be high yielding especially if trained by the Lenz Moser system) and hardiness (it is therefore suited to cool climates). It is also late ripening (so not suited to some Northern European regions), but tolerant of many soil types. In particular, it expresses mineral notes when grown with low yields on appropriate soils such as in the Wachau in Austria.  |                            |
| June-07 | Compare and contrast the production and style of Barossa old vine Grenache, Châteauneuf du Pape AC and Navarra Rosado DO.  | Grapes        | open-response       | In terms of comparisons, the key things to focus on relate to grape variety, climate and wine style. These can be summarised as: All three are made partly or wholly from the Grenache grape. All three show the characteristics of grape (large, thin skinned berry, high sugar levels, low acidity) resulting in full-bodied wines with red fruit character (strawberry, raspberry), spicy notes (white pepper, liquorice, cloves), high alcohol, low in tannin, colour and acidity. All three wines share most of these characteristics (even the Rosado is full bodied). With age, the spicy notes evolve into toffee and leather as with the Barossa old vine Grenache and the Châteauneuf du Pape. Grenache needs a hot climate to ripen – all three regions provide this. Grenache has strong wood and is suited to bush training – this is normal practice in all three regions. None of these regions uses irrigation (not even Barossa).<br>Barossa is regarded as the best Australian region for Grenache, with wines mimicking those of the Rhône such as Châteauneuf du Pape in terms of style.<br><br>When it comes to contrasting the three wines, the answer lies in focusing ONLY on the differences between the three. This means covering issues such as how the grape is used in the wines. For example the single varietal Barossa compared to the blended Châteauneuf du Pape. Viticulture is another area where differences can be identified such as the use of old vines in the Barossa versus much younger vines for the Navarra or soils and yields.<br><br>Winemaking techniques should also be addressed such as the traditional red winemaking of the Barossa and Châteauneuf du Pape and the very different approach required to produce a rosé wine. Finally there are clear differences when it comes to wine style both in terms of flavour profile and quality with the Barossa clearly a premium wine whilst the Rosado is aimed at a completely different market.<br><br>When asked to "compare and contrast" it is not sufficient to describe each wine in isolation. No comparison or contrast has been made. Instead, answers should seek to set out the similarities that the three wines share and the specific differences between them. All other information is superfluous. |                            |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type                | comments  | Example                               |
|------------|---|---------------|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| January-07 | Discuss why Viognier has become such a fashionable grape variety. Illustrate your answer with examples produced in both northern and southern hemispheres.<br><br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question.)                    | grapes        | essay               | In general, candidates described Condrieu or Chateau Grillet well. Comments were also good in terms of the aroma, structure and texture of Viognier and most commented on the growing consumer appeal of this variety.<br><br>Common errors were as follows:<br>1. Believing Viognier formed part of the blend of Cornas or Hermitage (both red and white). In fact, there was general confusion on the varietal composition of Northern Rhône white wines.<br>2. Confusion over which countries are defined as Northern or Southern hemisphere – far too many thought California was in the Southern hemisphere.<br>3. Believing the purpose of Viognier in Shiraz/Viognier blends is simply for adding acidity, perfume and finesse. It is to help fix polyphenols.<br>4. Ignoring the appeal (or not) of this variety to the producer.<br>5. Confusing the concept of “blending” with “co-vinification”.<br><br>As always with this sort of question, it is vital to support observations with specific examples of actual wines, and to consider the whole spectrum from inexpensive to premium.<br><br>Descriptions of wines and lists of facts may generate some marks, but when the question starts with the words “discuss why...” it is essential to realise that reasons must be given to show an understanding of the points being made.   |                                       |
| January-07 | Describe and discuss the various styles of still wines produced from Chenin Blanc in the Loire and South Africa.  | grapes        | essay/open-response | Even those who did cover it well often forgot about the more basic ACs of Touraine, Anjou and Saumur or Vin de Pays. Where these were mentioned, they were simply referred to as “basic Chenin Blanc from the Loire”. Hardly anyone mentioned that in these areas Chenin Blanc could be blended with other grape varieties. It is always important to illustrate answers with examples of wines from specific producers, this shows sound commercial awareness. Unfortunately, these were very sparse.  | 2006-07 pp 36 (example script for SA) |
| June-06    | Describe how the factors in the vineyard and winery determine the style and quality of Syrah or Syrah dominated wines from Northern Rhône, Barossa and one other country.   | Grapes        | essay/open-response | Far too many answers suggested Syrah was barrel fermented, when they presumably meant fermentation in wooden vats. A number also thought that Syrah was pressed prior to fermentation. Detail was sometimes lacking in respect of the Barossa, where candidates tended to generalise and many missed the fact that this region also produces many premium wines, not just “bulk” wine. Coverage of the third region was often very brief and occasionally was missing entirely. This was very costly in some cases and usually resulted in a fail grade being awarded. Some candidates were very arbitrary in their choice of country. Whilst it is true that Syrah is planted in just about every country, the examiners were looking for evidence of knowledge of its use in the region, not just generalisations based on the characteristics of the grape variety. This meant selecting a country with significant or increasing plantings of Syrah, where a particular style has evolved over time that differentiates it from the wines of the Northern Rhone or the Barossa. Without specifically spelling this out in the question, the examiners were looking for another contrast here. Some of the valid alternatives suggested by candidates were California (the Rhône Rangers), Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Portugal (particularly in the Alentejo and Borba) and Italy. One candidate achieving a high scoring distinction grade, took the time to write a short essay plan which preceded their response. This is reproduced below:<br><br>N Rhone – high trellis, limestone and gravel soil, Mistral, continental climate, rain, Cote Rotie slopes (Bruin/Blonde) St Joseph, handpicking, Cornas, Hermitage, Crozes<br><br>Barossa – canopy management, pruning, irrigation, heat – climate, rain, different parts, Lindoch – Seppeltsfield – Eden Valley, St Hallett, Peter Lehmann.<br><br>S Italy – Heat!, bulk cheap wine, limestone soil, mechanisation |                                       |
| June-06    | “If I hear anybody order another bottle of Merlot, I’m walking out.” (The movie “Sideways”.)<br><br>Does Merlot only appeal to the mass market or can it achieve greatness? Discuss. (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question.) | Grapes        | essay               | The examiner commented that “like Merlot itself, many essays achieved adequacy, but few if any achieved true greatness.” In a compulsory essay style answer, structure is important in order to present a coherent argument that explores both sides of the equation – Merlot’s mass appeal and its potential as a great wine.  | 2005-06 pp 44 (model)                 |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type                | comments  | Example                    |
|------------|---|---------------|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| June-06    | Describe the two wines below under the following headings:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Viticulture<br>c) Vinification<br>d) Assessment of Quality<br>e) Target Market<br><br>Two wines: Botter Veneto IGT Pinot Grigio & SGN Alsace<br>1994 Tokay Pinot Gris Leon Beyer | Grapes        | essay/open-response | The purpose of this question is to test the candidates' commercial awareness of the wines depicted in addition to their factual knowledge regarding production. The two wines were selected to provide a clear contrast under all the headings. The Italian Pinot Grigio – well-made but clearly not an exceptional wine, aimed at the bulk market in the £5 - £8 price bracket, and the Léon Beyer - a very different wine altogether.<br><br>This was premium quality from an excellent vintage (1994) and made from botrytised grapes (SGN) making it expensive, of limited availability and highly desirable.<br><br>Too often with this type of question, candidates fail to pay close enough attention to the labels, simply describing the wine in generic terms rather than concentrating specifically on the actual wine shown. There was far more potential for detail in all sections on the Alsace wine, and the marking key reflected this in the allocation of marks. However, in many instances, this detail simply was not there, for example <u>the effect of botrytis on yields, the problems associated with fermentation of must which is so rich</u> . At this level of qualification, detail is expected and required for a pass grade. |                            |
| January-06 | What does blending other varieties with Chardonnay achieve?<br><br>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question.)   | grapes        | essay               | Many essays were “one-sided”, only thinking in terms of how other varieties could “make Chardonnay better” rather than including observations on what contribution Chardonnay can bring to other varieties in a blend.<br><br>Some candidates ignored the commercial aspects such as supplying large volumes of wine, meeting specific price points etc. A good essay plan for answering this question would have included the following key points:<br><br>The introduction – setting out how the question will be answered and making a few key observations.<br>Making a wine – considering what other varieties can contribute to Chardonnay and what it can contribute to them. What works and what does not? What are the advantages of blending?<br>Marketing/selling a wine – what are the advantages of blending from a commercial point of view?<br>Conclusion – what have you deduced as a result of your discussion of the topic?<br><br>As always with this sort of question, it is vital to support observations with specific examples of actual wines, and to consider the whole spectrum from inexpensive to premium   |                            |
| June-05    | Describe the similarities and differences between Sauvignon Blanc wines from the Napa Valley, Marlborough, Pouilly-Fume and Pessac-Leognan.   | Grapes        | essay/open-response | The best approach is in two sections. The first should aim to establish any similarities between the wines and the second to discuss ways in which they differ. Hardly any candidate addressed the similarities (dry, and made either wholly or predominately from Sauvignon blanc). Sweet wines are precluded from the Pessac-Leognan AC. See examiners' report from more details.   | 2004-05 pp 30 (key points) |
| June-05    | With reference to both France and South America, write about each of the following grape varieties.<br>a) Malbec<br>b) Syrah<br>c) Merlot   | Grapes        | open-response       | The Examiners' report has more details. However, note: the grape varieties were in terms of South America and not just Argentina, for example. Likewise Syrah was in reference to ALL of France, not just Rhone.  | 2004-05 pp 32 (key points) |
| 2004       | What are the factors that have led to top quality Cabernet Sauvignon being produced in each of the following:<br>a) Bordeaux<br>b) Tuscany<br>c) Maipo Valley<br>d) Napa Valley   | Grapes        | open-response       |   |                            |

| Date       | Question  | general topic    | type                | comments   | Example                       |
|------------|---|------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| January-08 | The Rhine Riesling grape produces very different styles of wine in the Eden Valley, the Rheingau and in the Wachau. Describe the factors in the vineyard and in the winery that account for these differences in style.   | Grapes           | essay/open-response | Not simple in terms of HOW the wine is produced, but also BY WHOM. For example the importance of FWW co-operative in the Wachau compared to the Rheingau where co-operatives are responsible for only around 10% produced. In the case of styles; Eden Valley has one; however the other regions have more: Trocken wines to top quality botrytised wines of Auslese and TBA quality with the rare Eiswines. In Vineyard the 6 factors (climate, topography, location, aspect altitude, gradient, soil and general vineyard management including things like yields, training systems, irrigation etc. In the winery, it is simply a case of describing how the wines are produced and by whom.  |                               |
| June-15    | Write about THREE of the following grape varieties (60% weighting):<br>a) Assyrtiko<br>b) Savatiano<br>c) Agiorgitiko<br>d) Xinomavro<br>What are the challenges facing the modern Greek wine industry when selling its wines abroad? (40% weighting)                             | Greece           | open-response       | This first part of the question required hard facts, such as where specifically in Greece these varieties are cultivated, their key characteristics, the style of wine they produce, etc.  |                               |
| January-06 | "Greece and Portugal are countries that have largely resisted the charms of international grape varieties". For both countries, give examples of wines made from indigenous grape varieties that illustrate this statement. (An essay format is NOT necessary for this question.) | Greece/ Portugal | essay/open-response | candidates should not assume they can pass by waffling or generalising in the hope of picking up a few valid marks. In the case of the latter, many scripts covered barely half a side of A4 paper. This is seriously inadequate for this level of qualification. This question was deliberately vague in terms of indicating how many wines should be covered from each country. However, the use of the phrase "For both countries, give examples of wines ...", implied that a minimum of two wines from each country was required. The examiner was advised therefore to allocate marks based on the level of detail contained in each case – where only four wines were discussed, this required more depth and detail than the script that covered six or more wines.<br><br>In general, candidates appeared to know more about Portugal than they did about Greece. Most candidates mentioned Retsina, but not always with the correct grape variety. Vinho Verde was another popular choice. |                               |
| January-15 | Write about wine production in Hungary under the following headings:<br>a) Strengths<br>b) Weaknesses<br>c) Opportunities<br>d) Threats<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)   | Hungary          | essay/open-response | A pass should have been possible with basic knowledge of Hungarian wine production and lateral thinking. Many of Hungary's strengths relate to universal viti/vini themes such as the climate being ideal for viticulture and the variety of soil types and topography (suited to so many different varieties and styles of wine). Too many candidates focused almost exclusively on the sweet wines of Tokaj, writing nothing (or very little) about other indigenous grapes or the many international varieties grown in Hungary.<br><br>strengths include the low production costs that enable the production of competitively priced wines, Hungary's adaptability and openness to innovation in the vineyard and cellar and interest from outside the country, both in the form of 'flying winemakers' or investment from companies such as AXA and Vega Sicilia.   |                               |
| January-13 | Outline the renaissance of Tokaj wine since 1989 (20% weighting).<br>Describe the climate, topography, soils and grape varieties of the region (30% weighting).<br>Explain how the different styles of wine are produced (50% weighting).   | Hungary          | open-response       | responses often lacked the level of detail expected for a higher grade. Very few candidates mentioned the shift from the old oxidative style of wine to the fresher more modern style and many forgot to mention Szamarodni or did not describe it accurately.<br><br>The majority were able to name the key grape varieties but were less competent at discussing the characteristics of these and what they contribute to the style of the wines in which they feature.  | 2012-13<br>pp90 (fail & good) |
| June-18    | With reference to wine production in Central and Southern Italy, write about FIVE of the following:<br>a) Frascati<br>b) volcanic soils<br>c) Negroamaro<br>d) climate<br>e) Passito di Pantelleria<br>f) Cannonau di Sardegna<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)          | Italy            | short-form          |  |                               |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type          | comments   | Example        |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| June-15    | <p>With reference to the wines of Italy, write about FIVE of the following:</p> <p>a) Gaja<br/>b) Teroldego<br/>c) Dolcetto<br/>d) Bianco di Custoza<br/>e) Collio (Collio Goriziano)<br/>f) Gattinara<br/>g) Arneis<br/>h) Colli Orientali<br/>i) Valtellina<br/>j) Bardolino<br/>(Each section carries equal weighting)</p> <p>(topics varied by region)</p> | Italy         | short-form    | <p>A sound approach where short-form responses are required is to think in terms of key questions to help structure your answer. For example, for the grape variety 'Dolcetto' candidates could have considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Where exactly is it grown?</li> <li>-- What are the key DOCs / DOCGs for this variety?</li> <li>-- Is it used in blends or as a varietal wine?</li> <li>-- Which climatic conditions suit this variety and why?</li> <li>-- What particular growing problems is it susceptible to?</li> <li>-- It is early or late budding, maturing, ripening, etc. and what is the significance of this?</li> <li>-- What are the key aroma/flavour characteristics of this variety?</li> <li>-- What style of wine does it produce? Does it have high or low acidity, light or full body, high intelligent observations in answer to the second part of the question but lacked factual knowledge of the varieties themselves. It was impossible to gain a pass mark in either scenario.</li> </ul> <p>62</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>or low alcohol, soft or firm tannins, etc.?</li> <li>-- What quality level are the wines from this variety?</li> <li>-- Why is it important from a commercial point of view?</li> </ul> <p>This is not an exhaustive list but answering these questions correctly would have led to a comprehensive answer of the standard expected at Diploma level</p>  |                |
| January-15 | <p>Discuss the progress that has been made in Sicily in moving from bulk wine production to making quality wines with distinct varietal and geographical character.<br/>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)</p>  | Italy         | essay         | <p>Implicit in the question was the need to address the history of Sicilian wine production (focused on bulk) together with more recent, positive developments. To pass candidates needed to address both elements.</p> <p>There was also a tendency for less well-prepared candidates to list Sicilian grape varieties and their characteristics without linking them to the question. Often these were misspelt, which is unacceptable at Diploma level; candidates must be able to spell grape varieties and wine regions accurately.</p>   |                |
| June-14    | <p>Discuss the renaissance of quality red wine production in Tuscany over the last 60 years.<br/>(An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question)</p>   | Italy         | Essay         | <p>The most logical approach would have been a chronological one – to start discussions at the beginning of the 60 year time span and identify key developments up to the present day. Good candidates took their starting point as the “post war period”, largely the 1950’s and 1960’s and outlined the status quo at this time that would then set the scene for the renaissance that followed.</p> <p>The next key timeline was the start of the revival which really kick started in the 1960’s and 1970’s with the emergence of the Super Tuscans. It seemed that the majority of candidates covered this movement to some extent, but some simply mentioned it, giving no examples of actual wines and no indication of exactly when these wine appeared on the scene.</p> <p>At the other end of the scale were the candidates who wrote almost solely about these wines to the exclusion of everything else that was relevant in terms of answering this question. Neither approach was ideal. The success of these Super Tuscan wines in the 1970’s was in turn followed by the rise of Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, leading finally to more recent developments in the 1980’s onwards, largely within the Chianti DOC and all of these needed to be discussed to answer this question well.</p> <p>Far too many essays contained very broad statements about “modern winemaking techniques” without any discussion of what these actually entail. As a result, many essays lacked depth, detail and discussion and fell short of the level required for a pass grade.</p> |                |
| June-13    | <p>The production of wine from dried or semi-dried grapes has a long tradition in the Veneto. Describe the techniques involved and the resulting styles of wine.<br/>(Each wine carries equal weighting)</p>   | Italy         | open-response | <p>Four styles were needed -- not just a discussion on Valpolicella</p>  | 2012-13 pp 106 |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type                     | comments  | Example                    |
|------------|---|---------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| June-12    | Describe the wine region of Puglia, commenting on:<br>a) Climate and soil (10% weighting)<br>b) Grape varieties (30% weighting)<br>c) Key styles and quality levels of wine (30% weighting)<br>d) Recent development (30% weighting)  | Italy         | open-response            | there was a surprising lack of knowledge of local grape varieties with many not even mentioning the key one, Negroamaro   | 2011-12 pp 128             |
| January-12 | Piemonte produces wines of great diversity from indigenous varieties.<br><br>Select and describe THREE wines from different indigenous grape varieties which illustrate this statement, one of which MUST be from the Nebbiolo grape.<br><br>Explain how factors in the vineyard and winery contribute to the style of these wines. (50% weighting for Nebbiolo based wine, 25% weighting for each remaining wine.) | Italy         | open-response/short-form | Most candidates were helped by the fact that 50% of the marks were easily earned on the Nebbiolo based wine, with most writing knowledgeably about Barolo. Responses relating to other grape varieties were often superficial in contrast and the weakest candidates selected wines or grapes from the wrong region or from varieties that do not exist, such as the candidate who wrote about Asti Spumanti and the "Friuli" grape variety.  | 2011-12 pp 120 (merit)     |
| June-11    | Describe the DOCG wines of Brunello di Montalcino Riserva, Recioto della Valpolicella and Dogliani.<br><br>Discuss how factors in the vineyard and winery account for the style and quality of these wines. (Each region carries equal weighting)   | Italy         | essay/open-response      | Amongst the poorer scripts there were some very elemental errors in terms of the process of red winemaking, with candidates often stating that red grapes were pressed before fermentation, or were fermented in barrel, or that fermentation was stopped with SO <sub>2</sub> , and similar illogical processes. Comments were also surprisingly weak on Recioto and knowledge of Gavi was also clearly lacking.<br><br>There is certainly a technique to answering questions well. In the first instance, it is important to spend some time thinking about what the question is actually asking before writing anything, also using this time to decide how to approach the question. There are always key words that should determine both the structure and content of any response. In this case, there are two instructions – "describe" and "discuss", and there are also a number of key words – the three named wines, and the words "vineyard", "winery", "style" and "quality". Unless candidates write about all of these, they will not be answering the question as set.<br><br>Candidates need to show that they understand the significance of the facts and can analyse "cause and effect", but this is a skill too few of them have learnt.<br><br>For example in the case of the Recioto della Valpolicella, the following would appear under the heading "vineyard" – grape variety, climate, altitude, soil, aspect, harvesting. Under "winery", the candidate would probably note "drying of grapes", "fermentation", "use of oak". This is the "prompt" that these issues need to be discussed at length in terms of what they contribute to the wine in respect of "style" and "quality" |                            |
| January-11 | Discuss the factors in the vineyard (60% weighting) and winery (40% weighting) that account for the range of styles and quality levels found in DOCG Chianti and its sub-zones.   | Italy         | open-response            | A surprisingly large number wrote little or nothing about the factors in the winery and whilst most candidates had an awareness of the topography of the region and the grape varieties grown, very few made any real attempt to DISCUSS how they affected the style of the wine or accounted for the different quality levels. This is a common problem, with far too many candidates not appreciating the difference between the factual recall which forms the assessment for lower levels of WSET qualifications and the evaluation and analysis of these facts which takes the assessment to this higher level.  |                            |
| June-07    | What makes Barolo special? Account for the different styles produced. (An essay format is COMPULSORY for this question.)  | Italy         | essay                    | Any responses submitted in formats other than an essay, such as separate, disjointed paragraphs or bullet points were graded as fail.   | 2006-07 pp 39 (key points) |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                | comments   | Example |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------------|--|---------|
| January-06 | Italian wine making south of Rome has been transformed in recent years and the wines now represent very good value for money. Give details of red and white wines that support this statement. (An essay format is NOT necessary for this question.) | Italy         | essay/open-response | <p>This was a topical question and one which identified those candidates who had up-to-date, detailed knowledge of Italian wines from these regions which are currently undergoing considerable change.</p> <p>Solid introduction: "South of Italy, the climate is Mediterranean with many hours of sunshine and assured ripening of grapes. Sea breezes temper the climate and prevent fungal diseases, but until the 1990's it was largely ignored as a decent source of quality wine. With EU funding, flyingwinemakers (especially from the New World), and increasingly sophisticated cellars, we are now seeing some of its potential".</p> <p>Two key points:<br/> (1) Changes taking place in the vineyard<br/> Reduction in yields and planting density. Replanting of vineyards with better quality vines (including better clonal selection). Better siting of vines. Remodelling of vineyards to allow for mechanisation. Use of modern vineyard equipment, but not necessarily for mechanical harvesting (in many areas it is not possible). Change in pruning and training systems – (eg from bush to Cordon etc. and increasing the height of grape clusters). Use of consultants - viticultural expertise from other regions and countries.<br/> (2) Changes taking place in the winery<br/> Introduction of modern vinification techniques – temperature controlled cellars, vats, presses etc. Better quality control in all stages of the process. Use of consultants' expertise to improve quality/cost ratio – flying winemakers from other regions and other countries. Involvement of consultants producing wines for a particular market segment, eg major supermarkets producing own label wines. Production of different wines for different markets – easy drinking, clean, fruity styles vs. good quality, traditional, oak aged wines</p> |         |
| January-18 | Discuss the developments in grape growing, winemaking and the marketplace that have shaped the wines of the Languedoc over the past forty years.   | Languedoc     | essay               |  |         |
| January-18 | Account for the styles and quality levels of the wines produced in:<br>a) Muscadet<br>b) Chinon<br>c) Vouvray<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)  | Loire         | short-form          |  |         |
| June-14    | Discuss the water shortages in South East Australia, Spain and Argentina (40% weighting).<br><br>How are wine producers dealing with the challenges created? (60% weighting)   | new world     | essay/open-response | <p>The best candidates understood that the purpose of the first part of the question was to establish what the status quo is in each region, i.e. Why do they have a water shortage? How has this manifested itself in recent years? What natural features exacerbate the problem, e.g. soil, temperatures, vine density etc? This then set the scene for the second part of the question where they explained what these three regions are doing to address the problem.</p> <p>Irrigation<br/> drought resistant rootstocks<br/> low density planting<br/> removal of cover crops which compete for water<br/> use of mulch to conserve moisture<br/> canopy and yield management<br/> use of regulated deficit irrigation (RDI) and partial root zone drying (PRD)</p> <p>(expected:) Australia through the issue of WULs (water use licence) and "Water Share" which is allocated and monitored by regional authorities through an "allocation bank account" which produces an "annual use limit</p> <p>Spain allows irrigation now (drip preferred)</p>   |         |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type       | comments  | Example  |
|------------|--|---------------|------------|---|--|
| January-13 | Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following regions:<br>a) Central Otago<br>b) Clare Valley<br>c) Robertson<br>d) Salta<br>e) Stellenbosch<br>f) Yarra Valley   | New World     | short-form | there seemed to be a general lack of understanding of climatic terms, especially "maritime"<br><br>The examiner also commented on the fact that the majority of candidates seem to believe that every wine region in the world has limestone and marl as soil types. However, although these soils are common in Europe (Burgundy being the classic example), they are the exception in the New World.  | 2012-13 pp 94 (main points & good)                 |
| June-12    | Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Columbia Valley<br>b) Paarl<br>c) Margaret River<br>d) Martinborough<br>e) Rio Negro<br>f) Uruguay.  | new world     | short-form | A good approach in all six sections would have been to consider the characteristics of each region, such as climate, soil, grape varieties, viticulture, winemaking.<br><br>Rio Negro clearly highlighted those candidates who had studied the full breadth of the Unit 3 syllabus. These were the ones who scored high marks in this section. Others often thought it was a region in Brazil or Chile, and some clearly clutching at straws wrote that it is a river. Responses on Uruguay were surprisingly good, with most showing a basic understanding of the country, location and climate. Tannat certainly needed to be mentioned, and was by most candidates.  |  |
| June-09    | Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Pinotage<br>b) Gimblett gravels<br>c) Washington State<br>d) Hunter Valley Semillon<br>e) Robert Mondavi<br>f) Australian Wine Research institute (AWRI) | New World     | short-form | Hunter Valley Semillon was the worst section.   | 2008-09 pp79 (Hunter Valley -- excellent response) |
| January-09 | With reference to the New World wines, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Zinfandel<br>b) Maipo<br>c) Cloudy Bay<br>d) Wine of Origin (WO)<br>e) Phylloxera<br>f) Terra Rossa               | new world     | short-form | The compulsory question always focuses on mainstream elements of the syllabus. The New World is always a popular subject matter and this, coupled with the paragraph format that always appeals to a larger proportion of candidates seemed to make this question less intimidating.<br><br>WO caused the most problems with lots of responses far too vague and clearly relying on guesswork Key facts that the examiner was looking for:<br><br>* Wine authenticity legislation of SA implemented in 1973 and based on similar laws in Europe.<br>* Guarantees information on label has been checked, verified and certified by the Wine & Spirit Board.<br>* Bottles carry a numbered certification seal, usually on the capsule, awarded after strict quality control test<br>* 100% of grapes must come from any stated production area<br>* Delineates region, district (e.g., Paarl or Stellenbosch, war (such as Franschhoek) and estates (NOTE: not all districts are part of a region and not all wards are part of a district leading to untidy production area boundaries).<br>* If vintage dated, 75% must come from stated vintage<br>* if single variety stated, it must comprise 75% of the total and 85% if it is to be sold in the EU<br>* Must enrichment banned, acidification permitted, no yield restrictions.<br>* participation voluntary but non-certified wine subject to spot check analysis |  |



| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                     | comments   | Example                                   |
|------------|--|---------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| January-07 | Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following: (each paragraph carries equal marks)<br>a) Margaret River<br>b) AVA<br>c) Jacob's Creek<br>d) Central Otago<br>e) The Andes<br>f) Opus One   | New World     | short-form               | Failure was either due to brevity, lack of detail, writing fewer than five paragraphs, answering all six paragraphs (and therefore covering the required five in superficial terms only) or incorrect factual knowledge. It was surprising how many did not know what Jacob's Creek was, or thought it was in New Zealand rather than Australia. Most also only focussed on the commercial wines and were unaware of the premium wines it produces. A number of candidates did not know what AVA stood for – one suggestion was "Australian Viticultural Area". This has to be worrying as this is covered in the lower level qualifications and should be general knowledge at this level. Central Otago also caught out many, with suggestions that it was an area in California or Chile. The paragraph on the Andes caused the fewest problems with most candidates able to cover the basics such as where they are and how they impact on wine production in Chile and Argentina. | 2006-07 pp 37 (MR and CO)                 |
| 2004       | With reference to Australasia, Africa and/or Asia, write a short paragraph on EACH of the following:<br>a) Chenin Blanc<br>b) Swan Valley<br>c) China<br>d) Mataro<br>e) Hawkes Bay<br>f) KWV  | new world     | short-form               | Examples provided in ER.   | 2003-04 pp 25 (fail and key points)       |
| June-18    | Account for the commercial success of New Zealand wines. To what extent can this success be sustained?   | New Zealand   | essay                    |  |   |
| June-14    | Give an overview of the evolution of red wine production in New Zealand over the last fifty years (30% weighting).<br><br>Describe today's red wine sector in New Zealand, with particular reference to the preferred grape varieties and the regions where they are grown (70% weighting) | New Zealand   | essay/open-response      | Most wrote in generic terms about the evolution of wine production in NZ rather than focussing on red wine. Comments were therefore too broad, such as reference to use of stainless steel, canopy management, increased marketing etc. Very few took much (if any) notice of the fifty year time span indicated in the question, making no attempt to date any of the developments they did mention.<br><br>The majority of candidates referred to Central Otago Pinot Noir and Hawkes Bay Bordeaux blends but the detail relating to soil, producers, styles etc was often missing or inaccurate and there was very little discussion of other regions or grape varieties.   |   |
| January-10 | Account for the success of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc (25% weighting). Evaluate the main threats to its continued success and discuss whether the region has a guaranteed future with premium Sauvignon Blanc (75% weighting).  | New Zealand   | essay                    | Don't spend too long on the 25% part; commercial knowledge increases chances of better scores  | 2009-10 pp70 (distinction)                |
| January-05 | Explain why retail prices for New Zealand wines are high. Despite this, how has the New Zealand wine industry expanded its markets?<br><br>(an essay is COMPULSORY for this question)  | New Zealand   | essay                    | Many scripts were simply too short. It was important to establish some key points from the start: current average price of NZ wine in UK market (compared to average); how have they managed to achieve this. Too many candidates approached this question in very general terms. Viti/vini were often dealt with in one sentence (!) Only a few appreciated the significance of the effect of pests and diseases.   | 2004-05 pp 27 (the highest scoring paper) |
| June-18    | Discuss how factors in the vineyard and in the winery contribute to the style of the white wines of Vinho Verde and the red wines of Alentejo.<br>(Each region carries equal weighting)  | Portugal      | open-response            |  |   |
| January-14 | Describe light wine production in:<br>a) Douro<br>b) Vinho Verde<br>c) Alentejo  | Portugal      | open-response/short-form | Writing knowledgeably about the basics of climate, soil, topography, viticulture and vinification would have been enough to secure a pass grade here. Candidates who also brought a commercial slant to their response tended to achieve higher marks.   | 2013-14 pp 57                             |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                      | comments   | Example                                    |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| June-10    | Assess Portugal's strengths (50% weighting) and weaknesses (50% weighting) as a producer of still light wines.   | Portugual     | essay/open-response       | Commercial knowledge increased scores.<br><br>One of the highest pass rates (83%)  |  |
| January-09 | Describe how climate, soil and grape variety vary across the following region:<br><br>a) Vingo Verde<br>b) Bairrada<br>c) Dao<br>d) Alentejo   | Portugual     | open-response/ short-form | Candidates were weak on white grapes; there was a tendency to ignore key words in the question such as "climate, soil, grape variety". In addition, many candidates failed to look at how these differ in the four regions, simply stating what they were in each region with no discussion at all. This made their responses very simplistic in terms of demonstrating real understanding of the regions.<br><br>There was some confusion between Bairrada and Dao. | 2008-09 pp 70 (an excellent response to D) |
| January-19 | With reference to the wines of Europe, write about FIVE of the following:<br>a) Assyrtiko<br>b) Blaufränkisch / Kékfrankos<br>c) Dornfelder<br>d) Furmint<br>e) Grüner Veltliner<br>f) Silvaner / Sylvaner<br>g) Xinomavro<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)   | random        | short-form                |  |  |
| January-19 | With reference to grape growing and winemaking, describe the production and resulting style of wine for each of the following:<br>a) Pomerol AC<br>b) Inexpensive California Chardonnay<br>c) Coteaux du Layon AC<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)  | random        | short-form                |  |  |
| June-18    | Describe the typical style and outline the principal selling points of each of the following wines:<br>a) Alsace Gewurztraminer Sélection de Grains Nobles<br>b) Côtes de Provence rosé<br>c) inexpensive Argentinian Malbec<br>(Each wine carries equal weighting)  | random        | short-form                |  |  |
| January-18 | With reference to the Americas, write about FIVE of the following:<br>a) Wine production in New York State<br>b) Carmenère<br>c) Wine production in Uruguay<br>d) Pierce's disease<br>e) Wine production in Sonoma<br>f) North American liquor monopolies<br>g) Ice wine<br>(Each section carries equal weighting) | random        | short-form                |  |  |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type       | comments  | Example                              |
|------------|--|---------------|------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| January-16 | With reference to grape growing and winemaking, describe the method of production and resulting style of wine for each of the following:<br>a) Hunter Valley Semillon<br>b) Amarone della Valpolicella<br>c) Mosel Riesling Kabinett<br>(Each wine carries equal weighting)                | random        | short-form |   |                                      |
| January-16 | With reference to wine production in South America write about FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) San Antonio<br>b) Irrigation<br>c) Torrontés<br>d) Casablanca<br>e) Leyda<br>f) Maule<br>g) Carmenère<br>h) Uruguay<br><br>(only 6 choices given on exam papers; choices varied by region) | random        | short-form |   |                                      |
| June-09    | Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Pfalz<br>b) Garrafeira<br>c) Furmint<br>d) Sicily<br>e) Nemea<br>f) Chateau Musar  | random        | short-form | Again paragraph answers generated low results. E) and b) were the worst answered.   |                                      |
| June-05    | Write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Baden<br>b) Primitivo<br>c) Franschhoek<br>d) Erstes Gewachs<br>e) Santorini<br>f) Irsai Oliver  | random        | short-form | Much of the comments by the examiner are out of date (EG).  |                                      |
| June-11    | With respect to still wine production, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Israel<br>b) Turkey<br>c) Bulgaria<br>d) Lebanon<br>e) Romania<br>f) Morocco  | regions       | short-form | On the whole, Lebanon was answered well, but there was considerable confusion between Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. The study notes contain a vast amount of information about these three regions and it should have been a problem deciding what to leave out rather than what to include. | 2010-11 pp 111 (fail v. distinction) |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type          | comments   | Example                                    |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------|--|--|
| June-06    | Select FOUR of the following cool climate regions and discuss the wines produced:<br>a) Casablanca Valley<br>b) Rias Baixas<br>c) Canterbury, New Zealand<br>d) Ontario<br>e) Walker Bay<br>f) Wachau  | regions       | short-form    | The key word here is <b>discuss</b> . This is not the same as “describe”, which is what the vast majority of candidates did. This question required the candidate to know what the wines of the four regions tasted like and to discuss why they taste the way they do. In other words, to identify the factors that influence the style of the wines of the regions in question. The other way in which candidates lost marks was in limiting their observations to one wine only from each region. This meant their responses were very one-dimensional. The question asks about the regions in general, not about specific wines, so for example, under Rias Baixas, the candidate should at least acknowledge the fact that the region does produce red wine as well as white.<br><br>The sections on Rias Baixas and Wachau generated the best responses, although a number of candidates confused Rias Baixas with Vinho Verde. Canterbury, Walker Bay and Ontario were the weakest sections and a number of candidates wrote about Chile in general terms rather than focusing on the Casablanca Valley in particular   |  |
| June-05    | With reference to rose wine, write a paragraph on EACH of the following:<br>a) California<br>b) Tavel<br>c) Navarra<br>d) Anjou<br>e) Portugal   | regions       | short-form    | For Portugal mentioning Mateus AND Lancers was vital. For California mentioning white zinfandel.   |  |
| January-05 | Write a paragraph on Pinot Noir from EACH of the following:<br>a) The Loire Valley<br>b) Germany<br>c) Italy<br>d) Romania<br>e) South Africa<br>f) Pommard  | regions       | short-form    | An understanding of the regions and the factors there that they have on the wine, the wines styles produced. Relevant information on method of production should have been covered. South Africa: identifying areas with the right climate to suit this variety – Overberg and Walker Bay where Hamilton Russell are having success. Pommard: where in Burgundy (Cote de Beaune); name of famous vineyards; typical yields thoughts on how these wines differ in style from those produced in other parts of Burgundy and any specific practises in terms of vinification.   |  |
| 2004       | Describe the climate of each of the following areas and explain how climatic factors determine the principle style(s) of light wines produced in each:<br>a) Valdepeñas, Spain<br>b) Willamette Valley, USA<br>c) Lower Hunter Valley, Australia<br>d) Barolo, Italy<br>e) Côte Rôtie, France<br>f) Casablanca Valley, Chile | regions       | short-form    | The six regions in this question were selected for the diversity of their climates – this meant that candidates needed to be able to differentiate between the various types. The previous question had already identified some clear weaknesses in this respect. However, this question required candidates to go beyond the simple “tags” such as continental, maritime etc, and it was clear in many instances that candidates had little understanding of the most obvious elements that determine climate – sunlight, temperature, rain, wind. Many also failed to address the issue of wine style or failed to grasp what “style” meant in this context – colour, ripeness, structure, acid, tannin, alcohol etc. Too many candidates did not read the question properly and included unnecessary or irrelevant information in their answers, such as soil and training methods. This was a question specifically on climate in isolation. Of course, it is a temptation under examination conditions to tell the examiner “everything you know” in the hope of extra marks. This is a waste of time. Marks are awarded only for information relevant to the question. | 2003-04 pp 23 (fail script and key points) |
| June-15    | Describe the following wines and discuss how factors in the vineyard and winery determine their character. (70% weighting)<br>a) Premium Stellenbosch Pinotage<br>b) Bulk Worcester Chenin Blanc<br><br>What advantages and disadvantages might the producers of these wines face in the marketplace? (30% weighting)        | South Africa  | open-response | It was possible to gain marks by applying general viticulture, vinification and commercial principles to South Africa, but the best responses targeted the issue of quality (premium versus bulk) to explore specific production factors in the two regions (Stellenbosch and Worcester).<br><br>Some candidates overlooked style entirely, despite being instructed to describe the wines. Without demonstrating an understanding of the two styles at the outset, it was impossible to answer the question convincingly. Some candidates forgot to address advantages or disadvantage at all or seemed unable to answer this part of the question as it required commercial awareness, application and original thought  |  |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                      | comments  | Example                                 |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| June-13    | Describe South Africa as a wine producing country with specific reference to:<br>a) Wine laws<br>b) Trade structure<br>c) Grape varieties<br><br>(Each section carries equal weighting)        | South Africa  | open-response/ short-form | Whilst most candidates were able to write knowledgeably about the grape varieties, some of them had very naïve views when it came to the politics and history of South Africa as a wine producing country and these come across when writing about wine laws, and more specifically, trade structure.   | 2012-13 pp 111 (distinction)            |
| June-11    | In relation to South Africa, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) WOSA<br>b) Climate<br>c) Groot Constantia<br>d) Durbanville<br>e) Syrah/Shiraz<br>f) Black Economic Empowerment | South Africa  | short-form                | WOSA was often mistaken for the wine of origin scheme and candidates who made this error gained no marks for this section. Also, Black Economic Empowerment was frequently confused with the principles of “fairtrade” which is not the same thing.<br><br>“climate” and “Syrah/Shiraz”. Both of these needed to relate specifically to wine production in South Africa, so any discussion of climate should have included reference to unique features such as the Benguela current and the “Cape Doctor” and the impact that these have on viticulture, as well as other significant climatic aspects.<br><br>The best responses described the increased success with the variety, discussed how it suits the climate and granite soils and explained where it performs best, giving examples of key producers. They also showed that they understood the significance of both synonyms in the question, and related this to the two very different styles of wine produced in South Africa from this variety   | 2010-11 pp 105 (pass -- close to merit) |
| June-08    | Describe the role of brands for the South African wine industry.<br><br>(an essay format is COMPULSORY for this question).   | South Africa  | essay                     | A number of candidates simply did not answer the question, instead they wrote an essay on South African wine – in some cases not even mentioning a single South African wine brand. Very few candidates actually bothered to define exactly what a brand is – fairly important if you are to discuss its role. Brands could have comprised: large-volume, inexpensive wine such as Kumala, Namaquo or Arniston Bay. They could also have included any non-generic name, including prestigious estates such as Rustenberg, Meerlust or Thelema. You could argue that “Pinotage” or “Stellebnoesch” might also count.   | 2007-08 pp 71 (pass)                    |
| January-06 | What are the advantages and disadvantages of South Africa as a wine producing country? (An essay format is NOT necessary for this question.)   | South Africa  | essay/open-response       | This was really quite a large subject with far more to consider than just viticulture and vinification. A good response was one that considered the following:<br><br><u>Advantages</u><br><b>Climate and weather</b> and the effect on vintages. Good candidates also mentioned some of the areas particularly valued for their mesoclimates such as Stellenbosch, Paarl and Walker Bay.<br><b>Soils and topography</b> – what are they, what effect do they have on wine quality?<br><b>Grape varieties</b> – which ones are being planted, where are they planted and why?<br><b>Viticulture/vinification/maturation</b> and the effect on wines produced. This should have included discussion of size of vineyards, availability of labour, availability of expertise, openness towards research and development etc.<br><b>Historical/cultural/social/financial issues</b> – these show commercial understanding, such as understanding of the importance of brands and price points but also the increase in small, boutique wineries.<br><br><u>Disadvantages</u><br><b>Climate</b> – not all good news, some areas are simply too hot and some marginal areas are planted simply to keep up with demand for wine irrespective of quality.<br><b>Grape varieties</b> – again, there is another side to the argument here – South Africa has greater potential for red wine but there are more white grapes planted than red, the most widely planted varieties (Pinotage and Chenin Blanc) are not generally highly regarded in export markets.<br><b>Viticulture/vinification/maturation</b> – what are the problems arising from the hang over from the apartheid years?<br><b>Historical/cultural/social/financial</b> – again, this shows commercial awareness, eg exchange rate issues, logistical issues due to location, cultural aspects associated with apartheid etc. |   |

| Date       | Question   | general topic     | type                | comments   | Example       |
|------------|--|-------------------|---------------------|--|---------------|
| June-10    | Using the maps provided, for EACH of the wines listed below, state the number which correctly locates the area of production, briefly describe the wine using the format of a tasting note, and comment briefly on the factors in the vineyard and in the winery that determine the style of the wine.<br><br>a) Walker Bay Pinot Noir<br>b) Durbanville Sauvignon Blanc<br>c) Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon<br>d) Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay<br><br>(two maps were provided: South Africa and California. See page 98 or ER) | South Africa/ USA | open-response       | Too many "generic" tasting notes based on grape varieties given without really knowing very much at all about the wines themselves.  |               |
| January-15 | Your business is planning to launch two new premium quality wines from South America: a Torrontés from Argentina and a Pinot Noir from Chile. Describe the wines you would be looking to buy. In each case, which winemaking region would you select and why?<br>(Each wine carries equal weighting)   | South America     | essay/open-response | Some candidates missed out on easy marks by failing to describe the wines, or doing so only in very generic terms rather than demonstrating an understanding that these were to be premium wines. In terms of winemaking regions, the majority of candidates wrote in general terms about where these varieties are grown rather than selecting regions on the basis of quality potential.<br><br>don't just list all the regions they are grown   | 2014-15 pp 47 |
| January-12 | In relation to wine production in South America, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br><br>a) Carmenère<br>b) El Niño<br>c) Coquimbo (Elqui and Limari Valley)<br>d) Bonarda<br>e) Joint Ventures<br>f) Brazil  | South America     | short-form          | Responses on El Niño were surprisingly poor. Many candidates did not understand that it is a weather pattern and not just an ocean current. As the question was in relation to South America, its impact on Chile and Argentina was expected, yet many candidates wrote about California and Australia instead or as well. Many candidates opted out of the section on Coquimbo, which is surprising considering how many white wines are appearing in the market from these regions. Weaker answers simply referred to general growing conditions in Chile rather than those specific to Coquimbo and there were also those who confused this with other regions further south. The section on joint ventures allowed some candidates to claw back some marks but very few candidates thought to explain what a joint venture is, why they are popular and what the participants gain from them. Many candidates simply mentioned foreign producers who have purchased properties in South America and were producing wine, but these were not examples of true joint ventures. |               |
| January-19 | With regard to the wines of Rías Baixas, describe the following:<br>a) Climate (15% weighting)<br>b) vineyard location (15% weighting)<br>c) grape growing (30% weighting)<br>d) winemaking (25% weighting)<br>e) commercial appeal (15% weighting)  | Spain             | short-form          |  |               |
| January-18 | Describe the wines produced in the following DOs with specific reference to grape varieties used, climate and soil:<br>a) Bierzo<br>b) Rueda<br>c) Ribera del Duero<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)  | Spain             | short-form          |  |               |
| January-16 | The quality of Spanish white wines has improved significantly. Discuss the progress made with reference to THREE Spanish white grape varieties.  | Spain             | essay/open-response |  |               |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                | comments   | Example                     |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| January-15 | Describe the regions of Priorat and Navarra with reference to:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Soil<br>c) Grape varieties<br>d) Viticulture<br>e) Wine styles.<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)   | Spain         | short-form          | There was evidence of fairly widespread confusion over the difference between a Mediterranean and a continental climate, with some candidates incorrectly assuming that any region located close to the Mediterranean sea must have a Mediterranean climate.   |                             |
| January-13 | Oak ageing is common in the red wines of Rioja. What are the oenological, cooperage and legal requirements/options for the production of red Reservas and Gran Reservas in this region? (70% weighting). From the perspective of producers and consumers, what are the advantages and disadvantages of these styles of wine? (30% weighting) | Spain         | essay/open-response | Many candidates simply wrote everything they knew about Rioja, ignoring the structure of the question.   | 2012-13 pp 100 (key points) |
| January-12 | With reference to climate, soil, grape variety(ies), viticulture and winemaking, discuss the WHITE wines of the following regions:<br><br>a) Rioja<br>b) Rueda<br>c) Rias Baixas<br><br>(Each section carries equal weighting)   | Spain         | open-response       | too many candidates simply described the wines, sometimes very briefly or incorrectly, and said very little to explain how the factors listed in the question come into play. This is a common feature of this type of question  |                             |
| January-11 | Describe the DO regions of Ribera del Duero, Rueda and Bierzo. Discuss how factors in the vineyard and winery account for the style and quality of wine produced in each of these regions. (Each region carries equal weighting)   | Spain         | essay/open-response | <p>candidates are able to write fairly credible tasting notes for the various wines, but are unable to explain convincingly why the wines taste the way they do, and this is what this question is all about. This is a classic example of the way the questions in the Diploma exam require candidates to apply both explanation and application in their answers rather than just factual recall in the form of the tasting note</p> <p>Candidates who answered the section on Bierzo well started out by explaining that this region is geographically close to Galicia but is protected from Atlantic influence by mountains. They were aware that this region is becoming increasingly fashionable as a producer of red, Rosado and white wines, many commanding premium prices. They described how vineyards are planted on gentle slopes at lower altitude than the other two regions, that the climate is not quite as continental with cooler summers and milder winters giving the wines a delicacy. They noted that soils are rich and fertile, containing slate and granite and that this is particularly suited to the grape variety of the region, Mencia. They explained how the character of this grape influences wine style, with specific reference to its herbaceous quality. They also wrote about the white grape of the region, Godello, describing its characteristics and how barrel fermentation and aging on the lees results in creamy, fruity wines that retain their freshness. They also wrote about fermentation and ageing of the red wines and how this differs from the other two regions, making specific reference to the need to retain fruit character and ensure that oak does not overpower the delicacy of the Mencia grape. All of this information was readily available and should have been covered during the learning and revision process, but this clearly was not the case in many instances.</p> |                             |
| June-09    | Describe how the factors in the vineyard and winery determine the style and quality of:<br><br>a) Priorat<br>b) Ribera del Duero<br>c) Valdepenas  | Spain         | open-response       | Valdepenas was the worst section. Far too many candidates simply stated what the factors in the vineyard and winery are, rather than explaining WHY these are significant in terms of determining wine style of quality  |                             |

| Date       | Question   | general topic   | type                | comments   | Example   |
|------------|--|-----------------|---------------------|--|---|
| June-08    | Describe the factors in the vineyard and winery that determine the style and quality of red Rioja.<br><br>What innovations have been made over the last thirty years?  | Spain           | essay/open-response | See Examiner Report for key points.  | 2007-08 pp 73 (key points)                                      |
| 2004       | "Rioja has been overtaken in quality by some of the emerging Spanish DO zones." Write a paragraph on each of five DO areas that support this statement. (Paragraph or essay format is acceptable for this question.)   | Spain           | essay/open-response | This was in essence a fairly straight-forward question – select five appropriate regions and describe examples of wines using the 7 factors as a guideline.<br><br>The question did not specify whether answers should have been limited to red wines only. Most candidates assumed that they should only address red wines, however, the question was deliberately left open to allow candidates to include white wines in their answer, providing they fitted the criteria regarding quality. This meant, for example, that Rueda was a potential valid contender in this context.<br><br>In spite of some very dubious choices of DO (La Mancha, Jumilla, Yecla), most candidates managed to cover the obvious contender – Ribero del Duero. Other options included:<br><br>Toro in Castille-Leon with their Tempranillo wines<br>Rueda also in Castille-Leon, and famous for its white wines from Marques de Riscal<br>Navarra, largely due to the work of the oenological research station EVENA<br>Somontano for its mix of new and old (Tempranillo and international varieties)<br>Penedes where Miguel Torres has achieved so much<br>Priorato where quality estates such as Rene Barbier are leading the way and to a lesser extent, Costers del Segre where Raimat have their experimental station. |   |
| June-07    | With reference to Spain and/or Portugal as appropriate, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following: (each paragraph carries equal marks)<br><br>a) Dão<br>b) White Rioja<br>c) Toro<br>d) Irrigation<br>e) DOCa<br>f) Monastrell                                     | Spain/ Portugal | short-form          | the examiner commented that many submissions were far too short – some with only a few lines on each paragraph. Some candidates also fell foul of the effect of not being able to answer all five sections well. Every year, this report warns candidates not to attempt this style of question unless they can confidently write a good paragraph (around 12 – 15 lines of text) on ALL FIVE sections.  | 2006-07 pp 41 (key points, fail and pass)                       |
| January-07 | With reference to Spain and/or Portugal as appropriate, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following: (each paragraph carries equal marks)<br><br>a) Tempranillo/Tinta Roriz<br>b) Bairrada<br>c) Reserva<br>d) Miguel Torres<br>e) Alvarinho/Albariño<br>f) La Mancha | Spain/ Portugal | short-form          | The essence of a good paragraph answer is plenty of relevant facts in clear, simple English, rather than opinion or argument. Leave these for the more discursive style essay questions. To do well in a paragraph question you need to get as many facts down as possible in a short space of time, making sure that you can provide sufficient facts for all sections of the question. You should aim for around 5 or 6 key points with explanatory detail for each paragraph. A paragraph should equate to roughly one third to half a page of average handwriting. Do not assume that you can gain enough marks by writing a great deal about a few subjects only  | 2006 - 07 pp 45 (high mark despite misreading part of question) |



| Date       | Question  | general topic    | type                | comments   | Example                              |
|------------|---|------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| January-14 | Describe the differences in wine production between Oregon and Washington with reference to the following factors:<br>a) Geography and climate (40% weighting)<br>b) Soils (10% weighting)<br>c) Grape varieties (30% weighting)<br>d) Industry structure (20% weighting) | USA              | essay/open-response | The section on soils appeared to be the result of largely guesswork for many candidates and many struggled to write anything meaningful under the heading "industry structure", simply naming key AVAs. This was not what was required here. The examination panel had selected this particular topic to evaluate whether or not candidates were commercially aware of the differences between these two regions with one managing to maintain a "farmhouse", estate grown, artisanal and almost "blue collar" feel whilst the other appears more "agro-industrial" with over three times the vineyard acreage.  |                                      |
| June-12    | With reference to the wines of Napa Valley and Central Valley (California), describe how geography, climate, winemaking and the marketplace influence production.<br><br>(Each region carries equal weighting)  | USA              | open-response       | Responses were better on Napa than the Central Valley with a number of candidates confusing the latter with the Central Coast. Candidates were also weaker at writing about the marketplace in these two regions.<br><br>These two regions were selected for this question specifically because they produce wines that differ so much in terms of style and quality level. Candidates who failed to make this clear in their response and were unable to explain the reasons for the difference through reference to geography, climate winemaking and the marketplace inevitably did not do well.  |                                      |
| June-07    | What causes California's climatic diversity? Select three wine regions in California that reflect this diversity and describe the climate of each. For each region, select two wines that are typical of the area and write a tasting note for each.                      | USA (California) | essay/open-response | Failure was often due to covering only two regions rather than three (and in some instances, only one was mentioned), or due to lack of detail on climate in the regions or weak tasting notes. In most instances, candidates ensured that their choice of regions and wines actually did reflect the diversity referred to in the question.<br><br>Ideally, the three regions selected should have been from different climatic zones. This meant that candidates could potentially either cover a single region from each of three broad areas e.g. North Central Coast (Zones I-III), Sierra Foothills Zones (III-V) and Central Valley Zones (IV-V) and achieve climatic diversity, or opt for smaller zones such as three areas from the North Coast Region e.g. Oakville AVA in Zone 1, Potter Valley in Zone 11 and Clear Lake AVA in Zone 111.<br><br>In general, far too many candidates launched straight into describing the three regions and the wines without paying enough attention to the first part of the question, ie looking at what causes the climatic diversity. These are largely latitude (this is an extensive region - 1,100km north to south), altitude and, probably most importantly, proximity to the Pacific Ocean (in areas where the current from the Pacific does not have any influence temperatures can reach 40°C or more). |                                      |
| January-11 | In relation to North America, write a paragraph on FIVE of the following:<br>a) Finger Lakes<br>b) Rutherford Bench<br>c) Willamette Valley<br>d) Cascade Mountains<br>e) Niagara Escarpment<br>f) Mayacamas Mountains  | USA/ Canada      | short-form          | It was answered by only 20 candidates (25% of the total) and these fell into two distinct camps, those who did so because they were knowledgeable about the topic (accounting for the high pass rate) and those who did so because they mistakenly believe paragraph questions are the "easier" option.  | 2010-11<br>pp92 (pass & sample fail) |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type                         | comments  | Example                    |
|------------|---|---------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| January-16 | <p>With reference to grape growing and winemaking, describe the method of production and resulting style of wine for each of the following:</p> <p>a) Mosel Riesling Kabinett<br/>b) Niagara Peninsula Icewine<br/>c) Pommard Premier Cru</p> <p>a) Rheingau Riesling Eiswein<br/>b) Rioja Tinto Gran Reserva<br/>c) Hunter Valley Semillon</p> <p>a) Hunter Valley Semillon<br/>b) Amarone della Valpolicella<br/>c) Mosel Riesling Kabinett</p> <p>(Variation based on region)</p>  | viti/vini     | open-response                |   |                            |
| June-13    | <p>Using your knowledge of the style of the two wines depicted below, describe them based on the following criteria:</p> <p>a) Climate<br/>b) Harvesting<br/>c) Vinification and maturation<br/>d) Resulting style of wine and target market</p> <p>Wines version 1: De Bortoli Noble One Botrytis Semillon / Chateau Ducla Entre Deux Mers<br/>Wines version 2: Chateau de la Roulerie Coteaux du Layon / Spice Route S African Chenin Blanc<br/>Wines version 3: Chateau Climens Barsac / Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon</p> | viti/vini     | open-response                | <p>The emphasis here was clearly on being able to explain why the two wines differed so much in terms of style and target market and this was done by highlighting the differences in terms of climate, harvesting, vinification and maturation.</p> <p>Each pair of wines generated problems.<br/>Version 1: Entre deux Mers had to be a white wine, since red wines produced in the Entre deux Mers are not permitted to be labelled under the Entre deux Mers AC, but are simply Bordeaux Rouge AC. Those who made this error inevitably failed.<br/>Version 3 was only answered well by those candidates who were familiar with the style of Tyrrell's Hunter Semillon. Many candidates simply described a generic Australian Semillon and their comments were therefore often incorrect.</p> |                            |
| June-12    | <p>What is the role of blending in the production of the following:</p> <p>a) Large volume branded Australian Chardonnay<br/>b) Sauternes 1er Cru Classé Grands Vins<br/>c) Red Rioja Gran Reserva</p>  | viti/vini     | open-response/<br>short-form | <p>Most candidates simply wrote everything they knew about the wines rather than focussing on the issues relating to blending. Many only considered the issue of blending of grape varieties rather than expanding their responses to include many of the other components of the blending process and only the best candidates made any attempt to link these components to the effect that they have on the wines produced. Far too often candidates simply described the wines rather than discussed them and this means that answers were superficial and missed many key points.</p>   | 2011-12 pp 135 (fail & ok) |

| Date    | Question  | general topic | type          | comments   | Example |
|---------|---|---------------|---------------|--|---------|
| June-11 | Describe the method of production and resulting style of wine for each of the following:<br>a) Rheingau Riesling Beerenauslese<br>b) Clare Valley Riesling<br>c) Niagara Peninsula Riesling Icewine                         | viti/vini     | open-response | In far too many instances, responses were superficial and very narrow in terms of scope for each wine – for example, in the case of the Beerenauslese, many only wrote about botrytis in the vineyard without considering the implications of this in the winery as well. Even more surprising was the lack of detail in terms of the icewine where many candidates went no further than mentioning the use of frozen grapes. Far too many scripts were presented in bullet point format. It is important that candidates understand that this is not acceptable in a qualification of this level.<br><br>The key word here is METHOD. It did not ask candidates to “describe the production of the wines”. There is a subtle difference between these two options and the majority of candidates failed to appreciate this. To answer this properly candidates needed to explain how these wines are made.<br><br>it was those candidates who focussed on the specifics of grape growing and winemaking who achieved pass grades or higher.   |         |
| June-05 | Describe THREE different methods of producing sweet or medium sweet wines. Then for each method select a wine and comment on:<br>a) Country/ region of production<br>b) Grape variety(ies)<br>c) Quality level              | viti/vini     | open-response | Two major pitfalls:<br>1) Starting with the second part of the question rather than the first, or completely ignoring this section<br>2) Either describing the wines selected in general terms, rather than the method of production, or selecting two wines made by the same method and thereby restricting their allocation of marks to two methods only on the grounds of repetition (choosing Sauternes and Tokaji)<br><br>Choices for methods:<br>Botryised grapes<br>Semi dried/passito grapes<br>Over-ripe/ late harvest grapes<br>Over-ripe frozen grapes<br>Addition of sussreserve   |         |
| 2004    | Botrytis cinerea helps to make great sweet wines in Sauternes and in Tokaj-Hegyalja. Describe the production techniques used in each region and the resulting wine styles. (An essay format is required for this question.) | viti/vini     | essay         | Those who did know about Tokaji, were not always aware of the current trend towards the new fruit driven styles – with the emphasis on non oxidative winemaking and shorter ageing. In the time available for each question (1/2 hour), the examiner expects about two sides of A4 paper, yet many scripts were barely one side or even less, resulting in an inadequate answer.<br><br>Tokaji was clearly a problem for many as reflected in the large number of candidates who failed this question. If able to locate production in Hungary (or more accurately the north east of the country) or cite the conditions required for noble rot, most were unaware of the slightly different conditions, were unable to name the rivers (Bodrog and Tisza) and struggled to list the relevant grape varieties (Furmint, Harslevelu and Muscat Lunel). Knowledge of the vinification method was at best sketchy. Although some candidates were aware that aszu berries are made into a paste, there were many versions of how this paste was used to make the different grades of Tokaji. As already discussed, the majority were unaware that things have moved on from the Communist era and that modern styles are non-oxidative.<br><br>Finally, many candidates failed to answer the second half of the question and did not describe the style of the wines produced. This lost them a sizeable portion of the marks allocated in the marking key |         |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                | comments   | Example                       |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| June-15    | Discuss the climate and choice of grape variety in FIVE of the following:<br>a) Aconcagua<br>b) Central Otago<br>c) Okanagan Valley<br>d) Salta<br>e) Clare Valley<br>f) Central Valley USA<br>(Each section carries equal weighting)  | Viticulture   | short-form          | Examiners expected candidates to go beyond identifying climate and grape varieties for each region to discuss why the climate there is the way it is and how/why certain grape varieties are suited to it. An understanding of cause and effect is expected at Diploma level.  |                               |
| January-10 | Discuss the factors to be considered when replanting and managing an existing vineyard for the production of:<br>a) Chablis Grand Cru<br>b) Inexpensive Central Valley Chilean Chardonnay  | viticulture   | essay/open-response | The question was about RE-PLANTING and EXISTING vineyard; therefore, site selection is not important for this question. Answers should have concerned: choice of rootstock, the task of balancing the vine, work in the vineyard, the issue of frost risk, the effect of sunlight, legal restrictions and precipitation.   | 2009-10 pp 78 (merit)         |
| January-08 | Describe the soils in FIVE of the following regions and discuss their importance in determining the styles of wine produced.<br>a) Alsace<br>b) Marlborough<br>c) The Douro<br>d) Mosel-Saar-Ruwer<br>e) Santorini<br>f) Touraine (Vouvray)  | Viticulture   | short-form          | Examiners were looking for around one third to half a page of text on each region. However, there is no point writing half a page if the content does not answer the question as set. Some, not knowing anything about soils, described the wines, which was not the question. Santorini was the weakest section and many chose to omit this.  | 2007-08 pp 64 (fail and pass) |
| 2004       | 2003 saw abnormal weather conditions in the Northern Hemisphere. Select FOUR of the following regions. For each, describe the weather conditions and explain the impact on the wines produced.<br>a) Chablis<br>b) California<br>c) England<br>d) Sicily<br>e) Pomerol<br>f) Austria | viticulture   | short-form          | There were a number of reasons for failure in this question. In the first instance, candidates were asked to write about FOUR regions only, not all six. The second problem, was that many candidates wrote about climate in general for each of the regions rather than specific conditions in 2003. Some assumed that the excessively hot weather in Europe, produced the same results in all European regions – this was, of course, far too simplistic. Finally, some, clearly clutching at straws, hoped (incorrectly) that all regions had experienced the same conditions. There would have been very little point in asking this question if this had been the case<br><br>Most candidates could give a good account of conditions in the UK and in Chablis, both experiencing spring frost followed by a long, hot summer. However, the impact on wine style and quality was not the same in the two regions, with the UK producing a small quantity of very good wines (particularly reds) and Chablis producing wines which were less typical in terms of traditional style, and not as long lived as cooler vintages – not a classically good vintage for Chablis. For more details see Examiners' Report pp 27-28 | 2003-04 pp 27-28 (key points) |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type          | comments  | Example                        |
|------------|---|---------------|---------------|---|--------------------------------|
| January-15 | Describe the wines below under the following headings:<br>a) Viticulture (30% weighting)<br>b) Vinification (30% weighting)<br>c) Resulting style of wine (20% weighting)<br>d) Target market (20% weighting)<br>Wine 1: Opus One 2004<br>Wine 2: [yellow tail] Chardonnay<br>Wine 3: Klein Constantia Sauvignon Blanc 2013   | wine styles   | open-response | While candidates were not expected to describe the exact viti/vini processes for each wine (though some did and were rewarded), they were expected to make logical deductions from the quality level and market position to draw out possible differences in winemaking/grape growing.<br><br>how might they all differ?<br><br>To do well in Section (d) (Target market), answers had to give an approximation of the wine's price point in a relevant market and address distribution channel as well as the type of consumer the wine is aimed at. Simply identifying Opus One as "Premium" or Yellow Tail as "entry-level" was insufficient.  |                                |
| January-14 | Explain how grape growing and winemaking determine the style of the following wines:<br><br>Version 1: Beaujolais Nouveau / Old Vine Barossa Valley Shiraz<br>Version 2: Beaujolais Nouveau / Barolo DOCG<br>Version 3: Inexpensive red Côtes du Rhône / Barolo DOCG  | wine styles   | short-form    | descriptions of the mechanics of semi or full carbonic maceration were extremely poor in a surprisingly large number of instances. Even where descriptions of the process were better, there was little in the way of discussion of how this determines wine style. In the case of the Côtes du Rhône, a considerable number of candidates failed to appreciate the significance of the words "inexpensive". This led them to describe the production of a "traditional" style Côtes du Rhône with maceration and oak ageing rather than one that was likely to have been produced in stainless steel or by semi carbonic maceration<br><br>Results for this and many other questions on the Unit 3 theory paper show that candidates would do well to build some form of revision for Unit 2 into their study plan for this examination.   |                                |
| June-13    | With reference to Rosé wine, write a paragraph on each of the following:<br><br>a) California<br>b) Tavel<br>c) Navarra<br>d) Anjou<br>e) Portugal  | wine styles   | short-form    | A surprisingly large number of candidates failed to mention Zinfandel at all when writing about rosé wine in California, despite the huge significance of this from a commercial point of view. Similarly, the two key brands that underpin rosé wine production in Portugal were often overlooked. Responses on Anjou tended to only mention one wine (Rosé d'Anjou) rather than the three wines which are covered by the AC in this sub-zone.   | 2012-13 pp 115 (good and fail) |
| January-13 | Explain how factors and work in the vineyard, combined with winemaking techniques, determine the style and quality of the following wines:<br><br>a) Cru Classé Saint-Estèphe<br>b) Niagara Peninsula Ice Wine<br>c) South East Australia Semillon Chardonnay blend<br><br>a) AC Bordeaux Rouge<br>b) Alsace Gewurztraminer Vendanges Tardives<br>c) Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc<br><br>a) Premier Grand Cru Classé St Emillion<br>b) Rheingau Riesling Eiswein<br>c) Napa Fumé Blanc | wine styles   | open-response | Scripts for all three variations of the question also showed a worrying lack of basic knowledge on vinification from many candidates.<br><br>Some of the fundamental errors encountered were as follows: Pressing red grapes prior to fermentation. Barrel fermenting red wines. Confusing Eiswein/Ice wine production with botrytised grape production.<br><br>many wrote about the Bordeaux region in general terms, listing all available soil types, districts and grape varieties rather than concentrating on the specific AC wine as defined in the question. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the AC Bordeaux Rouge where the inclusion of gravel soils and Cabernet Sauvignon had far less relevance. Comments relating to the Fumé Blanc were also often poor, with many candidates describing it as an inexpensive Sauvignon Blanc wine made using oak chips or essence and often with some residual sugar. |                                |

| Date       | Question  | general topic | type          | comments  | Example              |
|------------|---|---------------|---------------|---|----------------------|
| January-10 | Describe the two wines below under the following headings:<br>a) Climate and soil (24%)<br>b) Viticulture and grape variety(ies) (24%)<br>c) Vinification (24%)<br>d) Assessment of quality (16%)<br>e) Food combination (12%)<br><br>The two wines: Gundian Rias Baixas 2008 & Castillo Ygay Rioja Gran Reserva Especial Cosecha 1994) | wine styles   | open-response | Failing to structure responses to reflect the weighting in the various sections, such as writing far more on food and wine matching than any of the first three sections  |                      |
| January-09 | Your company sells a Grand Cru Gewurztraminer from Alsace, a Cotes de Provence Rose and an Argentinian Malbec. For each wine, describe its style and method of production.  | wine styles   | open-response | As often happens, candidates were able to describe the three different styles of wine, but struggled to come up with the detail that differentiates the production of each wine, simply writing vague descriptions referring to "stainless steel vinification" or use of "malo-lactic fermentation". The second part of this question was vital, as it demonstrated real understanding of the wines – for example not all of these wines will undergo mal. But the reason for blocking this is not always the same. One wine was in effect "hand crafted" and vinified to retain aromatics (GC Gewurtz), one was made by the saignee method, and the other used classic red wine techniques. This needed to form the basis of any response. |                      |
| June-08    | Describe the two RED wines below under the following headings:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Grape Variety(ies)<br>c) Harvesting<br>d) Maturation<br>e) Scale of production and resulting quality of wine.<br><br>Two wines: Mouton Cadet Bordeaux 2003 & Hermitage Domaine Jean-Louis Chave  | wine styles   | open-response | The danger with this type of question, is that candidates fail to pay close enough attention to the detail on the labels, simply describing the wine in generic terms rather than concentrating specially on the actual wines shown. This is particularly important from the point of view of vintages, producers and other small print that might have a bearing on the answer. Scale of production: MC 15 million bottles a year while Chave's much smaller production of 35,000-40,000; the exact numbers were not necessary, but the difference between the two is important. Chave: blends his wine from several "plots" with differing soils which results in wines with strong "terroir".  | 2007-08 pp 69 (fail) |
| January-08 | Select FOUR of the following wines and describe the production process for each.<br>a) Amarone della Valpolicella DOC<br>b) Beaujolais Nouveau AC<br>c) Monbazillac AC<br>d) Niagara Peninsula ice wine<br>e) Rioja Tinto Gran Reserva DOCa   | wine styles   | short-form    | This was a purely factual question, and to do well you needed to get down as many facts as possible in a short space of time, making sure that you provided sufficient content for all four options selected. There was no point therefore padding out responses with a tasting note for each wine. There was confusion between carbonic maceration and semi-carbonic maceration. Amarone was often confused with Repasso. Ageing requirements for Rioja Tinto Gran Reserva were also often incorrect.  |                      |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type                | comments   | Example                          |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| June-07    | Describe the two wines below under the following headings:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Harvesting<br>c) Vinification<br>d) Maturation  | wine styles   | open-response       | Two wines: Dr. Loosen 2002 Bernkasteler Lay Riesling Eiswein & Oremus Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos 2000<br><br>The danger with this type of question, is that candidates fail to pay close enough attention to the detail on the labels, simply describing the wine in generic terms rather than concentrating specifically on the actual wine shown. This is particularly important from the point of view of vintages, producers and other small print that might have a bearing on the answer.<br><br>In terms of climate, some candidates overstated the summer temperatures in the Mosel – it is not hot, the average July temperature is a warm 18°C. There was also some very poor knowledge regarding what is actually responsible for the development of noble rot in Tokaj-Hegyalja. It was of course the Bodrog and Tisza River.<br><br>When discussing ripening conditions for Eiswein, some candidates totally ignored the necessity of cold winters for this style of wine or forgot the importance of climate/temperature in terms of harvesting grapes when frozen. It was often unclear that it is the freezing of the water in the grapes that causes the concentration not just the late harvest.  |                                  |
| January-07 | Select FIVE still wines from Central and South-eastern Europe which demonstrate the breadth of styles and quality levels available from these countries. Describe the wines and give reasons for your choice. Your selection should include no more than two wines from any one country.<br><br>(It is not necessary to specify particular producers or vintages.) | wine styles   | essay/open-response | There were a number of reasons for failure here beyond brevity. Some candidates simply did not read the question properly and listed more than two wines from one country. In many instances, the wines selected did not illustrate sufficient breadth in styles and quality levels and very few indeed gave reasons for their selection beyond the most simplistic such as “good example of a mid priced wine”. There was a great deal of confusion concerning what qualifies as “central and south-eastern Europe”. Candidates who had studied their way through the suite of WSET qualifications should have been familiar with this concept (in simplistic terms meaning countries to the east of Germany).<br><br>Most candidates included Tokaji in their answer and in the majority of cases, this was described well. Other popular choices were Retsina from Greece, Grüner Veltliner from Austria, Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay from Bulgaria, Chasselas from Switzerland.   | 2006-07 pp 34 (borderling merit) |
| January-06 | Describe the two wines below under the following headings:<br>a) Climate<br>b) Viticulture<br>c) Vinification<br>d) Assessment of quality<br>e) Target market<br><br>Two wines: Carmen Pinot Noir 2004 Aconcagua Valley & Clos Vougeot Grand Cru Louis Jadot   | wine styles   | open-response       | There was also a tendency to generalise about the regions as a whole, rather than limiting comments to information specific to the wines depicted. For example, the Burgundy is a single vineyard, domaine bottled wine (as shown on the bottom of the label) and not therefore a negociant’s blend as many of Jadot’s other wines are. This is an important detail that should have been captured as it is particularly pertinent in terms of the assessment of quality. In many instances, scripts lacked detail, particularly in the important sections on viticulture and vinification. These sections should have included detail on issues such as soil, vine training, yields, possible problems (pests and diseases) and how these are managed, how wines are fermented, how and for how long they are matured, how they are prepared for bottling.<br><br>The target market for these two wines could not be more different. What candidates should aim to identify here is a likely price bracket for the wines (around £5-8 for the Chilean and £60+ for the Burgundy), the kind of people who would buy it (everyday drinking for the Carmen, premium market for the Jadot), with some explanation as to why they are appropriate for these two different markets. |                                  |
| June-05    | With reference to climate, grape variety(ies) and use of oak, describe the typical style of the following red wines:<br>a) Rioja Reserva DOCa<br>b) Douro DOC<br>c) Chiantic Classico DOCG   | wine styles   | open-response       | Few candidates were able to comment knowledgeably on the difference in climate in the three sub-zones in the Rioja region, and how these are reflected in the wines produced there. The examiner was looking for more than just Sangiovese is used in the blend. (percentages allowed if labelled, variable quality level, slow / late ripening; high acidity, high powdery tannins in cooler years; over-production accentuates the acidity; is blended with Canaiolo (softens and lightens the blend); Colorino (adds colour); Mammolo (provides aroma, esp. violets); Cabernet, etc to give longevity)<br><br>In terms of oak, the key points should have referred to type of oak, age and size of barrels (new or used) and length of time spent in oak.   |                                  |

| Date       | Question   | general topic | type          | comments  | Example                             |
|------------|--|---------------|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| January-05 | <p>With reference to the maps attached, answer the following.</p> <p>For EACH of the wines listed below, state the number which correctly locates the area of production, briefly describe the wine using the format of a tasting note, and comment briefly on the factors in the vineyard and in the winery that determine the style of the wine.</p> <p>a) Plovidv Cabernet Sauvignon DGO<br/> b) Egri Bikaver Minosegi Bor<br/> c) Weinviertel Gruner Veltliner DAC<br/> d) Rueda DO<br/> e) Dao DOC<br/> f) Ribera del Duero DO</p>  | wine styles   | open-response | When saying describe, be specific in the details of the factors (e.g., are yields high or low?) Name the grapes; specify winemaking techniques. |                                     |
| January-05 | <p>Using your knowledge of the style of the TWO wines depicted, compare and contrast them based on the following:</p> <p>a) Climate<br/> b) Viticulture<br/> c) Vinification<br/> d) Resulting style of wine<br/> e) Target market</p> <p>Two wines: Paul Anheuser Nahe 1989er Kreuznacher Krotenpfuhl Riesling Auslese &amp; Jacob's Creek Dry-Riesling 2003</p>  | wine styles   | open-response | Note the vintages; very few actually compared and contrasted the two wines  |                                     |
| 2004       | <p>With reference to the maps attached as Appendix A, answer the following.</p> <p>For each of the wines listed below, state the number which correctly locates the area of production, briefly describe the wine using the format of a tasting note, and comment briefly on the factors in the vineyard and in the winery that determine the style of the wine.</p> <p>a) Aglianico del Vulture DOC<br/> b) Orvieto Amabile DOC<br/> c) Dolcetto d'Alba DOC<br/> d) Dürkheimer Fronhof Scheurebe Spätlese QmP<br/> e) Rangen Riesling Grand Cru AC<br/> f) Bereich Kaiserstuhl Tuniberg Spätburgunder Trocken QbA</p> | wine styles   | short-form    |   | 2003-04 pp 29 (Pass & fail scripts) |