

WSET Level 4 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits®

APPEARANCE

Clarity/brightness	clear – hazy/bright – dull (faulty?)
Intensity	water-white – pale – medium – deep
Colour	colourless – lemon – gold – amber – mahogany – brown pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black
Other observations	e.g. louching

NOSE

Condition	clean – unclean (faulty?)
Intensity	neutral – light – medium – pronounced
Aroma characteristics	e.g. fruits, flowers, vegetables, grains, botanicals, herbs, oak, sweetness, other
Maturation	unaged – short-aged – matured – very aged

PALATE

Sweetness	dry – off-dry – sweet
Alcohol	soft – smooth – warming – harsh
Body	light – medium – full
Other observations	e.g. tannin, texture, other
Flavour intensity	neutral – light – medium – pronounced
Flavour characteristics	e.g. fruits, flowers, vegetables, grains, botanicals, herbs, oak, sweetness, other
Finish	<i>length</i> short – medium – long <i>nature</i> simple – some complexity – very complex

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

QUALITY

Assessment of quality	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding <i>then give reasons, assessing e.g. balance, finish, intensity, complexity, oak character, etc.</i>
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THE SPIRIT IN CONTEXT

Country and/or region of origin	<i>state the country and/or region of origin, giving reasons when required</i>
Raw material	<i>state the raw material, giving reasons when required</i>
Style within the category	<i>state the style within the category, giving reasons when required</i>
Method of production	<i>state the method of production, giving reasons when required</i>

Notes to students:

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

For lines where the entries are separated by commas, the entries are points to consider. You may not need to comment on each entry for every spirit.



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

AROMA AND FLAVOUR CHARACTERISTICS

FRUITY/FLORAL (ESTERY)

Citrus fruit	orange, tangerine, grapefruit, lemon, lime
Orchard fruit	apple, gooseberry, pear, apricot, peach, plum, red cherry, black cherry
Berry/currant	grape, strawberry, raspberry, redcurrant, blackcurrant, blackberry
Tropical fruit	banana, kiwi, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
Dried fruit	fig, prune, raisin, sultana, citrus peel, fruit cake
Flowers	elderflower, orange blossom, rose, violet, perfume, lavender, lilac, dried flowers

VEGETAL

Cereal	husk, porridge, barley, rye, linseed, malt, flour
Fresh vegetable	agave, bell pepper, mushroom, asparagus
Herbaceous	grass, hay, eucalyptus, blackcurrant leaf, wet leaves, conifer
Botanicals/herbs	juniper, coriander, basil, rosemary, thyme, sage, lemongrass, mint
Kernal	chocolate, coffee, hazelnut, almond, coconut, cashew

OAK/SWEETNESS/SPICE

Oak	toast, coffee, cedar, char, spice, sherry, sawdust
Sweetness	corn, vanilla, butterscotch, menthol, caramel, burnt sugar, toffee, molasses
Spice	anise, fennel, liquorice, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, cardamom, black/white pepper, cumin

OTHER

Peat (phenolic)	peat, medicinal, smoked fish, earthy, smoky, seaweed
Animal	leather, meaty, gravy, yeast extract
Rancio	fruit cake, candied fruits, mushroom, forest floor, polish
Solvent	pear drop, turpentine, paint, varnish
Feinty	wax, leather, biscuits, tobacco, cheese, sweat, plastic
Sulfur	rubber, spent matches, boiled cabbage, drains

Notes to students: The WSET Level 4 Spirits-Lexicon contains suggested descriptors for the aromas and flavours you may identify in a spirit. It is not exhaustive but gives examples of appropriate vocabulary to use in the Unit 4 examination.



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