

WSET Level 3 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits®

Appearance	
Intensity	water-white – pale – medium – deep – opaque
Colour	colourless – lemon – gold – amber – brown e.g. pink, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black
Other observations	louching: slightly hazy – cloudy and opaque other: e.g. particles
Nose	
Condition	clean – unclean
Aroma intensity	neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Aroma characteristics	e.g. raw materials, production, maturation, additions
Palate	
Sweetness (sugar level)	dry – off-dry – medium – sweet
Texture	e.g. alcoholic warmth, viscosity, feel, shape
Flavour intensity	neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Flavour characteristics	e.g. raw materials, production, maturation, additions
Finish length	short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long
Finish nature	neutral – simple – some complexity – very complex
Conclusions	
Quality criteria (building an argument)	Balance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the aromas in balance with each other?• Are the textures in balance with each other?• Are the aromas balanced with the textures? Expressiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the aromas seem well-defined or generic?• Do the textures seem well-defined or generic?• How do the aromas develop?• How do the textures develop?
Quality level	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding
Identity type	e.g. Scotch whisky, American whiskey, agave spirit
Identity category	e.g. Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Bourbon, Tequila

Notes to students:

- For lines where entries are separated by a hyphen: You must select only one of these options.
- For lines starting with 'e.g.': These are examples and you do not need to comment on each item.
- Texture: Describe the texture of the spirit in full sentences and record how it changes over time.



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WSET Level 3 Spirits-Lexicon

Supporting the WSET Level 3 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits®

Describing aroma and flavour

Raw materials	
Grains	sweetcorn, popcorn, cornbread malt, porridge/oatmeal, husk rye bread, zest, peppercorn
Sugar cane	grass, herbaceous, stalky molasses, caramel, candy floss (cotton candy)
Fruits	raisin, sultana, date, fig, blossom, elderflower, lavender, violet apple, pear, apricot, peach, raspberry, blackberry cherry, plum, marzipan, almond
Agave	agave, root vegetable, bell pepper (capsicum) jalapeño, herbaceous, peppercorn, olive
Production (up to the end of distillation)	
Smoke	bonfire, iodine, peat, seaweed, smoky
Fermentation	apple, pear, apricot, peach, banana, melon, mango, pineapple jasmine, geranium, lilac, rose, chocolate, coffee, pastry, hazelnut
Group 1 (high levels)	paint, solvent, varnish, vinegar
Group 3 (high levels)	cheese, feet, plastic, wax
Sulfur (high levels)	egg, drains, meaty, rubber, spent match, smoky
Maturation (wood and time)	
Wood	cedar, sawdust, toasted bread, char, pecan, Sherry vanilla, coconut, cinnamon, clove, nutmeg
Time	fruit cake, prune, leather, tobacco, cacao, coffee mushroom, earth, walnut, polish
Additions (post-distillation)	
Botanicals	juniper, coriander seed, cardamom, caraway lemon peel, lime peel, orange peel, ginger angelica root, orris root, cinnamon, clove liquorice, aniseed, fennel, mint, lemongrass basil, dill, rosemary, sage, thyme

Describing texture

Texture	
Alcoholic warmth	e.g. gentle, glowing, sharp, aggressive
Viscosity	e.g. watery, light, oily, mouth-coating
Feel	e.g. soft, coarse, silky, astringent
Shape	e.g. hollow, linear, angular, round, full

This lexicon is only a guide, and you do not need to memorise it. Examiners will also accept other accurate descriptors.



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