

Institute of Wines & Spirits

The IWS is a division of the WSET



Revision Techniques

Planning

Timetables

- Make it realistic
- Allow time to complete any coursework
- Include breaks for relaxation & leisure activities

Using Time Efficiently

- Know which time of the day you work most efficiently. It is no good trying to revise when you are tired.
- Study for approximately 45 minutes at a time then have a short break
- Set yourself a goal e.g. remembering the names and locations of the main regions within Bordeaux. Once you have achieved this you can take a break.

- Alternate between your strong and your weaker subjects

- Make a list of all the points that you need to revise and then tick them off as you accomplish them.

Making Revision Notes

- First read through your complete notes on the subject you are revising
- Condense all the key facts and figures onto 1 side of A4
- Transfer these onto index cards. Using different coloured pens, highlighting text or drawing pictures and symbols may help you to remember things more easily.
- Record the important points onto a tape and listen to them on the way to and from work (that is if you can stand the sound of your own voice!)
- Write down a list of questions as you prepare your revision notes then periodically test yourself in the time you have leading up to the exam.
- **Do past exam papers against the clock**

Active Revision NOT Passive

Passive revision simply means reading through your notes a few times, in general this is not a very effective means of revising as you will remember the facts at the time of reading your notes but you may find it difficult to recall the facts when you actually need them.

Active Revision techniques are used to ensure that you can recall the essential facts you will need in the exam. These include summarising your notes, writing out index cards, drawing mind maps and by testing yourself regularly.

Memory Techniques

There are several techniques that you can use, however you need to discover which one works best for you. Do you recall things easily by visual, auditory or physical prompts?

There are a number of systems that you can use, the following website lists a number of very helpful methods www.brainbox.co.uk
(URL: http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/A3_ASPECTS/pages/memory.htm)

During the Exam

Don't Panic

Stay confident

Ignore others around you especially if you have more than one exam and they are discussing the previous exam during a break.

Exam Paper

- Read all the instructions carefully and listen to the invigilator
- Know how many questions you have to answer.
On the Unit 3 Theory Paper – Question 1 is compulsory. In addition to this you are required to answer 4 other essays from a choice of 6 other questions. You have 3 hours to complete 5 questions so ensure that allocate enough time for each essay.
- Answer a question that you know you can answer well first, this will increase your confidence, and then choose one that is slightly more difficult.
- Highlight or underline key words, make sure you understand the question before you start to plan and write the essay.

Essay Plan

- Take a couple of minutes to write an essay plan. This will benefit you in two ways, first your essay will be more comprehensive, ensuring you do not forget to miss out important facts and secondly if you do run out of time the examiner will often award marks for correct points written in the essay plan.

Writing the Essay

- Write an answer to the question set and not something that you know about
- Be concise and stick to the point, marks are not awarded for irrelevant waffle
- Try and write as neatly and legibly as you can.

Reducing Stress

- It may sound obvious but preparing for the exam will make you more confident and calm your nerves.
- Organise yourself the night before the exam; know what you are going to wear, where the examination venue is and how long it will take you to get there. Ensure that you have pens, pencils, rubber, stapler as well as water and a spittoon if you are sitting a tasting exam.

At the end of the day, it is you who will benefit from all your work.

The following is an example of the basic information you should be focusing on for each section, in addition to which you should be reading around the subject to obtain a complete understanding of the region.

Bordeaux Key Facts

Location	South West France
Climate	Maritime – Effects on grape production & solutions to climatic problems
Weather	Information on the variable weather conditions and how they affect the grapes. Microclimate and influence on this eg aspect, sloping vineyards, water & trees.
Soils	Gravel - Médoc, Haut-Médoc & Graves Clay with Limestone Subsoil – Saint-Emilion & Pomerol Alluvial – Near river banks etc Attributes of different soils.
Commercially significant Grape Varieties	Black – Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec & Petit Verdot White – Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc & Muscadelle
Viticulture	High-density planting, yield limits, chemical treatments used on the vines throughout the year. Clonal selection and reasons for this..
Vineyard Management	Training and pruning techniques. Hazards to the vine including weather, pests, diseases and deficiencies, harvesting techniques (machine or hand) and the reasons behind using each method.
Vinification	Fermentation process for both red, white and sweet wines Fermentation vessels Use of oak and different methods of obtaining oak flavour Adjustments & Clarification Blending Maturation vessels & Ageing restrictions Treatments
Packaging	Container options eg glass, plastic, cans etc Closures – Cork, plastic, screwcap Quality assurance
Key Wines Left Bank	Médoc: Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Saint-Estèphe, Pauillac, Saint-Julien, Margaux, Moulis, Lustrac Graves: Graves, Pessac-Léognan Sauternes: Sauternes, Barsac Cérons
Key Wines Btw Garonne/ Dordogne	Entre-Deux-Mers, Premières Côtes de Bordeaux, Cadillac, Loupiac, Sainte-Croix-du-Mont
Key Wines Right Bank	Saint-Emilion: Saint-Emilion Grand Cru, Saint-Emilion Grands Cru Classés, Saint-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé, Saint-Emilion Satellites Pomerol, Lalande de Pomerol Côtes de Bourg, Premières Côtes de Blaye, Fronsac, Côtes de Castillon.
Classifications	Generic, District, Commune 1855 Classification of Médoc 1955 Classification of Saint-Emilion Cru Bourgeois and updates 1959 Classification of Graves
Other factors	Packaging, labelling, trade structure, role of negociants, domestic and export markets, en primeur sales, vintage variations, historical, political and cultural influences etc.

The sources used to produce this document were www.bbc.co.uk, www.brainboxx.co.uk, www.kingston.ac.uk and my own experience. However there are a number of other useful website and books that can also assist you in revision techniques.

GOOD LUCK