

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

D6, WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines



Assignment 1: January 2025 submission – Virginia

Context

Virginia's wine industry dates back to the early 17th century, but since the mid-1990s the number of wineries and production of wine has grown steadily. Producers are typically small businesses making high-quality wines from this diverse region. However, there are many challenges to wine production in Virginia, from climatic issues and disease pressure to the difficulties of selling wine from an up-and-coming region. The region's wines are rarely exported, although as production and reputation continue to grow this may start to change.

[See below for required sections and allocation of marks]

Instructions for candidates

- Assignments must adhere to the word count of 3,000 words. A tolerance of 10% will be allowed which means the research assignment should be no fewer than 2,700 words and no longer than 3,300 words in length. The word count excludes references, bibliography, appendices, diagrams or tables.
- Candidates must include a bibliography showing the sources used to research the topic.
- Candidates are reminded of the need to draw on a range of sources in their assignment and that it will be necessary to read around the subject matter. It will not be sufficient to rely solely on the Diploma materials. There should be clear evidence of critical analysis of the source material and well-reasoned personal commentary, together with relevant examples to support the points made.
- There are 100 marks available, of which 15 are allocated to presentation (spelling, grammar, legibility, bibliography and referencing) and answer structure/style (coherence, flair, fluency and use of examples). Footnotes, references and appendices must be used correctly. Candidates are advised to read the *D6 Independent Research Assignment Guidelines* before starting their research.
- Candidates must address all required sections and gain a minimum overall mark of 55% to qualify for a pass grade.

Required sections and allocation of marks

Candidates must address the following required sections:

- 1) Give a historical overview of how wine production in Virginia has developed to the present day.
(15% weighting)
- 2) Explore the environmental challenges faced by wine producers in Virginia. Discuss Virginia's different terroirs in your answer.
(40% weighting)
- 3) In your opinion, how can producers ensure that the Virginian wine industry continues to grow in the future?
(30% weighting)

15% weighting is allocated to presentation and structure, as outlined in Instructions for candidates above.