

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/01

Theory

Key messages

- Candidates should be taught the difference between 'fibres' and fabrics.
- It is important to read the instructions on the question paper – candidates are required to answer three questions, but some answered just two.

General comments

The standard of scripts varied as usual, from high to very low.

It is helpful when candidates complete the numbers of questions answered on the front cover of the examination script. Some candidates are still writing out the question before answering; it is recommended that key words could be highlighted but it is unnecessary to write out the whole question. Some answers gave irrelevant information as candidates had not read the question carefully enough.

The difference between 'fibres' and 'fabrics' is still confused by some candidates and at this level this terminology should be known.

A number of candidates did not attempt every part of a question and in other scripts, part questions were not answered together i.e. a question answered at the beginning of the examination had one part at the end of the script after other questions had been answered.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) (i) and (ii) This was mostly well answered with a good number of candidates gaining full marks although a few candidates stated, incorrectly, that cotton was a protein fibre.

(b) (i), (ii) and (iii) Answers varied from excellent to muddled, and a few answers gave information about fibres which were not listed in **(a)**. The most common choice was wool (protein) and polyester (synthetic). Some of the answers which gained high marks were detailed and explained reasons for the different performance characteristics very well.

(c) Candidates who gained marks in the high band were well informed and were able to relate the performance characteristics in **(a)** to fabric structures (such as woven, knitted or bonded fabrics). They gave specific examples and were able to explain points clearly.

Answers which gained only a few marks had muddled subject-specific terms such as the difference between 'fibres' and 'fabrics' or did not relate their answer to the fibres listed in part **(a)** of the question. A few answers talked about blending of fibres, which was not required in this question.

(d) Some candidates answered this well, and were able to give specific examples of fibre developments in detail. Common answers included micro-encapsulation, interactive fabrics and Lyocell.

Question 2

- (a) This was not well answered. Many scripts had muddled answers that mixed up knitting and weaving and used incorrect terminology. A few answers were very good and it was clear that the candidates had learned the work well. These scripts showed excellent sketches of the structure of knitted fabric. The position of knitting needles was not required to be shown in this question.
- (b) (i) and (ii) Answers to this question were at times muddled. Diagrams were not well labelled and were unclear.
- (c) (i) This was usually well answered and most candidates were able to give correct names of fabrics.
- (ii) This was also generally well answered with the best answers explaining in detail the reasons for differences in stretch and fibre composition.
- (d) This section was usually well attempted and types of yarns were well known.

Section B

Question 3

In general, this was not well answered although it was better answered than **Question 2**. There were some good sketches, but many scripts had small, poorly drawn sketches which were not well labelled. Better sketches had used the silhouette provided on the question paper, which was larger and allowed for more detail.

- (a) Answers varied and there were a few excellent sketches which showed an imaginative use of the architectural features. Many sketches were not labelled.
- (b) (i) This was usually well attempted although sketches were small or unlabelled. A few designs drawn had not been developed from (a) as asked for in the question or did not draw dresses as asked for in the question.
- (ii) Answers here were better and many candidates were able to score full marks.
- (c) The answers to this question varied, with a small number of very good answers which showed good knowledge of historical study of hemlines. Most answers were adequate or lacked detail. Some scripts did not make reference to specific examples of fashion designers as asked for in the question.

Question 4

This was the least popular question in Section B.

- (a) This part was usually well answered. A few answers were unfinished.
- (b) (i) This was very well answered and many scripts scored full marks.
- (ii) Answers which scored high marks had discussed the points well. There were, however, a large number of candidates who wrote a list of points which were not discussed so only a few marks could be awarded.
- (c) Usually this was well answered although a few candidates included 'hems' in the discussion, which was not correct as the question asked for joins and seams.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/02

Practical

Key messages

- To score well, candidates should demonstrate good planning and organisational skills, a high level of understanding of pattern adaptation/drafting and excellent sewing skills.
- Where the results were disappointing this was due mainly to a lack of planning and the choice of tasks set.

General comments

Centres would benefit from submitting the proposed garment for their Practical Examination to Cambridge prior to the examination date. This would solve any problems in the processes used and the mark schemes.

Candidates have shown tenacity and endurance when completing the practical exam to stringent time restrictions. Many Centres are struggling to provide enough expensive resources and can only be congratulated on achieving the results they do.

Comments on specific questions

1. Task Analysis and Planning

Candidates made various garments including skirts, Bermuda shorts and sleeveless tops.

Candidates showed very good knowledge of the necessary resources needed for completing the practical examination. Candidates would benefit in presenting their information as a listed table for the following:

- shopping lists
- choice of processes stating the techniques used and reasons for their choice
- production plans.

Shopping lists should include quantities and prices. Production plans need to show a breakdown of the time taken for each process and the total amount of time taken.

There was a colourful range of woven, textured and printed fabrics used such as linens, cottons, wool/cotton mixtures and stretch cotton. Candidates showed good knowledge of fibres and fabrics and how they perform.

2. Preparation

The pattern adaptations were suitable for this level of examination. Some Centres worked to their own blocks, but the majority used the New Look commercial patterns.

Candidates making their own clothing patterns showed aptitude and skill in drafting and pattern adaptation.

Candidates using the commercial paper patterns either drafted their own card patterns with the alterations or made adaptations onto the commercial pattern itself.

There were few sketches of cutting layouts and candidates should be encouraged to complete these.

Candidates showed competence in making garments fit them. Some Centres submitted two garments, one being the prototype to test the fit of their pattern making.

3. Implementation

- Seams

There were different types of seams used, namely plain seams with overlocked, edgestitched or zigzagged edges. French seams were used in the shorts. A lapped seam would have been more appropriate to give a flat strong finish.

- Disposal of fullness

Tucks, pleats, darts and gathering were generally well made.

- Yokes

These were styled as either cross over or straight across the chest with gathers or tucks. Yokes need to be self-faced to give a flat and professional finish. Neckline and armhole facings are not suitable with a yoke. Interfacing is not usually required if the yoke is self lined.

- Fastenings

Zip fasteners were a popular choice for most of the garments and there were interesting interpretations of inserting them into skirts and shorts, including decorative topstitched and tailored methods. Many zips with fly insertions were worked with the opening reversed from left to right. Many candidates found this method of zip application a challenging task. There was a predominance of dress zips used. Hooks and eyes were omitted from waistbands. Buttons and buttonholes were generally well made. Fabric loops and buttons were made to a good standard.

Waistbands on the whole were not completed or stitched appropriately. Machining (ditch stitching) would have been the most suitable method of finish. For the shorts many candidates stitched the left and right sides of the waistband the wrong way round.

- Pockets

Some Centres eliminated these at the pattern adaptation stage whereas others included side hip pockets. These were generally well made.

- Hems

Narrow machined hems on shorts were well made. Where there were curved and flared hemlines e.g. on skirts, candidates should have eased any fullness to enable the hem to lie flat. A narrower hem would have been more suitable.

- Finishing

Candidates showed good ability in topstitching e.g. on pleating. Most candidates were confident in pressing their garments and they presented them well.

4. Evaluation

Most candidates gave a good account of their strengths and weaknesses when completing the practical examination, showing knowledge and understanding of technical terms in Textiles.

Candidates were able to evaluate their time plans and how long it actually took them to complete the garments.

Many candidates stated which improvements they would make if given a second chance. Most enjoyed the Practical Examination and the opportunity to work to a set time.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/03

Textile Applications and Technology

Key messages

- It is important to read the instructions on the question paper – candidates are required to answer four questions, not three.
- Candidates should check the wording of the question carefully. Some candidates wrote what they knew about a subject, rather than selecting the specific information asked for in the question.

General comments

The standard of answers was good in general and candidates attempted the questions well. It was pleasing to see that candidates had been well prepared for this examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This was well answered and many candidates gained full marks.
- (b) This was adequately answered in most cases although the description of fabric finishes could have included more details to gain higher marks.
- (c) (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) Answers usually included a well labelled sketch and reasons were relevant with many candidates gaining full marks for one or more question parts. The weakest area was (ii) **fabrics**, as there was sometimes inaccurate information given for the fabric chosen. There were some variable answers for (iii) **safety** as some of the safety points given were not related to the outfit sketched earlier.

Question 2

- (a) The answers were generally good although a few candidates drew two separate sketches to show the application of colour on the wall-hanging, instead of including both methods on one item. Labelling varied and where specific details were given, higher marks were awarded.
- (b) (i) and (ii) were often well answered with a good number of candidates gaining full marks. There were some very good diagrams, the chosen techniques were well known and answers gave detailed information.
- (c) This was very well answered, particularly where candidates had drawn a table and given detailed information about width of fabric, diameter of buttons or other small components, width of trimmings and types of textile colouring materials used etc. Some answers were brief and omitted specific details about the items required.
- (d) There were some good answers to this part question with a number of scripts gaining full marks.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This was well answered and many scripts gained full marks.
- (b) (i), (ii) and (iii) There were some excellent answers with many candidates gaining high marks particularly when explanations were detailed and included diagrams of fibre structure.
- (c) Textured synthetic filament yarns were well known and the best answers included a good amount of relevant detail. A number of scripts gained high marks.
- (d) Knowledge of woven fabrics was good and again the best answers included a good level of relevant detail. A number of scripts gained high marks although some candidates gave a list of different types of decorative yarns, which is not what the question required.

Question 4

- (a) (i) This part was usually answered well although not all candidates used the silhouette provided.
 - (ii) This was also usually well answered with relevant choices being given.
 - (iii) This part was often not answered adequately. Frequently, candidates had not read the question carefully, as a list of general points was given which did not relate to the garment in the first part of the question. A detailed design specification for the garment in (a)(i) was required. The few candidates who had answered this appropriately scored good marks.
- (b) The answers to this part were better than for (a)(iii) and many candidates gave a detailed discussion gaining a good number of marks.

Question 5

This was the least popular question in **Section B**.

- (a) This part was usually well answered and many scripts gained full marks.
- (b) (i) Answers to this part were variable, some lacking detail and having diagrams which were not clear. The candidates who scored well showed a wide range of well labelled shaping on a range of dresses. The most common ways of shaping included darts, tucks, pleats, gathers etc. A number of candidates had not labelled their sketches.
 - (ii) This part was also very well answered with many candidates including detailed, accurate and well labelled sketches and gaining full marks for this section.
- (c) Some candidates had studied this topic well and there was some good discussion of environmental issues with many relevant points included. Weaker answers included a list of points without discussion or explanation.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/04

Coursework

Key Messages

- As always the standard of practical work was generally very high with garments especially, showing high level skills and excellent finish.
- Evaluation (Assessment Objective Four) was again a weak area for most candidates. To score high marks a detailed evaluation of both the task and the product is required.
- Many folders contained large quantities of samples and/or cut out pictures of research which were not accompanied by written evaluation of their worth to the project. Folders should contain approximately 3,000 words to get high marks.
- Each of the three projects submitted should demonstrate different practical skills. It is difficult to achieve this aim if candidates decide to make only garments.
- Design work should be the candidates' own original work. The use of copyrighted material (cartoon characters) should be avoided.
- Practical work must be carried out by the candidate and not a third party.

General comments

Candidates undertook a wide range of appropriate tasks suited to different abilities and interests. There were some beautifully presented folders with many showing excellent ICT skills with a general improvement in the written work this year. Candidates should ensure that all relevant work is included in their folders, as marks can only be awarded for work seen by the Examiner e.g. development of a paper pattern is often not found in the folder.

The practical work presented included some exceptional products demonstrating high levels of creativity and a wide range of textile skills including traditional textiles techniques. Some candidates spent excessive amounts of time completing large projects with repetitive techniques for which the marks awarded did not justify the time spent, e.g. block printing. A small number of candidates used inappropriate techniques not included in the syllabus and marks could not be awarded for this work.

Administration

Work was generally well presented, labelled and securely fastened together. The Individual Mark Sheets were all completed and many contained helpful comments from teachers.

The use, by many candidates, of digital photographs of finished products and by some candidates of work in progress, is helpful to the Examiner.

Most of the work presented was of an appropriate size to demonstrate the candidates' skills and to be easily transported with only a small number of Centres submitting work which was large, heavy or bulky. There was a pleasing reduction in the amount of work presented in individual decorated boxes this year; marks are not awarded for doing this. Candidates should not use glass or other breakable materials in their work.

Comments on Assessment Objectives

Research, Aims and Analysis

Almost all candidates made a simple statement of the aims of their project. Those candidates who included more detailed information, including the design targets for the task, received higher marks.

Many candidates provided interesting and thorough research on a chosen theme for their projects and research into existing products was carried out by some candidates. Some candidates could have achieved higher marks by going on to research the needs of the product user, product sizes etc. and by giving reasons for the choices made as a result of their research. All research should be analysed before writing a design specification. To obtain high marks for research, candidates should evaluate the relevance of the research to their own project. Questionnaires were used well by many candidates. Detailed analysis of the results of the questionnaires is needed to achieve a high mark.

Planning and Development

All candidates submitted some design proposals this year with some candidates producing an extensive range of designs and developments. Many candidates who used information from research effectively in their designs did not give reasons for their decisions leading to the choice of final design or went on to make something quite different.

A large proportion of candidates used samples of different textile techniques to demonstrate a wide range of textile skills. To gain high marks, samples of trial techniques should always relate to the designs and should be annotated with reasons for choices.

Few candidates offered a Design Specification. Detailed shopping lists were used by many candidates and generally demonstrated a good knowledge of materials.

Candidates should show more evidence of planning both at the beginning of the project and before the product is made. Candidates who demonstrated forward planning usually achieved higher marks. The small number of candidates who offered a time scale with their plan achieved the highest marks. Candidates should be aware that it is not expected that their plan will always be accurate. Marks are also gained for the ability to respond to unexpected changes in their plan and problems in completing work.

Process – Carrying out of the coursework tasks

The Examiner is guided by the teacher in marking this section and marks are judged against planning contained in the folder, annotations by the teacher and marks awarded by the teacher. Where teachers had provided detailed reasons for the mark given this was very helpful.

Realisation – Quality of the Outcome

Some very creative and original products were seen, demonstrating excellent skills, especially in fashion garments. A number of candidates made three similar products which did not show skills in different areas of the syllabus so did not achieve high marks. For example, if beading is a major part of one project, it should only feature in a minor way, if at all, in the other two projects.

Candidates should be discouraged from undertaking tasks requiring hours and hours of repetitive work which does not improve their mark. Gluing beads and fabrics together, or to wood, are not appropriate techniques for this syllabus. Wall hangings should be mainly stitched in some way.

Evaluation

Almost all folders showed that a lot of care had been taken in their production. The great majority of candidates could improve their marks for evaluation. The use of questionnaires to assess the views of consumers on the finished product is good practice but should not be regarded as a substitute for evaluation by the candidate.