

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/01
Fibres, Fabrics and Design

Key messages

Overall, candidates knowledge and understanding of fibres, fabrics and design was good and showed improvement.

Candidates seem to have a better overall understanding of natural fibres than synthetic fibres. They should be able to distinguish between a variety of different fabrics and understand their specific uses, e.g. brushed cotton is suitable for winter pyjamas.

Candidate's knowledge of blending fibres is good.

Candidate's knowledge of fashion revivals was good and they were able to give appropriate examples. Most knew why garments are pressed during construction.

Many candidates were able to describe one-off and mass production but were not always able to make comparisons. Those that did summarise achieved higher marks. A few candidates confused question 4d) with batch production.

General comments

In **Question 2(d)** many candidates discussed non-woven fabrics, however the question was concerned with choosing suitable fibres to make felt.

Candidates need to make sure that they refer back to the key words at the beginning of the questions, e.g. explain, discuss, compare, assess, evaluate. in order to ensure that their answers are relevant to the question posed. In **Question 3(d)** candidates tended to list the advantages of using CAD rather than evaluating them.

There was not as much evidence of candidates listing points and a number of candidates had summarised their answers which is evidence of very good practice.

Responses generally covered the range of items on the paper with few areas where a minority of candidates were unable to respond.

Candidates had answered the correct number of questions and the majority of questions had been attempted by all candidates. Candidates found **Question 1** the hardest.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i) Candidates were able to state how cotton fibres are obtained.
- (ii) Many candidates did not know how polyester fibres are obtained.
- (b) Candidates were able to describe how cotton fibres would appear if examined under a microscope, however their knowledge of polyester fibres was lesser than cotton.

- (c) Candidates tended to explain about absorbency in general, relating it to clothing, rather than thinking about more specific uses and fabrics such as towelling, sportswear, medical purposes, cleaning, etc.
- (d) This question was answered very well by candidates. They understood the question and their knowledge of fibres and fabrics was excellent. They were able to list the properties of both fibres and then evaluate the advantages of using them in a blend.

Question 2

- (a) (i) and (ii) Candidates had a better knowledge of satin fabrics and were able to describe the construction and appearance. They did not have such a good knowledge of Dobby cloth.
- (b) Many candidates were able to describe possible end uses and some made reference to Damask and Brocade fabrics.
- (c) Candidates had a good understanding of twill weave and wool fabrics and were able to evaluate their suitability for winter coats and jackets. Strong answers were seen where candidates were able to separate wool and twill weave and could explain the benefits of each.
- (d) Many candidates based their answer on non-woven fabrics rather than felt fabrics.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates answered this question well and there was evidence of originality and creativity in the design work. Some candidates had only designed the pyjama bottoms but they were not penalised for this. The fabric identified was often unsuitable for winter.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to describe what a fashion revival was and were able to give some examples.
- (c) Many candidates were aware of the fashion cycle and the five stages but did not always relate it to the question. The question was primarily concerned with fast fashion and consumers buying habits.
- (d) Candidates had a good knowledge of using CAD to design fabrics and were able to evaluate the advantages.

Question 4

- (a) This was answered quite well.
- (b) Most candidates explained why garments are lined and achieved marks in the high band.
- (c) Answers included good comparisons of the production methods and showed a good understanding of the question overall. Candidates need to be careful to compare rather than just describe the methods.
- (d) There was some misunderstanding seen with some candidates focusing their answer on describing batch production. Some of the points were repeated, e.g. storage, machinery, staff.

DESIGN & TEXTILES

<p>Paper 9631/02 Practical Test</p>

Key messages

- Candidates chose a variety of printed cotton fabrics. There was a good selection of plain, linen, and viscose fabrics.
- Centres need to focus on the skill of evaluation and how to evaluate correctly.
- Working Notes for the practical exam which had been annotated fully were very helpful for the marking of the exam. Thank you.

General comments

- Unused fabric should not be sent with the candidates' garments.
- There is no need to send in unused pattern pieces that candidates do not need, such as instructions and additional pieces not needed for the garment.
- Centres only need to submit one list or register of candidates entered for the practical examination.
- Centres do not need to send seating plans.

Comments on specific questions

Task Analysis and Planning

- (a) Candidates showed understanding of the tasks set by their centre. Within working notes candidates should explain which size they need to cut out, what measurements they have taken, and why these are important.
- (b) Most candidates fully stated the fabrics, accessories, and equipment needed to make their choice of garment.
- (c) Candidates need to state reasons to justify the choices made in fabric selection, including reference to the occasion when it will be worn. Reference should be made to the fabric's specific properties and why this makes the fabric suitable e.g. fibre, durability, comfort, and care.
- (d) Most candidates completed a time plan for their planning / implementation sections. When candidates completed this in detail it supported them well in their construction of their garment. It is a good idea if candidates refer to this plan to help them explain what problems and solutions they used to overcome the problems they had with timing and planning.

Preparation

- (a) Most candidates submitted paper patterns used. Some of these pattern pieces did not have any evidence of the alterations that they had made. Please ensure that candidates adjust and show evidence of pattern alteration. This can be done through sketches on working paper or physical adjustments on the paper pattern. Candidates who made an A line straight skirt with an inverted pleat produced very good card patterns.
- (b) Drawn diagrams of cutting layouts showed a good understanding of fabric usage and cutting on the straight-of-grain and the fold of the fabric. Candidates who drafted their own paper patterns showed a high standard of work.
- (c) The Working Notes for the practical exam which had been annotated regarding the testing & fit of the garment were very useful.

Implementation

- (a) Organisation and Time Management. Centres provided comments for the testing and fit of the garments. These were very helpful. Thank you.
- (b) Tasks. The tasks set varied, and the following garments were made:
- Sleeveless dress with asymmetrical opening on the front bodice and elasticated waist
 - A line straight skirt with an inverted pleat, inserted zip and facing.

Sleeveless dress – Front and Back Bodice

Preparation of back bodice pleats and yoke: most candidates did this successfully. Stitching of side and shoulder seams were mainly successfully completed and lined up correctly. Some of these seams were finished with a zig zag stitch. When using a zig zag stitch the stitching was at times too far away from the raw edges of the seam allowance leaving the edges to fray. Stitching of darts was very successful and were pressed correctly in most products.

Sleeveless dress – Neckline and Placket opening

This was the most challenging part of the construction of the dress. The range of skill shown here was varied. Most candidates were successful with the preparation of the plackets using interfacing to strengthen the placket. In some rare cases, the stitching of the plackets was stitched back to front. In the most successful pieces of work, necklines were well pressed and measured 1 cm around the edge exactly. Less successful pieces of work showed that candidates had struggled with not twisting the binding.

Sleeveless dress – Skirt

Overall, this was successfully completed by all candidates where they attached the bodice to the skirt. The elastic casing proved to be challenging for most. The casing was stitched at a variety of widths for the elastic and sometimes the elastic was twisted within the casing. There was a variety of neatening off the waist seam; when it was overlocked, it was very successful. Regarding the zigzag stitch, in some cases candidates did not do this on the edge of the seam. So, the seam frayed.

Sleeveless dress – fastening button and buttonhole.

There was evidence of this being done extremely well. However, some candidates struggled to get the correct buttonhole size for the button they have chosen. And some candidates put the button and buttonhole on the wrong way round. Some candidates did not complete this section of the exam at all, possibly because they did not have enough time.

Sleeveless dress – Finishing

Most candidates pressed the dress successfully and this improved the overall quality finish. Possibly due to not having enough time, a lot of candidates did not finish the hem at the bottom of the dress. Some candidates completely hemmed the dress, so they did not fully understand what was being asked of them.

A line straight skirt – seams

The stitching of side seams was mainly successfully completed and lined up correctly. All seams were pressed correctly. Overlocked seam allowances were neatened successfully.

A line straight skirt – pleats

Box pleats set into skirts were well set but the pleat widths varied at times.

A line straight skirt – facings

Facings on pleated skirts varied in finished width. Overall, a good standard was achieved. Not all candidates top stitched the facing in place on the waist edge. Some candidates did not finish the facing neatly on the zip edge.

A line straight skirt – Fastenings

Invisible zippers set into the pleated skirt tended to be successfully inserted.

Evaluation

Conclusion. Some candidates needed to produce a summary of their experience during the examination. Most Candidates did not refer to their planning sheet to explain problems & how they overcame them.

Findings. Some candidates discussed the achievements and difficulties that they experienced. Many candidates had realised where they had made mistakes and had to make adjustments.

Overall, candidates did explain the good points and where they had experienced problems. However, it is good practice to explain what caused these problems and how they could improve their product.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/03
Textile Applications and Technology

Key messages

Overall, candidate's knowledge and understanding of design and textiles is good.

In paper 3, candidates are expected to know a variety of different fabrics and their suitability for a range of activities or uses. They should be able to justify their choices of fabrics and relate their knowledge of fibres and fabrics to specific uses. **Question 4(b)** particularly highlighted this with candidates able to demonstrate their knowledge by listing different fabrics suitable for different styles of jackets and then explaining which type of closure would be best.

Candidates have a good overall understanding of fibres and fabrics. Candidates must not confuse yarns with threads as they are two separate topics on the syllabus.

Candidates have a good knowledge of creative effects achieved with fabric paints and how they can be used for home furnishings. They were able to describe different methods of hand embroidery and dyeing methods.

Many candidates understood about different production methods and were able to explain how a manufacturer would decide on the best one for producing fashion tops. Their knowledge of specifications was good.

Knowledge of environmental issues was very good, however the specific area of Eco-labels showed confusion with some candidates.

General comments

Candidates need to make sure that they refer back to the key words at the beginning of the questions e.g. explain, discuss, compare, assess, evaluate etc. in order to ensure that their answers are relevant to the question posed. In **Question 1(b)** candidates often listed fabric finishes but were not always able to assess their suitability for children's schoolwear.

There was some evidence of candidates planning their answers which resulted in a stronger response. It is a good idea to get thoughts quickly written down to outline an answer before writing the full response. This would have helped the candidates to focus more in **Question 3(a)**.

There was not as much evidence of candidates listing points and a number of candidates had summarised their answers which is evidence of very good practice.

Responses generally covered the range of items on the paper with few areas where a minority of candidates were unable to respond.

Candidates had answered the correct number of questions and the majority of questions had been attempted by all candidates. **Question 4** was popular with responses for **4(b)** showing evidence of some creative design sketches of different styles of jackets and a range of closures.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates answered this question well, and the majority of candidates gained full marks.
- (b) Some good answers, but a lot of candidates gave a list of fabric finishes. Candidates must make sure that the finishes are relevant to the subject content in the question e.g. children's schoolwear.
- (c) This was answered very well. Candidates have learned about the disposal of textile items in an environmentally responsible way.

Question 2

- (a) This was answered quite well by candidates, and most showed a good understanding of the production methods used for producing fashion tops.
- (b) Candidates knowledge of hand embroidery was very good and lots of answers included creative sketches to illustrate the answer. However, some candidates confused free machine stitching with CAM which is quite different.
- (c) There was some confusion again here, with some candidate's answers focused around yarns instead of threads. This is an example of a question that needs to be read carefully as the question does state 'when constructing fashion garments'.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This question was concerned with the importance of understanding colour theory when dyeing fabrics. However, candidates tended to get distracted from the main point of the question.
- (b) Candidates were able to compare a number of different effects that can be achieved with fabric paints and some had even done sketches to illustrate the answer. However, some candidates had listed resist dyeing techniques which was incorrect.

Question 4

- (a) This question was answered quite well.
- (b) This was answered well by the majority of candidates, with a good understanding of which closures are suitable for different styles of jackets. There were also some great sketches to illustrate the answers. Candidates were able to give examples of suitable fabrics for different styles of jackets and closures and really seemed to have a good understanding of this.

Question 5

- (a) Some candidates had a good understanding of what an Eco-label is and the importance of it, however quite a few candidates confused them with care labels, fair trade etc.
- (b) Candidates knowledge of dyeing was good and many were able to talk about natural and synthetic dyes very well. However, they need to make sure that they refer back to the key word 'evaluate' rather than simply writing down their knowledge.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/04
A Level Coursework

Key messages

- Ensure a photograph of the final responses are attached within the folder work.
- Lovely use of fabrics and decorative techniques employed to good effect.
- Consider the presentation of each page in terms of quantity of paper used. For example there are many cases where a page can be used for more than one piece of information. Think busy, creative, detailed and packed with information both visually and written.

General comments

- Toiles and pattern pieces are of course important elements of the project but if the weight and bulk of them is extreme it would be reasonable to use photographic evidence to support this rather than attach them to the back of the folders.
- There were a number of projects that evidenced very personal sets of research from visits to India, Madagascar, family heritage, zoo visits and deep sea diving to name but a few. These projects were lively, exciting and demonstrated a clear ownership by the candidate of their project and the enthusiasm and interest for the themes was great to see.
- Themes that took into account the world environment crisis was also apparent and well executed.
- One folder and one theme is advised. This saves on duplication and repetition of both folder and practical work which in turn helps with time management of all three products.
- A plan of work as a table or a Gantt chart works better than a list, it also supports those links and understanding to industrial practice.

ADMINISTRATION

- All folders and practical work continued to be labelled correctly and showed an established order of work.
- It was great to see that candidates had been much more careful this year not to distort any products with the attachment of labels which was great to see.
- Continue to consider the packaging and how many bags and pieces of tape are used.
- Ensure that each piece of work is labelled clearly with centre, candidate number and full name.

RESEARCH, AIMS and ANALYSIS

- Consider how many mood boards are needed to help create a foundation to the project.
- In some cases it may be helpful to consider a mood board for the theme and one for the product in order to help with ideas later on in the design process.
- It is unnecessary to create lots of written research on a particular technique it is much better timewise to bullet point the details but show practically with both worked sample and photographic evidence.
- It is clear that a rich and vibrant set of primary research coupled with strong themes are able to keep the momentum throughout the project and therefore access those higher marks.

PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure design ideas are more than just pencil drawings.
- Annotation of design ideas must be supported by clear annotation which gives another point of communication.
- Development should include colour choices and application of colour should be explicit. Appropriate rendering of ideas should be included.

- It is important to not make sweeping statements such as ‘design was fine or a certain technique has worked...’ but it is important to use photographic evidence to support the annotation of each process or activity.
- Development needs to include sampling of both decorative and construction techniques in order to create the right technique for the product.
- Structure and process need to work hand in hand therefore three squares of dyed fabric even when this part of the process has been executed very well cannot compare to a product with structure and shape. The comparison in terms of complexity are not equal and will not access those higher marks.

PROCESS –Carrying out the Coursework Tasks

- In the majority of projects a range of effectively and well implemented techniques and processes had taken place.
- It continued to be evident in some cases that the third product had not been given enough time to complete, it is imperative to plan the design and production of products carefully being mindful of time and resources as all products are of equal weighting.
- Some products were utterly delightful with intricate detail in both choice of fabrics and techniques.
- Choice of materials to include application of colour using paint or dyes needs to be explored and experimented carefully. The use of acrylic paint on fabric is not an appropriate medium and cause issues with drape of fabric and cracking of the paint surface.
- Ensure the inclusion of photographic evidence of the making of products alongside clear annotation which helps to make clear the making process.

REALISATION –QUALITY of the OUTCOME

- Many candidates demonstrated a range of marketable products that had clearly taken a lot of time and care to produce. Attention to detail both in construction, shape and embellishment were clear.
- Embellishment needs to be more than just a few beads and puff paint – it needs to enhance a quality product and support it being fit for purpose. Therefore, throughout the process continue to consider the target market and the environment that the product will be used in.

EVALUATION

- Evaluation continues to be extremely important and a reflective tool for each candidate but still has variable success.
- Reviewing and refining folder work continually will help to support the final evaluation.
- Consider strengths and weaknesses and how you would change certain parts of the project if you were to repeat the process.
- Always leave enough time to write a detailed and concise evaluation.
- The weighting of the evaluation includes the presentation of the folder so taking time to ensure work is collated and in order is important.