



**2013 Visual Communication Design GA 3: Examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 2013 Visual Communication Design examination was the first to reflect the new study design (2013–2017). The examination covered key knowledge and key skills that extended upon those covered in the sample examination. It is important to acknowledge that not all key knowledge and key skills will be assessed in every examination. The Visual Communication Design examination specifications and the study design both refer to the Technical Drawing Specifications Resource document, available on the VCAA website, that has been updated to reflect the new study design. Students should use this document when preparing for the examination.

Students who were awarded high marks

- were able to interpret what each question was asking and then respond appropriately to the question, addressing all details
- attempted all questions and were aware of the marks allocated to questions, carefully managing their time
- reflected their knowledge of the new study design’s key knowledge and key skills, including using relevant terminology from the new study design
- demonstrated a sound understanding of design elements and principles, and could use these to analyse and discuss visual communications, and to produce their own visual communications or design concepts
- showed understanding of the design process and drawing methods.

The following should be noted.

- Question 8 was framed differently in the 2013 examination. Many students were unprepared for this.
- Students need to be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the three design fields and the associated designers, drawing upon the knowledge gained and research completed during the year.
- Students should practise rendering objects using tone and texture to enhance form under time constraints. Similarly, it would be beneficial to practise developing design concepts for design-based questions or briefs.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

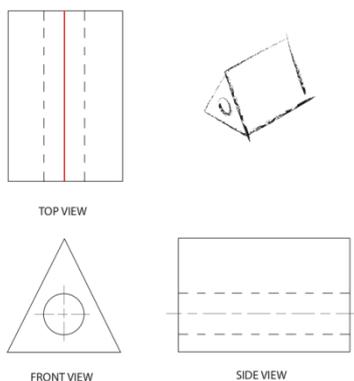
**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

**Question 1**

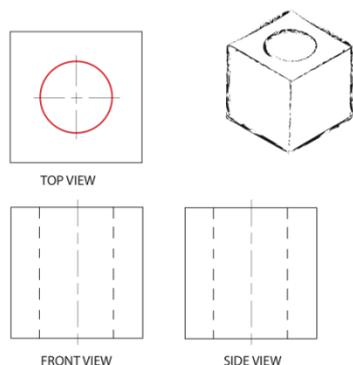
This question assessed technical drawing conventions for orthogonal drawings. Students were required to add the missing line for each drawing.

Drawing 1: Most students knew where to place the line. However, both an object line and a centre line could be placed in the same position. Students needed to know that the solid line took precedence over the centre line. There were students who inaccurately tried to show both by using different line weights and styles. Some included the solid line and then, in addition, placed finer lines outside the object to indicate the centre lines. This is not an ideal practice as it can confuse students’ understanding of conventions. The correct response is shown below.

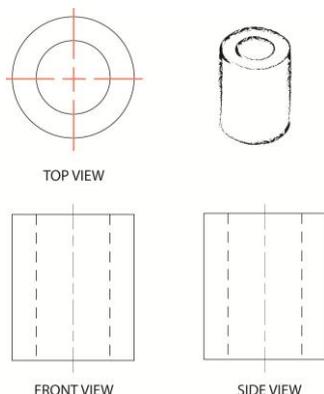




Drawing 2: Although answers completed in freehand were accepted, students needed to indicate the approximate size of the circle. The circle needed to be drawn in relation to the centre lines provided. This meant the circle needed to be placed within the centre lines as centre lines always go beyond the edge of a circle. The correct response is shown below.



Drawing 3: Most students attempted this part of the question. Most of the time a line was shown; however, there were problems with using the correct line style and convention. From the top view, two circles can be seen: the centre lines drawn needed to extend beyond both. The correct response is shown below.



## Question 2

This question assessed the characteristics and functions of the design principles of balance and hierarchy. To achieve full marks, students needed to use the required shapes to emphasise and show a clear and correct interpretation of the design principle. The first two parts of this question were related to balance and the key to a successful response was a student's understanding of the difference between a balanced and an unbalanced composition. Successful responses had the required shapes arranged in relation to an imaginary visual central axis.

Common errors included using incorrect shapes or shapes that were out of proportion. It was clear that many students did not read the question carefully, using the same shapes for all three questions. Some students wasted time trying to create a more decorative solution even though the question asked for freehand sketches, not polished presentation drawings.

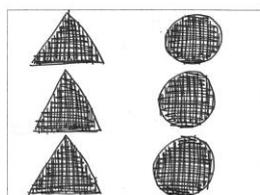
Shape pair 1: Asymmetrical balance had to be shown using the required shapes differently on either side of an imaginary axis. Demonstrating asymmetrical balance was a challenge for many students. Many students confused asymmetrical balance with unbalance.

Shape pair 2: Symmetrical balance had to be shown using the required shapes in a mirrored format on either side of an imaginary axis.

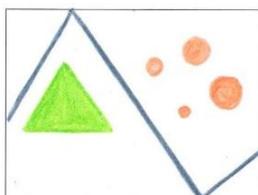


Shape pair 3: Students with high-scoring responses used an arrangement of the required shapes in a clear hierarchy.

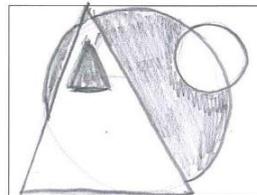
The following are high-scoring responses.



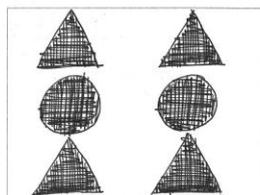
asymmetrical balance



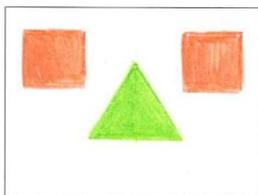
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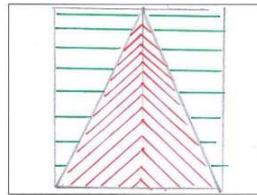
asymmetrical balance



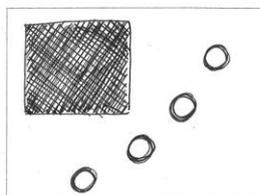
symmetrical balance



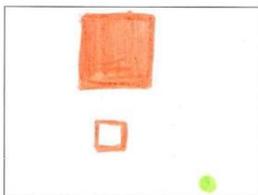
symmetrical balance



symmetrical balance



hierarchy



hierarchy



hierarchy

**Question 3a.**

All parts of Question 3 required students to demonstrate their knowledge of techniques for analysing visual communications. Students were required to discuss the effectiveness of the use of shape in a visual communication. Although balance is a principle in itself, other elements can be used to create balance. Many students described how the shapes of music-related imagery were used, but neglected to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of these. Students with successful responses identified the type of shapes used, musical instruments and notes, and how the shapes assisted in creating a portrait of a musician.

The following is a possible response: Shape has been used effectively to create a simple interpretation of a portrait using a combination of organic and geometric shapes. The shape of musical notes, guitar and harmonica (jack) are combined to describe the portrait of Bob Dylan in a clever composition of figure and ground.

**Question 3b.**

The focus of this question was on identifying specific characteristics of the possible target audience. To be awarded full marks, it was important that students identified specific characteristics such as ‘people who purchase art supplies’. Answers such as ‘age’ and ‘gender’ were too general. The explanation needed to include what in the visual communication led students to their opinion.

The image was of a postcard for Eckersley’s design competition, which would target those who shop at the store. Some students did not read the question carefully and discussed characteristics of the actual postcard rather than the target audience.



The following is a possible response.

Characteristic 1: Non-gender specific, between the ages of 16 and 30

Characteristic 2: People who purchase art and design materials and enter competitions.

Explanation: The image of the headphones is neither feminine nor masculine. The line drawing on the black background is contemporary and would appeal to the ages of 16–30. The bold, bright colours of the type (yellow, pink and blue) would be appealing to both genders and attract a younger audience. The unique typeface used for the word 'WIN' catches the eye and encourages us to read the rest of the text. The text informs us of the chance to win a design kit and headphones that directly targets a younger audience who have an interest in art materials. The suggestion of winning a set of headphones may also encourage younger people who enjoy listening to music.

### **Question 3c.**

Most students ticked the asymmetrical box; however, many struggled to then discuss how design elements and principles had been used to achieve asymmetrical balance in the visual communication. Often there were discussions on design principles, such as cropping and hierarchy, or design elements, such as colour and shape, with students not bringing their discussion back to the subject of balance. Students did not do well if they failed to link the elements and principles with the representation of balance. Some students took asymmetrical balance to mean that the design was unbalanced. Others spent time describing the layout but did not make the connection between the components on either side of the design that balanced each other and, therefore, created a visually balanced visual communication. This question required students to show an understanding of design thinking – why did the designer do it? – rather than simply stating what had been done.

The following is a possible response based on the selection of 'asymmetrical': The iTunes card is asymmetrically balanced with the shape of the figure weighted towards to the left-hand side of the card with an arm and leg reaching towards the right. The white cord leads our eye across the card to the contrasting white iPod and assists in counterbalancing the design. The bright blue ground on the right is more dominant than the more subdued colour in the ground on the left-hand side, which also assists in balancing the composition.

### **Question 3d.**

It is important that students have a clear understanding of what media, materials and methods are, as outlined in the new study design. Materials are the surfaces or substrates that visual communications are applied to or constructed from and media refers to the digital or non-digital applications used to make the visual communication. These concepts were often poorly understood.

Students often discussed materials such as thread, wool, string, cotton and clay (such as plasticine) but in the context of media. Clay could be described as a material if discussing its ability to be rolled out and embellished, which the designer may have done during the exploration of ideas. Weaving and sewing were the most common methods chosen.

The question required students to relate their choice of material and method to a design decision that the designer may have made during the design process. Again, this question asked students to show an understanding of design thinking – why might the designer have made the decision to choose a particular material and method?

Many explanations lacked depth and consisted only of a description of what the student saw rather than an explanation. The more successful students clearly related their nominated material and method to a stage in the design process that allowed them to be more articulate in explaining the relationship between their use and the design elements.



The following are possible responses for materials. Other possible choices for materials include paper, card, metal, plastic and textiles.

Material: clay (plasticine)

Explanation: The designer may have decided to use modelling clay to construct the word 'type'. Although the visual communication shows clay used as a media, clay may have been explored during the development of ideas by being rolled and manipulated easily into a word (like using metal to create type for a three-dimensional sign) and then photographed for further design work. Using clay has allowed a clever association with the actual construction process.

Material: fabric

Explanation: The word 'weave' appears to be sewn into the background, which suggests that the poster originated as an image of the fabric and elements have been added to complete the design. Furthermore, the fabric background creates texture.

The following are possible responses for methods. Other possible responses for methods may have included computer, photography, printing and drawing.

Method: 3D processes

Explanation: The designers may have incorporated a variety of 3D processes of construction and modelling. For example, they have constructed the word 'weave' through embroidery or stitching and modelled the word 'make' with clay in order to reflect the methods associated with these processes.

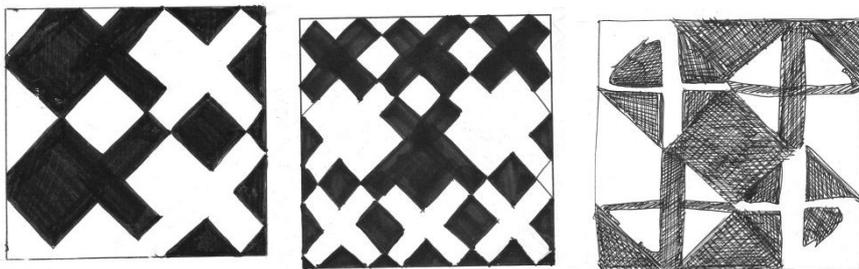
Method: printing

Explanation: To create a connection between the imagery and the type the designer has used a half-tone printing style in conjunction with figure-ground to emphasise the word 'print' and connect it to its actual function. For example, half-tone printing is common in newspaper imagery and connects to the history of print.

#### Question 4

This question examined a student's ability to apply design thinking skills when producing a composition that used specific design elements (including type) and principles. This question presented a challenge, with many students using the criteria as a checklist rather than thinking about design and creating an effective composition. The question allowed students to be open-minded, flexible, divergent, explorative and investigative in their approach. Students did not receive full marks if they did not create an equal distribution of figure and ground, repeat the letter X at least twice, and use black and white. Most students missed the key word in this question – composition – and did not consider that the design should be placed within the confines of square provided. It was pleasing to see students take the challenge and change the proportion, scale, orientation and typeface.

The following are possible responses.



#### Question 5

Most students attempted this question and were able to construct three views. As the views did not require dimensioning, students would have benefitted from using the 45° orthogonal angle method when drafting their views to help ensure that the views were aligned. Using the grid enabled students to save valuable time when drawing to scale. To be awarded full marks for each view, students needed to correctly draw all external, internal, hidden and centre lines accurately. Marks were awarded for including labels (centred and in upper case), the third-angle orthogonal drawing symbol and showing alignment.

Problems included the following.

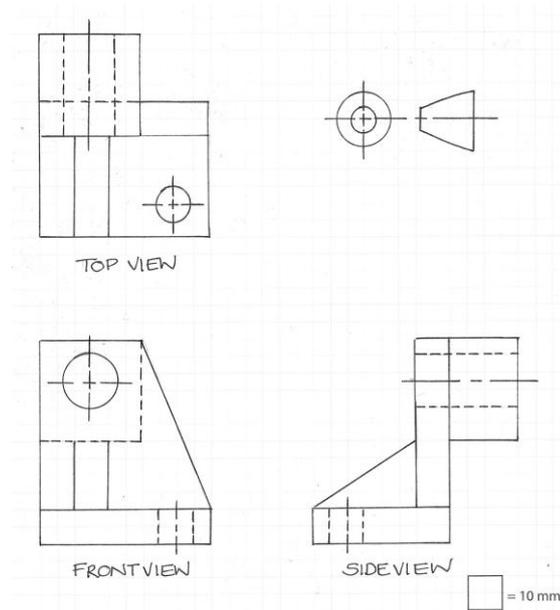
- unnecessary dimensioning, which wasted valuable time

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- not removing guidelines (students should remove their guidelines if they are of a similar weight to their outlines as these may be read as part of the drawing, affecting the clarity of a response)
- the hidden detail (horizontal dashed lines were the most common mistake on the front and top views, and many students had the hidden detail extending beyond the edge of their objects)
- centre lines not leaving the shape and the use of a dashed line instead of the chain line
- scale (the front and side views were sometimes too tall)

The correct response is shown below.



## Question 6

The majority of students correctly interpreted the light source. Marks were awarded for creating shadows cast onto the headphones and the ground. In general, students were able to show at least two textures, with better responses using at least two different textures from the resource book. As in previous years, the application of tone was a problem. Students need to understand how to apply tone in a correct and convincing way to describe an object's form.

Students with high-scoring responses addressed all of the criteria listed in the question and employed appropriate rendering techniques to represent tone and surface textures. They also demonstrated a skilful application of their chosen media.

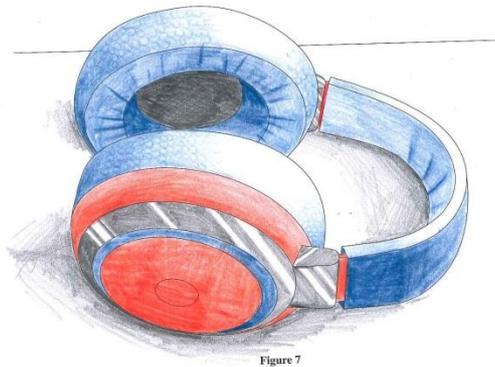
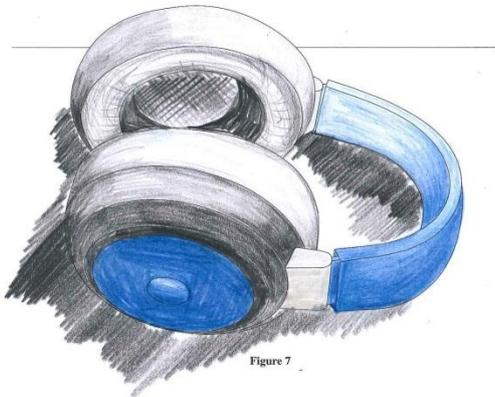
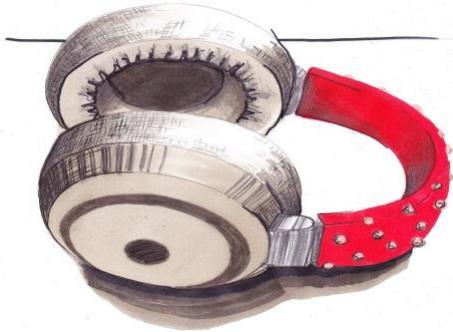
Problems included the following.

- incomplete rendering or rendering that appeared rushed
- not using the resource book
- not enough variation shown in tonal shading with some responses coloured in (flat)
- use of colour at times distracted from the tone, texture and form rather than enhanced them
- poor choice of media, which could not be used confidently to demonstrate rendering skills (the use of markers; a grey lead pencil can achieve highly effective results)

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The following are examples of possible responses.



## Question 7a.

This question assessed students' understanding of decisions made during the design and production of visual communications to fulfil a brief.

The inclusion of the requirement to indicate how the research had informed the given visual communication was crucial to obtaining full marks. Many students indicated where a resource may be found but could not meaningfully connect the resource to the visual communication and discuss how it may have been used as inspiration for generating ideas.

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The following is a possible response. Other examples may include vintage posters, geometric patterns/internet, Art Deco books, etc.

Resource: The Astor Theatre.

Discussion: StudioBrave may have taken photographs of the Astor Theatre to assist in researching the design features of Art Deco architecture. The photographs may then have been used as starting points in generating ideas on patterns as seen the background design of the design material.

## Question 7b.

It appears that students still do not know what media refers to. A common mistake was identifying the computer as a form of media instead of digital applications. Students could have received marks for their description if they discussed digital applications such vector and raster computer programs. Using the correct terminology to describe the stages in the design process was a challenge for many students, yet the design process is an integral part of the study and would be used extensively throughout Unit 4. Students should be able to identify all stages of the design process, and have a firm knowledge and understanding of it. The best responses discussed the use of pencil in the generation of ideas stage and then went on to describe how these were developed. Other good responses referred to digital applications in the development of concepts or refinement stages, followed by appropriate descriptions.

The following is a possible response.

Media: markers

Stage: generation of ideas

Description: The designers at StudioBrave may have used markers to assist in the generation of their initial ideas.

Markers allow for a quick and fluid way to get ideas onto paper and can be combined with fineliner and pencil to create detailed results. Using a fast working media such as markers means that a designer can work quickly to keep up with their ideas and trial concepts quickly.

## Question 7c.

Students found it difficult to distinguish between scale and proportion, with many students saying that scale and proportion were evident, but then discussing only scale. Many students went off-topic when answering this question and discussed other design principles, such as hierarchy. A designer may choose to maintain proportion within a visual communication (such as the proportion of imagery to text) so that there is consistency in branding if the designer chooses to drastically alter the scale, cropping and hierarchy when applying the concept to a different format and context. Key components in a visual communication may need to be cropped/scaled up, formatted differently and balanced differently to respect the purpose and needs of that format and context, but if proportion is significantly altered, then consistency in communication may be compromised.

The following is a possible response: The designer would have needed to take into consideration both scale and proportion during the production of the street banner and website. The image of the cat and the selected typeface needed to work at different scales (to be easily interpreted from a distance in the street and yet still work on a screen). Although the image of the cat has been cropped it still maintains realistic proportions so that it can be identified. The proportion of the cat to the text on the website is different from the street banner, because more information is placed on the website. The designer would need to understand the impact of large-scale printing on the selection of appropriate materials and the size and resolution of file sizes.

## Question 7d.

This question examined students' knowledge of terminology from the new study design. Based on the responses, it is clear that students do not know the difference between industrial, communication and environmental design. Some students confused environmental design with sustainability issues. The term 'design specialist' was also confused with a specialist such as a project manager or printer.

This question asked students to draw upon their knowledge of the

- roles and responsibilities of designers, specialists and clients in the design and production of visual communications
- the distinguishing characteristics of different design fields
- the processes and practices used for collaboration between designers, specialists and clients.

If a student identified a designer from one of the accepted design fields, they usually gave a good description of this designer's possible contribution to the campaign. However, many students wrote about graphic designers, including the

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designer who created the St Kilda Film Festival imagery – Elise Lampe. Other students wrote about improbable scenarios, such as architects assisting in hanging the street banner, or suggested that internationally renowned industrial designer Marc Newson may have been involved.

The following is a possible response.

Design field: Select either environmental or industrial

Designer: A designer that relates to the selected field of design (Industrial design can include product designer, furniture designer, engineer, an industrial designer, fashion designer. Environmental design can include architect, interior designer, landscape designer, set and exhibition/display designer)

Description

- An industrial designer may produce a range of specially designed crockery or drinkware for the exhibition opening. The range may then have the imagery produced by StudioBrave printed onto it.
- An industrial designer may have been involved in the design of a hanging mechanism for the street banner.
- A product designer may be responsible for designing a range of packaging for takeaway food (based upon geometric shapes to relate to the geometric patterns created by StudioBrave).
- A fashion designer may have designed a unique garment such as a long-sleeved top or jacket for the theatre/festival staff that incorporates elements of the Art Deco fashion period. StudioBrave may then have had their imagery printed onto the garments.
- A set designer or exhibition/display designer may be responsible for creating a three-dimensional scene in the foyer of the theatre for opening night. The design may need to include similar colour schemes, perhaps the cat, or incorporate geometric forms that relate to the work of StudioBrave.
- A landscape designer may have designed and created an outdoor theatre space for some of the festival's screenings. They may have been asked to incorporate Art Deco design features or aspects of the film festival's design material such as a blue and gold colour scheme.

## Question 8a.

This question assessed students' knowledge of Unit 3, Outcome 3, and Unit 4, Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

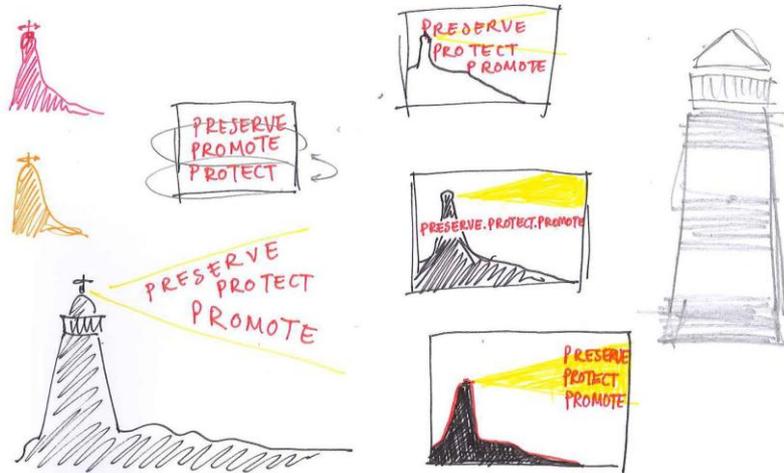
It appears that students did not take care when reading this question, as many did not produce a range of visualisation drawings for each concept. Successful students included a range of visualisation drawings, sometimes with annotations that clearly documented their application of design thinking. To receive full marks, students needed to ensure that their ideas were generated from the research provided and that the two concepts were different. It should be noted that visualisation drawings are not final presentations. Polished sketches, with colour and deliberate application of media, were not required.

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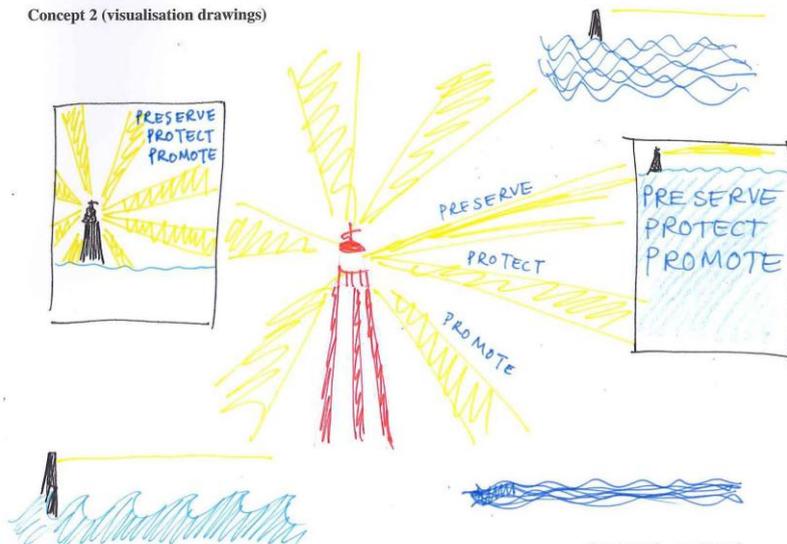


The following are possible responses.

Concept 1 (visualisation drawings)



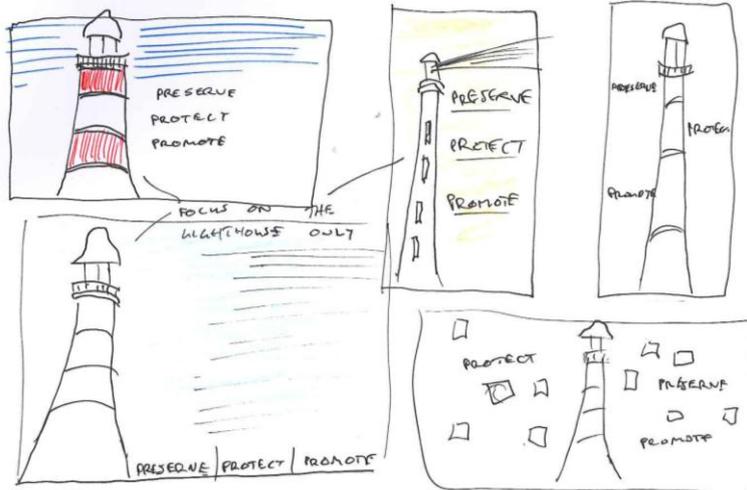
Concept 2 (visualisation drawings)



Question 8 – continued  
TURN OVER



Concept 1 (visualisation drawings)



Concept 2 (visualisation drawings) \*USE OF SHAPE!



Question 8 – continued  
TURN OVER

**Question 8b.**

Students needed to select one of their concepts and evaluate the effectiveness of this concept in meeting the requirements of the brief. The evaluation needed to highlight the reasons for the student’s choice of this concept. Students should have discussed the use of imagery, shape, colour, type, required text and figure-ground. However, many students just rewrote the design brief.

The following is a possible response: The use of the geometric shapes in concept 2 represents the light beams coming from the lighthouse and is used to assist in creating a hierarchy. Placing the three required words within the light beams allows them to be easily read and breaks up the negative space (the ground). The strong use of both shape and colour allows the lighthouse to dominate, providing instant recognition of the theme. Simple yet strong imagery works well for the small scale of a postcard.

**Question 8c.**

High-scoring responses addressed all the criteria and included the required words, ‘preserve’, ‘protect’ and ‘promote’. Correct spelling was mandatory as any final presentation must be accountable to a client or a brief.

Students used both portrait and landscape orientations, and referred to the resource book for imagery. Two marks were awarded for an effective use of figure-ground. Most responses included the use of figure-ground, but few students applied it deliberately and effectively. There were some students who used form without any application of shape.

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The following are possible responses.



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## Question 8d.

This was an opportunity for students to 'pitch' their design. Few students were able to provide a thorough explanation of the ways in which their final design met the requirements of the brief. Students with high-scoring responses explained how their final design was able to address the purpose and context of the requirements of the brief. Rewriting Question 8 was not necessary.

The following is a possible response: The use of strong colour and simple shapes assists in communicating the theme for a small presentation format (more is less for this visual communication). The incorporation of the light beams allows the required text to stand out and make the figure-ground relationship more interesting on the postcard that will assist in attracting a higher profile for the organisation.