

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/01 Fibres, Fabrics and Design

Key Messages

- When answering questions candidates should relate their knowledge to the question. For example in **2(d)** the answer should include only those properties of fabrics which would be factors in deciding whether they should be chosen for outdoor clothing.
- A good understanding and knowledge of the properties and names of both fibres and fabrics is needed at this level.

General Comments

Scripts were generally neatly written and easy to read. A number of candidates did not attempt every part of a question and in some scripts answers to questions were split with part of the answer at the beginning of the answer booklet and the rest at the end of the script after other questions had been answered.

It is not necessary for candidates to write out the whole question before their answers. Candidates could, instead, highlight key words on the question paper if they find this helpful. Some answers contained irrelevant information because candidates had not read the question carefully enough. Fibres and fabrics are still confused by some candidates and candidates should know the names of a range of fabrics.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i) Almost all candidates answered correctly
- (ii) Not as well answered as (i) with some candidates giving petroleum and chemicals as a response.
- (b) (i) Candidates found the question more difficult, although some candidates who did not know the exact answer adopted a logical approach by considering results for natural fibres generally.
- (ii) This question was generally well answered by candidates.
- (c) Candidates showed a good understanding of the similarities between silk and viscose and of how viscose was developed as a silk substitute.
- (d) Most candidates were able to describe the three basic weaves, satin, plain and twill but few offered named fabrics. Many responses were repetitive and focused almost entirely on the differences in strength and absorbency between the three weave types. Knowledge of the properties of satin weave was more detailed.

Question 2

- (a) This question was generally well answered. A small number of candidates responded incorrectly with names of other fibres such as nylon or linen.
- (b) The majority of answers gave good clear information about the performance characteristics of the chosen fabrics. Candidates were less successful in saying how the characteristics would affect the choice of style in a fashion item.
- (c) This question was answered well with most candidates showing some understanding of the three different weaves. Diagrams were generally accurate.
- (d) Most answers focused on the performance properties of the fabric with few candidates considering the target market and function. Candidates should be taught to write their answers in a logical manner and avoid repeating sections of their answers in an attempt to gain extra marks.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates showed they understood the concept of functional design but few were able to give sufficient detail for full marks.
- (b)(i) Designs were generally very basic and untidy showing little detail of colour, size or techniques. Candidates should be reminded to read the question carefully as those who did not designed a garment instead of a wall hanging.
- (ii) Candidates need to ensure that they fully answer the question set as many answers approached this question in a basic way. Some candidates' responses were limited by their poor designs in part (i) of the question.
- (c) Responses were generally confined to comments about giving texture to the design. Candidates who had made thoughtful choices of fabrics for their design were able to justify their choices more easily.
- (d) Answers to this question mainly gave details of sources of historical and cultural inspiration but did not often go on to say how they could be used to develop designs. Some candidates described traditional garments but did not say how they could be used in developing designs for other textile items.

Question 4

This was the more popular of the two questions in **Section B**.

- (a)(i) This question seemed well understood by candidates.
- (ii) Most candidates showed a good understanding of mass production.
- (iii) This question was answered very well with candidates showing a solid understanding of production methods.
- (c) Most candidates described a range of seams and showed that they understood that the type of fabric and type of clothing influence the choice of seam. Few candidates considered production and commercial constraints.
- (d) Some candidates generally did not suggest finishing of garments at the end of production but concentrated incorrectly on methods of finishing seams and hems and therefore did not gain full marks.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/02

Practical Test

Key Messages

- When using a commercial paper pattern, adaptations and alterations need to include a genuine alteration or additional styling, which are not optional views provided in the purchased commercial pattern.
- Centres should adhere to one choice of alteration or adaptation for the whole examination group.
- Candidates benefit from receiving well labelled diagrams which should include the front and back views of the intended adaptation or alteration. The diagrams should show how the finished garment looks on completion.

General Comments

- A variety of successful garments were made, e.g. pullover tops with flounces, skirts with yokes and hip pockets, shirts with collars and sleeves.
- Many of the fabrics used were very difficult to handle e.g. georgette. Candidates experienced problems in completing their garments.
- Candidates are still using hand sewing methods where machining would produce a faster and more professional finish e.g. a narrow machined hem.
- Additional heavy folders with samples and design work are not needed for the practical exam and carry no extra marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 Task Analysis and Planning

(a) Analysis of task

The majority of candidates clearly understood the pattern alterations and sewing processes needed to complete the examination. Most Centres have provided clear diagrams with their instructions for the candidates. Name labels have been stitched on either by hand or machine. Some Centres pinned the labels on which is not advised for health and safety reasons. The practical test task sheet and candidates written examinations should be submitted together with the practical work for assessment.

(b) Planning of requirements

There were good shopping lists made. The best ones were listed in table format, with quantities and prices. Resources refers to the equipment available and which is needed for the examination such as a sewing machine. Components or notions are the items needed to complete a garment such as a zip, thread and buttons.

(c) Justification of choice

Candidates need to justify the choices made when purchasing their fabrics and notions. Marks are awarded for showing knowledge of fabric and fibre properties, availability of notions in relation to their design and their suitability for purpose. Answers mainly focused on personal colour preferences or colour symbolism.

Question 2 Preparation

(a) Alteration to pattern

Centres need to make sure that the alteration or adaptation is suitable for the examination prior to the exam. Candidates using a commercial paper pattern and using an existing pattern piece from a different view are not making any valid adaptation or alteration to the pattern pieces. Addition of fastenings is not a pattern alteration or adaptation.

Adaptations using commercial patterns included:

- (i) Additional skirt pockets at the waist or hip, where the pocket bags were drafted.

The slanted pockets were well made with seam allowances incorporated into the waist and side seams.

The hip pockets varied in size and shape and some needed more shaping and extended seam allowances at the opening.

- (ii) Changing the skirt style from a straight, or A-line style, to a full gathered skirt set into a faced yoke.

Candidates understood dart suppression well.

The skirt pattern piece needed to be split vertically into sections so as to insert more fullness for the gathers, as opposed to adding the fullness onto the Centre Front and Back.

This creates better shaping at the hipline and hemline.

Patterns drafted by the Centres included skirts, shirts and blouses.

- (iii) Skirt patterns were drafted from blocks, to style a faced yoke with gathered skirt.

Many candidates completed this styling very successfully. Some finished with narrower hemlines in relation to the gathered edge.

- (iv) Shirt patterns were drafted from a basic block to include suppression of bust darts. Sleeve patterns were drafted to include a pleat on the sleeve head. The instructions needed to be more specific as it is not evident how many pleats were asked for. The front and back of the sleeve head needed more differentiation. No notches were made to indicate the front and back of the sleeve head. The armhole had little or no ease in the sleeve head.

The front plackets needed an extension to enable the two Centre Fronts to overlap, and to create a Centre Front line for the fastenings, e.g. buttonholes and buttons. This would also solve the problem of the collar edges overlapping at the opening. The Centre Front has been used as the shirt edge which is incorrect.

(b) Production plan/order of work/time plan for cutting and assembly

The most successful work and time plans were presented in table format and utilised the full 2 hours for the preparation stage and 3 hours for the implementation stage. The total time candidates have allocated to each stage needs to be indicated. Many candidates did not fully utilise the time allocated to them.

The order of work should be listed in the correct order of making up the garment and a time schedule allocated for the completion of each stage. Where the predicted time and actual time were compared candidates fully understood what was required.

Many candidates gave accounts of what they did step by step, rather than planning.

(c) Layout, cutting and marking

Cutting was generally good with candidates understanding how to find the correct size on multi-sized commercial patterns.

There were some good cutting layouts presented on graph paper and showed the candidates' understanding of the cutting stage.

More careful labelling is required of the Fabric Fold, Selvedge, Straight of Grain, the number of pieces to be cut. Pattern pieces need to be labelled or numbered with a reference column. Candidates need to focus on cutting the fabric economically. A cutting layout of any interfacings used should also be shown.

The shirt collar underside needed fusing to create shaping so the top collar can roll back. Some flounces were cut on the wrong side of the fabric.

The most popular method of transferring marks to fabric was using a dressmaker's wheel and tracing paper. When using commercial patterns the notches should be cut outwards so as to allow for any fitting adjustments within the seam line. Many candidates cut the notches off completely.

(d) Testing (fit)

Most Centres provided a mark and useful comment for the fitting stage. Some Centres made a toile/test piece for the sizing.

Question 3 Implementation

(a) Organisation and time management

The majority of Centres provided marks and useful comments e.g. any extra time taken.

(a) Tasks

A range of tasks were completed according to the garments made.

Seams and seam allowances These were generally completed to a very good standard. The stitch tension was suited to the fabric used and seam allowances were either overlocked or zig-zagged. Candidates are advised to test the machine stitch before attempting to stitch their garments, especially when the machines are shared by a number of different candidates. Inevitably, where candidates are instructed not to complete sections e.g. finish seam allowances, many will do so and therefore waste time without being awarded marks. Completed garments need to be finished to a high standard both on the outside and inside to gain high marks. Seam allowances need to be finished with a machined finish.

Skirt yokes and facings The majority of candidates interfaced/fused both the front yoke and the facing which made the completed yoke heavy and bulky. The front yoke needs only to be interfaced if using a heavier weight of interfacing/fusing.

The front and back yokes should be joined together and made as a separate section to the skirt. Some candidates joined the front yoke and front skirt together, and the back yoke and back skirt together. The front skirt and back skirt were then stitched together at the side seams. Many of the side seams were misaligned and the distribution of fullness was flattened. Some candidates joined the wrong sides of the yoke to the right sides.

The yoke facings were mostly incomplete and candidates found this process difficult. The waist seam allowances needed to be understitched to roll the facing inside. All seam allowances were generally too bulky and needed more trimming. A very good finish was made by topstitching the waist line. Different methods were used for attaching the facing to the yoke seam. 'Stitch in a ditch', where the yoke facing edge is overlocked and machined from the right side of the garment into the seamline, turning under the facing seam allowances and hand hemming. The majority of candidates did not complete the facing mainly due to lack of time for hand sewing.

Zippers Both dress and invisible zippers were used. The most frequent problem was a hole appearing at the base of the zipper. The overlapped method was popular and successfully completed using the dress zips. Where a heavier weight of fabric was used the invisible zippers were difficult to insert accurately. Candidates were also faced with the problem of having to line up the skirt yoke seam lines and dealing with extra bulk from the seam allowances and fullness of the skirt.

Gathered skirts The majority of skirts used only one line of machining for gathering the skirt into the yoke. Two parallel lines of machining with a loosened tension provides a better gather which is easier to distribute and machine stitch into a seam allowance.

Pockets Slanted skirt pockets stitched into the waistline and side seams of skirts were highly successful with topstitching to finish off the pocket edges. Some of the side seam pockets on the yoked skirts needed extra seam allowances to enable them to lie flat and hide the pocket opening.

Shirt plackets These were pressed and machine stitched to a very good standard.

Shirt collars The collar points needed reinforcing with an extra line of machining or using a very small stitch length. Then the fabric bulk can be cut away to create a good point. The underside needed to be fused with interfacing.

Sleeves and cuffs Seam allowances should be overlocked together and not separately in armholes. Candidates should not waste time overlocking separate cut pieces before the making up stage. A long sleeved blouse with a cuff was made with a continuous underarm seam. A more professional finish is achieved by stitching the sleeve seam first and making up the cuff separately. Attaching the cuff to the sleeve in a circular continuous seam prevents the seam allowances from showing.

Flounces Many of these were positioned upside down due to having been cut on the wrong side of the fabric. Most candidates handled this process well without creating too many pleats. Where pleats formed this was due to lack of clipping the seam allowance. There were some very good machined flounce edges which needed doubling over.

Top neckline and facing Most candidates understood this process well. The bodice neckline was staystitched sometimes showing on the right side of the finished garment. Interfacing was fused to the facing successfully. Facings were prepared well with trimmed seam allowances, zig-zagged edges and fitted the neckline accurately. A cleaner edge on the neckline facing edge could be achieved by folding the edge under and straight stitching. The neckline finished edge could have been improved with clipping the seam allowances more and understitching the facing to the seam allowances. The facings needed to be attached at the shoulder seams.

Armhole and flange The flange was prepared well and the majority of candidates fitted the flange into the armhole successfully. Many candidates confused the bias fold tape with the binding method. Many armholes were left unfinished with the bias fold tape attached but the understitching and topstitching missing. Where candidates completed the attachment of the bias fold tape this was stitched mostly by hand as opposed to being topstitched. There were a few excellent results which were topstitched.

Hemming and finishing The most popular hem was the 1 cm narrow machined hem, also a folded 2 inch hem with overlocked edges and slip hemmed. Hand hemmed stitches need to be small and invisible on the right side.

Hooks and eyes were not stitched on well. Buttonholes were not well made, with fraying edges, and would have benefitted from further consideration of their size, quantity and positioning within the space available on the waistband. Hanging loops were successfully stitched into the side seams of skirts.

Question 4 Evaluation

(a) Conclusion

Some candidates gave a conclusive paragraph at the end of the evaluation which summarised their experiences and thoughts about the examination. This gave a defined ending to their findings.

(b) Findings

Candidates wrote full answers which were well presented, stating their strengths and weaknesses in the practical examination. They gave comments on any improvements that could be made. The weaker answers focused on descriptive summaries of the processes that were used and what was accomplished, with some suggestions for improvement. The majority of candidates found time management was critical to the success of their examination.

(c) Results achieved

Marks were awarded for the overall quality of the garments made, the standard of finish in the processes and completion of the garment.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/03
Textile Applications and
Textile Technology

Key Messages

Candidates should be reminded that they could use the blank silhouette provided when answering questions which require sketches of garments. This will make sure that the size of the sketch is large enough to show the required construction details of garments e.g. seam lines, necklines, style features, etc.

Candidates should use two words when naming specific fabrics e.g. one word to indicate the fibre content (e.g. cotton or polyester) with the second word indicating the construction of the fabric e.g. lawn, calico or satin (for woven fabrics) and jersey, double knit or tricot (for knitted fabrics).

Candidates should read the questions carefully and answer only what is required.

There is no need to write out the question before answering.

Where the question began with 'discuss' or 'assess' each valid point needed to be analysed fully – some answers had presented only a list of points which meant that few marks could be awarded.

General Comments

All candidates followed the rubric correctly and attempted both questions in **Section A** and chose two questions out of three from **Section B**.

Where candidates had used the silhouette provided on the question paper, the quality of the answer was high with details of style features clearly shown. Front and back views of the sketch should be drawn with well labelled and accurate design features for full marks.

Comments on Specific Questions:

Question 1 (compulsory)

This was generally well attempted although a small number of candidates had not answered all parts of the question fully. Some scripts showed very good knowledge.

- (a) This was usually well answered with four factors which need to be considered when designing women's leisure wear being given in many scripts.
- (b)(i) Sketches were detailed where the silhouette provided had been used. Answers which gave back and front views, with detailed labelling and accurately sketched style features which were correctly labelled, gained full marks. The fabric names were not always detailed with many answers simply stating 'cotton' for example; this is the name of a fibre content rather than being a specific fabric. A correct response here would be 'cotton cambric' which gives the indication of the construction of the fabric as well as giving the fibre content. A number of candidates had not shown the position of seams or joins, for example, sleeve seams, where sleeves joined the bodice. It is expected that candidates will have had the opportunity to practice sketching during their course as the coursework element of this A Level course is very likely to include the making of a garment, so design sketches would have been expected for this.
- (ii) The answers here varied, as in some cases candidates had listed the design features but did not give reasons for their choice, so marks could not be awarded in this case.

- (c) The fabric finishes asked for in this part question had to relate to the garment sketched in (b) to be credited. In some cases, the fabric finishes listed were not appropriate for the garment so could not be rewarded. There were some excellent answers too which showed detailed knowledge of fabric finishes.
- (d) Answers here were variable as details were sometimes lacking, however, some answers were very detailed and well discussed so were awarded high marks. Discussion should include points for and against to indicate and explain why it is important to design to a given specification.

Question 2 (compulsory)

- (a) This was well answered by many candidates with relevant factors given when choosing which creative techniques to use on garments for children.
- (b)(i) Designs varied with some showing detailed design features which were appropriate for children's wear. Other answers lacked detail, mainly because the sketch was too small to show the creative techniques clearly enough. A few answers had not included back views and some labelling was very brief – at A Level, the labelling should include as much detail as possible to inform the chosen textile processes and techniques.
- (ii) This was usually very well answered with high marks being awarded where enough detail had been shown to explain the two chosen creative techniques. Where answers had included detailed sketches they gained higher marks. In some scripts, one technique was very well answered but the second choice was brief and lacked detail.
- (c) This section required adequate discussion for high marks, but many candidates gave a list of points without discussing them so gaining only limited marks. Some candidates had confused 'printing' (surface colour applied) with 'dyeing' (fabric immersed in a dye bath). This question asked for 'printing' only.

Question 3

- (a) A wide range of different items, with various design ideas, were sketched in this part question although some answers lacked detail and had omitted design ideas.
- (b) In high quality answers, all the points were well justified. Some scripts, however, had listed the style features only and had not fully explained why they had been chosen. Applique and hand embroidery were popular choices.
- (c) Answers included hand worked techniques, e.g. hand stitching, as well as machine worked techniques such as applique or machined embroidery patterns. The details of the techniques could have included how the fabrics are prepared, e.g. putting the fabric/item into an embroidery hoop to keep the fabric taught before stitching, or for applique, to apply fusible interfacing to the back in order to stiffen the fabric before stitching. A number of scripts gained high marks for this part question and in general this was well answered by the majority of candidates. Some processes were very well known with detailed explanations given.
- (d) This answer varied with only a few scripts answering the question well, including informed discussion showing detailed knowledge; these answers included many different types of yarns, from bulked, textured, fancy and plied yarns. Other candidates simply presented a list of points which was not adequate for high marks.

Question 4

- (a)(i) Was usually well answered with relevant points being presented to explain what is meant by 'consumer testing/surveys'.
- (ii) Answers varied although generally this was well known by candidates.
- (b) Many scripts had answers which gave a list of points rather than giving an assessment (i.e. to give your opinion on something). Candidates would have gained higher marks if they had analysed each point more fully, rather than present a list of possible factors.

- (c) The types of stitches were usually well known so marks were awarded for this, however, actual discussion was more limited so the answers could not always gain the highest marks.

Question 5

- (a) Where candidates had used the silhouettes provided, they had room to sketch the trimmings they had chosen and the quality of the answers were very good and high marks were gained in this case. Popular choices of trimmings included lace and bindings.
- (b) Reasons for the choice of fabrics, colours and stitches were not always given and fabric names in particular were not given correctly.
- (c) There was often good discussion of the types of experimental work (samples) which would be needed before making the final prototype and where this was well answered, candidates also gave a good range of examples. The choice of experimental work could have been based on that done for coursework during the A Level course.
- (d) This part question about the choice of environmentally friendly fabrics was well answered with detailed knowledge of the types of fibres available in a good proportion of scripts.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/04

Coursework

Key Messages

- The standard of practical work has mostly been high in all areas and has shown a vast array of creativity and skill. Many products have been extremely marketable designs.
- Time management is still a planning issue for some candidates, particularly with the third product. Use of Gantt charts and production flow charts may be a helpful strategy to incorporate into candidates' work.
- The use of one concise folder of work with three products has been used as a method of working by many Centres this year with great success. This method of working cuts down on needless repetition allowing for a focused piece of research which is another way of giving candidates time, where needed, within the practical work.
- Using the front and back of all pages in folders would reduce bulk.
- Each page should be as full and detailed as possible.

General Comments

- Candidates have undertaken a wide range of appropriate tasks using a variety of creative and vibrant themes.
- There has been a good use and level of ICT skills and in some cases candidates have produced whole folders with the use of ICT; which has culminated in a professional finish.
- The use of photographic evidence within the making is much improved this year and is extremely helpful when marking the work of candidates.
- It is important that candidates make sure the skill level is appropriate for A Level – low level skill with little embellishment or difficulty is not going to score high marks.
- It is good to see relevant fabric testing for individual products being used which demonstrates good practice within the testing and evaluation process.

Administration

The majority of Centres have presented the candidates' work beautifully with clear labelling which has been tied together separately to include the individual completed mark sheets which are annotated by the teacher.

It is important to ensure that all candidates' work is individually labelled to ensure smooth marking and moderation and that all work is packaged correctly so access to work is without the use of pins.

Comments on Assessment Objectives

Research, aims and analysis

The majority of candidates have developed a statement about the aims and theme of their project.

In general a lot of detail goes into the theme of the projects but research needs to be developed by annotating existing images with thoughts, ideas and evaluation in order to move the design process on and to access the higher marks.

Planning and development

In the main candidates have created a range of well executed and annotated design proposals, however, there were a number of candidates who produced just one design proposal and then launched into the making. To access the higher marks several design proposals need to be shown with a range of developmental techniques and samples with a clear annotation/explanation. Good use was made of toiles and pattern development which were included in the folders of work.

Process – carrying out the coursework tasks

The Examiner is guided by the teacher in marking this section. Annotations and marks by the teacher are most helpful.

It was good to see photographic evidence of practical tasks being carried out in many candidates' folders.

Realisation – quality of the outcome

Candidates have demonstrated excellent practical skills in a variety of different areas and in many cases the level of demand has been high and the final outcomes have been extremely creative and very marketable.

A number of Centres have produced three very similar projects which have not demonstrated a variety of skills, all of which is required from this syllabus. In some cases the size of the item is unduly large and the processes repetitive so that the candidate is unable to access those higher marks.

All products should be made by the candidate. If for any reason they are not, as in the case of recycling, the embellishments should be of top quality and the adaptations made should be interesting, unique and skilfully done.

Evaluation

The majority of folders have demonstrated that time and care has been paramount in their collation.

However, the evaluations are an issue with little time being given to this part of the design process and therefore candidates have demonstrated very basic evaluations in some cases.

To access the higher marks within the evaluation it is helpful for the candidate to evaluate against the original design specification to include strengths and weaknesses of the product and to indicate possible future developments that could be explored.