

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/01
Fibres, Fabrics and Design

Key messages

There was more evidence of candidates including examples in the discussion and evaluation questions than demonstrated previously.

Candidates must make sure that they read the questions carefully. They need to keep their answers concise and stick to the key points.

Candidates must be careful not to answer questions as bullet points. Answers at this level require discussion or evaluation.

Product analysis is an excellent classroom exercise. Candidates can use a variety of their own textile products (garments, bags, soft furnishings etc.) and identify how they made, what they are made from and why. This will really help to consolidate their understanding when they are answering the exam questions.

General comments

Candidates' knowledge of fabric names was good and they had a strong understanding of the advantages for blending fibres.

Responses generally covered the range of items on the paper with only a few areas where a minority of candidates were unable to respond. **Question 3**, which included sketching a design (**part 3b**), was much more popular than **Question 4**.

It would be of great benefit for candidates to practise answering past paper questions prior to the examination. They can then look at the mark scheme to see what was expected from them in their answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates' knowledge of the source of flax and viscose was generally good; however the fibre length was confused.
- (b) Many candidates were able to identify fabrics made from flax and viscose, in addition to listing an end use.
- (c) Many of the answers were too general and lacked the detail expected for a 7-mark question.
- (d) This question was answered very well by candidates. Their understanding was good and they had knowledge of a variety of fibre blends, as well the advantages.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates' knowledge of fabrics made from woven and non-woven construction was generally good. Felt and interfacing were popular answers for non-woven fabric construction.

- (b) Most candidates successfully described plain weave as a woven construction method in **Question 2 (b)(i)**. Descriptions of the non-woven construction method in **Question 2 (b)(ii)** were not as well explained. Needle punching was the most popular non-woven construction method described by candidates.
- (c) Candidates were successfully able to list a number of end uses for non-woven fabrics. However, only some answers included examples of relevant performance characteristics.
- (d) Some responses were overcomplicated. Candidates needed to focus on the key factors to consider when choosing between a woven and a knitted fabric. Answers needed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fashion cycles and their importance to designers of fashion garments.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This question concentrated on garment design and candidates either knew the different qualities or they did not. Responses indicated that these qualities may not have been fully understood. Looking at plenty of clear examples would help address this issue in the future.
- (b) Dress designs showed real flair and creativity, and it was very clear that candidates enjoyed answering this question. Candidates, on the whole, had not spent over the amount of time expected for 5 marks and were able to label some of the aesthetic qualities chosen from **Question 3 (a)** successfully.
- (c) This question was answered exceptionally well, with many candidates gaining 5 or 6 marks.
- (d) Responses indicated that some candidates were unsure of how to answer this question. Many candidates were able to discuss the fashion cycle and some had included a diagram. However, only some candidates had given examples to support their answer.

Question 4

- (a) Candidates had some knowledge of the two terms used in garment manufacturing.
- (b) This question was not always well answered. The majority of candidates were able to describe one way of adapting a pattern in home-based garment making successfully. However, when it came to describing a second way, candidates appeared to be looking for more complicated answers rather than a simple adaptation, such as altering a neckline or shortening a sleeve.
- (c) Lots of answers included describing the different methods of lay planning. However, the question asked for an explanation of why different methods were used. Many candidates found this challenging.
- (d) Candidates were able to list a variety of hems used, but only some answers related them to different garments and evaluated why different hems are used (depending on the fabrics and garments being made). Product analysis would really help candidates to answer these types of questions more successfully.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/02
Practical Test (AS)

Key messages

- Working Notes for the practical exam had been annotated fully and in detail. These were very helpful for the marking of the exam. Thank you.
- Centres need to focus on developing the skill of evaluation and how to evaluate effectively.
- Centres need to also focus on the skill analysis within the written part of this paper.

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.
- The adjusted/adapted pattern should be stuck within the candidates' written paper. This would be very useful to the examiners.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Task Analysis and Planning

- (a) Most candidates fully stated the fabrics and accessories required to make their garment. Some candidates also stated which equipment was needed for the Practical Test.
- (b) Candidates need to state reasons to justify the choices made in fabric selection, including reference to the occasion when their garment 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.
- (c) Candidates need to ensure they state which equipment they need and why. The list of equipment should be specific to the task they are being asked to complete.
- (d) Most candidates completed a time plan for their planning/implementation sections. When candidates completed this in detail, it supported them well in the construction of their garment. It is a good idea if candidates refer to this plan to help them explain any problems they encountered, and solutions they used, to overcome the problems they had with timing and planning.
- (e) Candidates should also use the time plan as a working document. As they complete each stage they should make notes on their time plan (e.g. what problems they did they have? How did they solve these problems? Why did they have these problems?).

Question 2

Preparation

- (a) Most candidates submitted the paper patterns they 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. Please ensure that these patterns are stapled or stuck

within the candidates' Working Notes. Candidates should explain how they have adapted the paper patterns to achieve the alterations needed.

- (b) The Working Notes for the practical exam which had been annotated (regarding the testing and fit of the garment) were very useful. In future series, please can candidates include a digital photograph of the fitting of their garment to show how it fits correctly. This would support the Working Notes.

Question 3

Implementation

- (a) Organisation and Time Management: centres provided comments for the testing and fit of the garments. These were helpful when they were filled in correctly. Thank you.
- (b) The task set was a very challenging task for the time allowed. The garment made was:
- Sleeveless V-neck blouse, gathered at bustline, decorated with lace trimmings, panelled waist fastened at the centre front with buttons and fabric loops.

Question 4

Sleeveless- V-neck blouse – Front and back bodice

Preparation of the front and back bodice: most candidates did this successfully. It was a challenge for candidates to gather the bodice under the bust line. Many candidates did not evenly gather the seam, and so this was unbalanced, or not attempted. The ones that were correctly done were finished to a high standard. Stitching of the 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 successful, but at times the darts did not match up correctly on the back. When pressing darts, it is important to remember that both the darts should face inwards. Many of the darts were incorrectly pressed. When choosing the lace for the bodice, some candidates did not take into consideration the type of lace they were stitching. This resulted in choosing inappropriate ways of attaching the lace to the bodice (e.g. it was top stitched in place when it should have been sandwiched within the seam). Some of the lace was not secure at the side seams. Few candidates had top stitched the front panel down.

Question 5

Sleeveless- V-neck blouse – Front and back facings

Overall, this was quick successfully done by all candidates. The candidates managed to interface the facing correctly, and, in most cases, it was attached correctly to the blouse. Some of the blouses did not have seams matched up on the shoulder seams. Very few candidates completed the topstitching of the neckline to keep this in place. The finishing of facing was either completed to a good standard or not completed.

Question 6

Sleeveless- V-neck blouse – Sleeve

Most candidates attempted to put in a sleeve, and all but a few adapted the pattern correctly. Overall, most candidates did finish the sleeve seams with either an overlocker or a zig-zag stitch. When using a zig-zag stitch, it is crucial to position the stitching close enough to the raw edges of the seam allowance. In several instances, the stitching was placed too far from the edges, resulting in fraying. The task of hemming the sleeve proved challenging, as the process often resulted in the hem rolling out of position or exceeding the hem allowance. Candidates should be encouraged to press the hem before stitching the final hem down. This will stop the hem from rolling, and ensure the correct distance from the edge.

Question 7

Sleeveless- V-neck blouse – Fastening – Button and fabric loops

This was the most challenging part of the construction of the blouse. The range of skill was shown to be varied. Most candidates were able to prepare and stitch in the underlay. In some cases, candidates had not done the underlay. Most of the candidates had prepared the fabric loops to be cut on the bias, and had successfully turned out the loops. The position of the loops and how to stitch them correctly was of a varied skill level. This is an area that most candidates had not experienced completing before, and this was evident in the quality of work seen. Some examples of work did not stitch the buttons in the correct place, or candidates ran out of time to complete this.

Question 8

Sleeveless- V-neck blouse – Finishing

Most candidates pressed the blouse successfully and this improved the overall quality finish. Possibly due to time constraints, many candidates did not finish the hem at the bottom of the blouse. Some candidates fully hemmed the blouse, which suggested that they may have misinterpreted the task requirements.

Evaluation

Overall, many candidates found this area of the exam particularly challenging and found it hard to effectively evaluate their completed work.

Conclusion – Very few candidates produced a summary of their experience during the examination. Most candidates did not refer to their planning sheet to explain problems and how they overcame them.

Findings - Some candidates discussed the achievements and difficulties that they experienced. Many candidates 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

Candidates' knowledge of fabric names was good and they were able to justify their choices of fabrics and relate their knowledge of fibres and fabrics to specific uses.

Candidates must make sure that they read the questions carefully and try to keep their answers concise by sticking to the key points.

Candidates must be careful not to answer questions as bullet points. Answers at this level require discussion or evaluation.

When answering evaluative questions, candidates must go beyond simple description by thoroughly examining both the advantages and disadvantages.

General comments

Responses generally covered the range of items on the paper with few areas where a minority of candidates were unable to respond. **Question 4** was the least popular question choice in Section B.

Candidates' knowledge of decorative techniques, fabric manipulation, fabric finishes and environmental issues was very good.

It is important for candidates to understand the different specifications that are used when designing and manufacturing fashion items, and to be able to distinguish between them and understand their importance in the process.

It would be of great benefit for candidates to practise answering past paper questions prior to the examination. They can then look at the mark scheme to see what was expected from them in their answer.

Product analysis is an excellent classroom exercise. Candidates can use a variety of their own textile products (garments, bags, soft furnishings etc.) and identify how they made, what they are made from and why. This will really help to consolidate their understanding when they are answering the exam questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates answered this question well, and many candidates achieved full marks. Candidates needed to ensure that they adhered to the number of factors that they were asked to explain (three).
- (b) There was evidence of some good discussion around safety considerations when dyeing fashion items at home.
- (c) The range of decorative effects that candidates knew was strong. However, candidates often simply listed and described their answers, rather than providing the evaluation that the question specifically asked for.

Question 2

- (a) There were some good answers, but quite a few responses described performance characteristics of knitted fabrics without considering sportswear. Absorbency was a popular performance characteristic, however candidates tended to relate it to the fibre content rather than the knitted fabric construction.
- (b) Very few answers had considered that the stitch should allow for movement during sports activities. Candidates needed to consider appropriate stitches that would allow for movement and relate this to the construction of sportswear garments.
- (c) Candidates had listed a number of fabric finishes which showed good knowledge. However, they needed to relate their knowledge to how the finish could improve the performance of fabrics used for sportswear.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Candidates answered this question very well and had a strong knowledge of environmental issues related to the textiles industry. They were able to discuss the issues, and many included examples.
- (b) It was clear that candidates knew a variety of environmentally friendly fibres and understood some of the benefits. However, candidates needed to evaluate the benefits, instead of simply listing different fibres.

Question 4

- (a) This question was asking candidates to discuss the design process from research through to prototypes. A number of responses seemed to misunderstand what needed to be discussed.
- (b) This question was not answered by many candidates. Responses demonstrated knowledge of some speciality yarns. A few candidates gave very good answers, but on the whole this was not a strong area.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates found this question challenging. Answers could have included evaluating the importance of design, product and manufacturing specifications.
- (b) Candidates' knowledge of fabric manipulation was very good and some answers included fabric examples related to the specific techniques.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/04
A Level Coursework

Key messages

- Overall, there was clear evidence that candidates had a thorough understanding of the design process.
- Please include a photograph(s) of the final response within the folder work.
- Please limit volume, particularly with regards to design folders – consider incorporating all work into one A3 folder.
- In a number of cases, some beautiful intricate sampling was evident.

General comments

- Planning with the use of a Gantt Chart supports industrial practices and helps to support timing of the practical element of the project.
- The lack of time was evident where candidates produced more than one folder. Some folders contained rushed designs.
- Some folders only showed one piece of work on a page – please aim for busy pages with detailed content.
- Candidates are advised not to use glitter within coursework.
- Ensure that headings of the design process are correctly used.

Administration

- All folders and practical work were labelled correctly and showed an established and logical order of work.
- It was great to see that candidates had continued to ensure that the attachment of labels had not distorted the products.
- Please continue to be vigilant for stray pins caught in seams.
- Please continue to be mindful with regards to bags and tape when packaging folders and products.
- Ensure all folders and products are labelled clearly with the centre number, candidate number and full name.

Research, aims and analysis

- The projects that adhere to one strong theme allow more time to fulfil the creating of three quality products. It also keeps momentum and energy within the project.
- The majority of folders demonstrated a focused set of research with background information on the chosen theme, relevant questionnaires, comparative shops etc.
- Every project included a mood board. This is an essential part of the research process that provides a strong foundation and serves as a stepping stone for the development of design ideas.
- Where appropriate, having one mood board covering the theme and another mood board for the product may be helpful as the project develops.

Planning and development

- Design ideas that were fully developed (to include application of colour and annotation and also links to both the starting point and the research) were the most successful.
- Design ideas must be annotated clearly to give an overview of the thought process surrounding the design ideas and to clarify important points which may not be clear from the drawing.
- Referencing worked samples is key to observing a clear and logical development process.

- Development should be through worked samples, not images from the internet. The samples should be relevant to the ideas and thoughtful to the function and aesthetic of the product(s).
- Photographic evidence of the practical elements is important for showing both construction and embellishment techniques.
- In a number of cases, there were some beautiful examples of intricate sampling.
- It is important not to incorporate every technique available; ensure quality, not quantity. Please consider the level of skill and how this impacts on the higher levels of marks.

Process – carrying out the coursework tasks

- The majority of projects had been developed with relevant and well-executed processes and techniques.
- Planning is imperative in order to ensure that there is enough time to produce a third product which is of equal weighting to the other two in the range.
- A number of products had been produced with a lot of attention to detail to include unique decoration and shape.
- Application of colour and pattern using acrylic paint is an inappropriate technique to use because it leaves fabric stiff and unwearable, without flexibility and drape.
- Please ensure the inclusion of photographic evidence showing the making of the products, alongside clear annotation. This helps to clarify the stages involved in the making process.

Realisation – quality of the outcome

- Candidates continue to evidence a range of marketable products which are both functional and aesthetic.
- Correct choice of fabric and embellishment techniques have a major impact on the marketability of the product.

Evaluation

- Evaluation continues to be variable within candidates' folders of work. It is a reflective tool which is an important part of the design journey.
- Ensure that you reflect and evaluate your work continually. Connections between your research, ideas and final responses are important to log within your folder.
- 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 presentation of the folder is an important part of the evaluation. Therefore, it is crucial to spend time collating and organising the work properly.