

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/01
Fibres, Fabrics and Design

Key Messages

Candidates generally showed a good understanding of both fibres and fabrics. It is important for candidates to remember that if a comparison of fabrics is asked for credit can only be given for points made about fabric construction and properties not fibre properties. Similarly if candidates are asked to name a fabric marks will not be awarded for naming a fibre, e.g. polyester cotton is not a fabric. A correct answer would be polyester cotton lawn.

General Comments

There were some excellent responses showing that most candidates had prepared well for the examination. Scripts were neatly written and clearly marked with question numbers. All candidates attempted the three questions required but did not always give a response to every part of each question. Few candidates chose question four which dealt mainly with garment manufacture. Answers were generally well organised and easy to follow.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) (i) and (ii) Almost all candidates gained a mark for each of these question.

(b) (i) Candidates appeared to have a good understanding of the characteristics of both fibres. A number of candidates gained only one mark because they did not give any justification for their response, stating simply that flax fibres are longer than cotton.

(ii) This question was answered well. A small number of candidates mistakenly gave the answer for a longitudinal view.

(c) (i) This question was answered well. Candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the performance characteristics of cotton and were able to relate their knowledge to clothing.

(ii) This question was answered very well. Candidates showed a good understanding of the properties of both fibres and were able to make justified comparisons.

(d) Most candidates showed an understanding of the properties fabrics should have if they are to be used for children's clothes. A limited range of fabrics were named by most candidates but some referred to mixed fibre fabrics and others gave the name of a fibre instead of naming a fabric.

Question 2

(a) (i) Most candidates could describe the fabric or give an example of its use but few could do both.

(ii) This question was answered well.

- (b) (i) There were few correct responses to this question.
- (ii) Answers to this question were weak. Candidates tended to concentrate on the elasticity of elastane.
- (iii) Few candidates knew that aramids are stiff fabrics but most knew that elastane is stretchy.
- (c) Most responses described woven and knitted fabrics well and answers were often illustrated with clear diagrams. Few responses included the correct name of a woven synthetic fabric and/or a synthetic knitted fabric. Some candidates incorrectly offered polyester cotton as the name of a woven synthetic fabric.
- (d) Many of the responses to this question were muddled and lacked structure or organisation. The question asked candidates to consider the factors that are important when making a choice between using knitted or woven fabric for clothing. Most answers dwelt on the properties of knit and weave but did not relate these to garment uses, function, style etc.

Section B

Question 3

This question was chosen by almost all candidates. As the first three items are about design candidates may have felt confident that they could answer this question adequately.

- (a) (i) There was a range of original and well drawn designs in response to this question. A small number of candidates wasted time writing a long, detailed description of the bag instead of labelling the drawing as the question asked.
- (ii) This question was answered well.
- (b) Responses to this question were variable. The more obvious advantages of having a choice of retail outlets such as variety and cost were given by most candidates. A small number of responses referred to advantages for the manufacturer and some candidates mistook the term retail outlets for discount outlets.

Question 4

This question was answered by only a small number of candidates.

- (a) (i) This question was well answered.
- (ii) Most responses showed an understanding of industrial methods of pattern production.
- (b) Answers lacked the detail required for full marks. In some cases non fusible interfacing was incorrectly considered in the answer.
- (c) Most responses to this question consisted of a list of different neckline styles accompanied by a description of the style and/or a drawing. There was little attempt to evaluate the styles or offer a variety of types of opening.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/02
Practical Test

Key Messages

- Centres are producing more ambitious garments e.g. reversible skirts, and creating their own components such as ruffles. More complex garment construction techniques have been used e.g. set-in sleeves, bound edges using bias binding as facings and edges finished with piping.
- Some of the fabrics used for garments were very challenging.
- More Centres have produced Computer Aided Designs (drawings) with written instructions for the candidates. This provided more reference for the candidates.

General Comments

Instructions given to candidates need to be clear and precise, so there is no ambiguity.

Centres providing instructions with diagrams, for candidates need to use labelled working drawings with clear outlines and no shading.

Any detailed processes need to be labelled and indicated clearly so there is no confusion as to what the lines represent e.g. side pocket openings. Details need to be checked carefully e.g. placement of a dart on the back or front of the garment.

Candidates are able to gain marks if they make their own components such as decorative fastenings.

The examination is based on making up a garment to a limited time frame; showing an understanding of task analysis and planning, practical techniques and skills. There is emphasis on garment paper pattern making, alteration or adaptation, cutting skills, fabric manipulation, garment construction skills and sewing processes.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Task Analysis and Planning

(a) Candidates have shown an understanding of planning their requirements and equipment for the examination.

(b) Shopping lists were itemized, listed and described with quantities and prices included. Some Centres omitted prices and listing the resources.

(c) Full responses showed:

Knowledge of fabric names, fibres and their properties with detailed descriptions and reasons for the choices made.

How the fabrics and components added to the design and function of the garment.

Whether the fabric was suitable for purpose.

Fabrics used were generally plain polyesters, cotton denim, stretch denim, stretch denim and synthetic suede, cotton gabardine, slub weave viscose and linens and printed cottons.

Heavy weight fabrics introduced by some Centres were very difficult to handle and would be heavy to wear. Centres are advised that in choosing difficult fabrics to handle they should be fit for purpose and pose greater challenges in cutting and construction skills. They may also need specialist machinery, tools and components to achieve successful results.

Question 2

Preparation

- (a) Centres need to specify if their own drafted block patterns are used as starting points and reminded that paper /card patterns should be submitted for examination.

Commercial paper patterns that are altered or adapted should be placed in their envelope and sent for examination. Commercial pattern adaptations or alterations need to be specified and provide a challenge to the candidate. Some Centres mistakenly interpreted paper pattern alteration and adaptation as adding a component e.g. a zip. This does not focus on the skills needed for creating paper patterns or adapting the cut or style.

Marks are awarded for skills shown in producing a paper pattern, changing the style lines or making alterations to the pattern pieces. Some candidates made major size alterations to the commercial patterns. This involves a complex grading system. Centres are advised to provide the appropriate sizes for their candidates.

Marks may not be awarded for pattern alteration or adaptation, where there is no evidence of any paper pattern alteration or adaptation having been made.

- (b) **The order of work refers to the Preparation and Implementation.**

Some candidates omitted time plans for the order of work or did not make any distinction between the preparatory and implementation stages.

Candidates need to indicate the different stages in the cutting and assembly with an estimated time for each stage and state the following: total time taken for the Preparation and the total time taken for the Implementation.

The Preparation stage

Candidates making their own paper patterns may list the stages of drafting with the estimated time taken.

Candidates adapting and altering a commercial pattern may list the stages of making the adaptations and alterations with the estimated time taken.

Candidates who draw a labelled cutting lay out show more understanding of the preparation stage.

The sewing processes needed for the fitting should be listed with the estimated time taken.

The Implementation stage

This includes, the final machining together of the different sections to make a completed garment. The sewing processes needed for the completion of the garment should be listed with the estimated time taken.

- (c) Many candidates using commercial patterns cut notches away or inwards, when they should be cut outwards. This is to allow for any fitting adjustments that may need to be made to the garment. The notches are crucial for matching points on seams, especially critical for setting in sleeves. Candidates do not need to send the remaining extra fabric with their practical exam as this adds to the bulk, weight and cost in postage.

- (d) Centres need to allocate marks and comments for the Testing (fit of the garment). Extra time should be noted.

Question 3

Implementation

(a) Organisation and Time Management

Centres should allocate marks for organisation and time management to each candidate. Any extra time taken should be noted.

(b) Tasks

Any alteration/adaptations made to paper patterns should not be included in the mark scheme for the Implementation stage as the marks awarded for this are in Preparation 2 (a). Separate garment fabric pieces, should not be overlapped before joining the sections together. This leads to inaccuracies in the seam allowances, seam line positions and fit of the garment. The confirmation note should be signed by the Centre to authenticate the candidate's practical work.

Darts

These were generally made to a good standard as bust or waist darts. The points should be machined over in reverse to secure the stitching. Tying off the thread ends produces a weak finish as the knots wear away or come loose. Sleeve elbow darts are at the back of a sleeve to allow for ease of movement especially in woven fabrics.

Seams and seam allowances

Centres may not be able to supply sewing machines with a swing needle for zigzag stitching, or overlocking machines. These types of machines provide a quick and strong finish to the raw edges.

Open seams may be successfully neatened by turning the seam allowance edges under and straight stitching them.

Many candidates found difficulties with using the overlocking machine during the exam, especially with the stitch tension. Candidates do not lose marks for using a different coloured thread for overlocking.

"Make up the garment to show the Front and Back Bodice". Candidates were confused by which seams needed neatening.

"Stitching of front panelled seams" and "Stitching of Centre back seam" were interpreted as just straight stitching along the seam line, or straight stitching along the seam line and neatening the raw edges. Most candidates understood the instruction, as straight stitching the seam line and neatening the raw edges.

Curved or princess seams

Generally these were well made. Where the seam allowances were not trimmed and then overlocked as one; the seam allowances created bulk at the curved bust line, preventing a smooth seam line on the right side of the garment.

Candidates using a zigzag stitch for finishing the seam allowances generally used to open a stitch, which did not prevent the raw edges from fraying, especially on linen weaves.

Pockets

Patch pockets on skirts were small, lined and well secured into the waistband and side seam. Pocket bags were successfully made but set too high at the side seams, near the waistband. They are usually set at the hipline.

Knife and Inverted Pleats

Pleats need to be placed and set evenly with the edges pressed well so as not to appear as tucks. Inverted pleats were made to a very good standard and topstitched. Knife pleats were set well.

Skirt Yokes and Facings

Front and back skirt yokes, were generally interfaced well with a suitable weight and stiffness of fabric. The front yoke and facing/lining should be stitched together as a continuous yoke at the side seams, before being attached to the skirt.

Understitching was missing from the skirt facing and seam allowances at the waistline. This is so as to roll back the lining/facing edge towards the wrong side of the skirt.

Zippers

Zips were inserted into the back seam neckline opening of tunics and also in skirt side seams. Dress and invisible zips were successfully inserted. Some zips were stitched in as a fashion feature with the teeth exposed. Where a garment was lined the zipper tapes on the inside were lined to hide the tapes and seam allowances. Some candidates set in zips too high so the top stoppers interfered with the facing, or waistband.

Waistbands

Waistbands should be cut as one piece and folded over along the top edge. Most were interfaced successfully. Raw edges should not be visible on the seamline of the waistband. Seam allowances need to be graded so as to eliminate bulk.

Raglan sleeves

These were made to a good standard with seams well pressed and neatened.

Set-in Sleeves

Candidates setting in three quarter length sleeves with darts at the elbow inserted the left sleeve instead of the right sleeve. Elbow darts were sewn at the front of the sleeve. Elbow darts are positioned at the back of the sleeve elbow for ease of movement. The easing and dispersal of fullness in sleeve heads was very poor.

There was little evidence of any marks being transferred at the cutting out stage. Notches were often cut off. The sleeve head and sleeve head dots at either side of the sleeve head were not transferred to the fabric. The easing lines at the sleeve head were not evident in most cases.

Many candidates mistakenly pleated the sleeve head. Seam allowances were zigzagged, with to open a zigzag stitch, leading to fraying edges. The seam allowances needed to be stitched together. The sleeve underarm seam and hem generally were well made and neatened.

A few candidates stitched the hems before stitching the underarm seam.

Bound Edges and Ruffles/ Bound Neckline Facings

Crossway strips were used to bind an edge or used as a facing with a folded bias strip.

Commercial bias binding, which was used to encase a long edge with corners, on a heavy weight fabric was successfully attached.

Bias binding used to finish the front edge on a jacket/vest was generally, successfully made. Those candidates who machined the binding on the right front edge and then folded it, tacking the remaining bias binding on the inside of the garment achieved good results. The steep curve, on the jacket/vest right front lower edge, was difficult to bind with the commercial widths available and candidates had difficulty in stitching the curves flat. Some candidates bound the edges evenly, over the right and wrong side, of the right front edge of the jacket/vest. Sometimes the binding came away from the edge, especially when used on loosely woven fabrics e.g. linens. The most successful results were when the bias binding was attached to

the right side of the jacket /vest, then the ruffle was attached and the remaining bias binding edge tacked on the wrong side of the jacket/vest. The machining of the ruffle was then hidden.

Some candidates made their own ruffles, using the same fabric that they cut for their jacket/vest. Ribbon and braid, were also used by a few candidates. Ruffles of assorted colours and designs embellished the garments. Most candidates chose to machine these on, after machining the bias binding on and tacking it down. The machining stitches usually showed unevenly, on the inside of the jacket/vest.

Necklines bound with a folded bias strip were generally misunderstood. The folded bias strip should have been machined through both raw edges, onto the front of the garment. Folded over the garment neckline edge and machined again. The narrow contrast piping was successfully attached, using machine and hand stitching. There were sections on the inside of the garment where the raw edges were showing.

Hems

Concealed seams were used very successfully as a hem, where a skirt was lined with another fabric to create a reversible garment. Intersecting seams needed bulk eliminated.

Narrow machined hems, were made, by most candidates. The machine stitches need to be close to the folded edge of the hem on the inside of the garment. Hem widths varied in depth according to the style of the garment and the fabric worked on. Some narrow machined hems included curves, which were difficult to machine. For lightweight fabrics, the hem needs to be as narrow as possible to avoid pleating.

Question 4

Evaluation

- (a) Candidates often omit a conclusion, which may summarise their experience of completing the examination with suggestions for any improvements they could make.
- (b) Candidates responded well to this question stating their strengths and weakness in the examination. They could refer back to their time plans and the order of work.
- (c) The standard of work has improved this year. Candidates wrote fuller answers for the Task Analysis, Planning and Evaluation and completed the set tasks.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/03

Textile Applications and Technology

Key Messages

Candidates are encouraged to use the figure template which is provided at the end of the question paper. This will ensure that the correct size of textile items are drawn and enough detail is shown on the sketches.

There is still confusion about the terms 'fibre' and 'fabric'. As this is advanced level, it is expected that candidates will know names of specific fabrics. Many are writing 'cotton' or 'polyester' but this only gives the fibre name. Two or more words are expected, the fibre name e.g. 'cotton' and the fabric construction name e.g. 'gabardine' or 'denim' or 'satin'. A correct fabric name would there be 'cotton gabardine' or 'polyester satin'.

Sketches need to be accurately sketched, especially if they need to be labelled with specific style features.

Candidates must pay particular attention to the command word used, discuss or assess require candidates to make some judgements and offer arguments for and against, coming to a reasoned conclusion. A list of points illustrating that subject content is known is a good start, but longer answers expect that candidates are able to give alternative views or advantages and disadvantages of various methods or techniques in the production of textile items.

It is recommended that candidates practice past questions and in particular, read the questions carefully so they are answering what is required. A number of answers showed good knowledge but had not answered the question.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i) The majority of scripts had a labelled sketch of one garment although some answers gave a whole uniform consisting of two or more garments which was not required. The sketches need to show the construction processes, for example, where a 'set-in' sleeve had been drawn but an armhole seam was not shown. As the labelling and sketch did not correspond, few marks could be awarded. It is recommended that sketching should be included when delivering this syllabus as clear drawings and sketches are an important way to communicate ideas. Some sketches were too small to show adequate detail of style features so the template provided on the last page of the question paper, should be used. In some cases, labelling was given as 'collar' or 'sleeve' but more detail is required at advanced level for full marks, e.g. 'set-in sleeve' or 'patch pocket'. 'Buttons' were often suggested as fastenings, but these need corresponding buttonholes in order to work as a fastening. If buttons only are shown, they should be labelled as 'decorative buttons' so that it is clear a buttonhole would not be needed.
- (ii) Fabrics names were not always well know – see comment above about 'fibres' and 'fabrics'. Where fabrics were known, there were some very good reasoned answers.
- (b) Machine stitches and how they could be used on the School uniform was well known with many answers gaining high marks. As number of answers were not able to correctly name 'straight stitch' often calling it 'running stitch or just 'machine stitch'. At advanced level, accurate naming of these stitches should be used.

- (c) A number of answers confused the term 'Eco-labelling' with 'care labelling' so could not gain many marks. Where Eco-labelling was known, the answers varied with most gaining marks in the middle bands.

Question 2

- (a) (i) Sketches varied for designs suitable for machine quilting. The answers which gained higher marks included an accurately sketched design showing the stitches clearly. Colour was also indicated on answer which gained high marks. Many sketches were very small and not labelled.
- (ii) Many answers included information about the preparation of sewing machines with details given about a larger stitch length, looser tension and using a different presser foot for quilting. A smaller number of answers gave details about fabric preparation such as layering the fabric, tacking, and use of an embroidery hoop. It is expected that quilting is included with other textile techniques, as part of the Design and Textiles course which can include a practical sample of quilting/other techniques.
- (iii) Many answers gave a list of relevant points but had not discussed them as asked for. This affected the marks which could be awarded.
- (iv) Reasons for using a sewing machine when producing decorative designs, was well known.
- (b) There were a variety of answers given for this question. A few answers showed very good knowledge and understanding of the benefits of recycling textile items which have decorated panels and many examples were included of how these could be re-used. As mentioned in (iii) above, it was common to see that a list of relevant point was given with little assessment or discussion.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This question was generally not well answered with many being awarded only low marks. This was often due to irrelevant fabric finishes given, ones which did not necessarily alter texture of appearance of fabric, where candidates had not read the question carefully enough. One named cotton fabric was usually given although many answers named 'polyester' (which is a fibre) but not the fabric name. Cotton twill, gabardine and lawn were often used as examples.
- (b) The range of performance finishes was answered adequately although some answers gave irrelevant information or included fabric finishes which would not normally be associated with sports clothing. Often the sport was not mentioned. Answers generally scored marks in the middle band often because the answers lacked detail and were rather general instead of giving points about specific sports.
- (c) Care labelling was known in general terms and many answers included care labelling symbols and gave general points rather than specific details. A few answers discussed the value of the symbols which was the focus of the question, so these scored higher marks. Natural fibres/fabrics are known more widely than re-generated or synthetic fibres/fabrics.

Question 4

- (a) Sketches were usually adequate and included relevant style features. However, a few answers had sketches home accessories rather than fashion accessories. Fabrics and resist dyeing methods were mentioned accurately in most cases.
- (b) Explanations as to how the fabrics benefit the environment, were brief and marks were usually awarded in the middle band. Self-coloured cotton was not well known.
- (c) The question was about how creative techniques can be developed was adequately answered although many answers gave a list of techniques without discussion which limited the number of marks which could be awarded. A few answers included sketches showing how specific decorative techniques could be used. Most answers gained marks in the middle band.

- (d) Again it was common to see that a list of relevant points was given but with little discussion and few if any reasons given. A few answers gained high band marks which included discussion and specific examples as asked for in the question.

Question 5

- (a) The answers varied although most were awarded marks in the middle band. Named fabrics were not always well-known although answer gave relevant information about staple yarns and filament yarns. It was common for answers to mention 'cotton' or 'silk' which are fibres, and not specific fabric names.
- (b)(i) Design specification was usually known but in some answers the points were not related to a shirt to be worn for work which was asked for in the question, so marks were usually awarded in the middle and low bands.
- (ii) Product specification was known although as in the point (i) above, the answers was not always related to a shirt to be work for work.
- (c) Batch production was usually known although many answers lacked adequate detail and gave a list of points rather than discussing them.

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/04
Coursework

Key Messages

- This year has demonstrated a range of innovative products to include electronics and recycling. The recycling theme in particular was excellent for worldwide current issues but they were also very well executed and extremely marketable.
- We continue to see Centres recommending the use of one design folder and one theme which is an excellent way of working, although there is still approximately 26% of candidates who are continuing to work in 3 separate folders; which in many cases is repetitive and not a good use of time, skills and resources.
- It is imperative that candidates steer away from using repetitive skills and ensure that each piece of work is of a high skill level utilising different methods of creativity.

General Comments

- Candidates must ensure that they demonstrate three products which are equal in their skill level, without showing repetition.
- Consider size/weight and bulk of items e.g. remove the cushion pad from its cover and refrain from sending any heavy electronics in boxes (good photographic evidence of this is sufficient).

Administration

- When attaching the label for identification purposes, stitching it to the garment through the top surface only will suffice as ease of access to the candidates work is always a priority. Please continue to avoid the attachment of pins and staples in the work.
- Try to avoid sellotape and string to collate candidates work together – if possible put work into a bag, which some Centres already do, to provide access to the work without damage occurring.
- It is extremely important when labelling and packaging work for moderation, that each item is clearly labelled with the correct candidate number.

Research, Aims and Analysis

- Candidates who choose a strong and constant theme tend to have a greater emphasis on development within their work.
- In some cases the design work needs to show more evidence of development and greater creativity rather than just running with one or two ideas. Candidates must also ensure that their time spent on each product is well balanced.
- Candidates should be imaginative and innovative when designing their products. They must avoid padding card as a product utilising this method at this skill level will not access the higher marks.
- Avoid the use of cartoon characters as this is not a good indication of the candidates design potential – it is much better to create an original character, image or design.
- The use of relevant and appropriate fabric testing is much improved.

- The use of Gantt charts and links to industrial practice continues to be a welcome improvement to work at this level.

Planning and Development

- It is as important to annotate all early and final ideas, as this helps to communicate thought process and links to the initial themes.
- Folders which include patterns and toiles are relevant and helpful in terms of showing the clear development of the product.
- It is important that candidates annotate clearly what has worked/not worked during the development of the design. It is good practice to evidence why and how this has moved an individual on in the process.

Process - Carrying out the Coursework

- Centres must ensure that all three products are complete and have the right skill and complexity level to access the higher marks. Some Centres have created whole outfits such as a skirt and scarf and then split these into 2 separate products for marking. In some cases these products will be of varying complexity and therefore not gain appropriate marks.
- Candidates who used a combination of fabrics, particularly difficult fabrics showing less repetition in their work, accessed the higher marks.
- In some cases it would be more appropriate to try and create original components rather than attach bought ones, particularly in the case of embroidered attachments/decoration.

Realisation – Quality of the Outcome

- It was yet again a real pleasure to see the vast skill and creativity demonstrated in the final outcomes from the choice of fabrics to complex patterns and decoration which were executed extremely well.
- All components should be attached correctly and not with the use of glue.
- There needs to be a clear balance between creating the fabric design and the construction of the product to access those higher marks.

Evaluation

- The vast majority of folders continue to be created with passion and detail but although well organised in most cases there is still a lot of unnecessary blank pages or pages which are not busy or detailed enough – this in turn would cut down on bulk and weight of folders.
- The evaluation section of the folders is showing some improvements but still has some way to go. Candidates who gained more marks in this section evaluated each product separately focusing mainly on the practical activities and then an overall evaluation at the end which ensured that all sections of the folder work could be included.
- To ensure a good evaluation the following points must be adhered to:
 - Conclude the outcome of the task.
 - Look at the strengths and weaknesses in both practical and folder work.
 - Recognise whether the task has been met and is fit for purpose.
 - Evaluate how effective the project has been and how the products could be further developed and explored in the future.