



General Certificate of Secondary Education

*Design and Technology
(Textiles Technology) Full Course
3547H*

Report on the Examination

2007 examination – June series

Full Course Higher Tier

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General Comments

Candidates used the theme as inspiration for a wide variety of products; being allowed a free choice did not appear to have had any detrimental effect on candidates' performance. Examiners were, at times, disappointed with the results as it seemed that many candidates had not researched the topics given on the Preparation Sheet thoroughly and this lack of preparation affected performance in a number of questions. Basic knowledge of fabric properties and construction was surprisingly lacking in the answers given to some questions. It would appear that many candidates do not use knowledge and experience gained in coursework to help them when answering questions requiring knowledge of manufacturing processes.

Many examiners reported having awarded some very low marks, more so than in previous years, suggesting that some centres had incorrectly entered candidates for Higher Tier papers. However, most candidates responded well, attempting all of the questions, and producing some very original design ideas. A wide variety of products was seen across all four papers; there were many novel designs, practical and otherwise, using the theme in imaginative ways. There were also many predictable designs such as shorts, bags and cushions made from cut down denim jeans, and some inappropriate use of components, e.g. sweet wrappers, old CDs, plastic bottles. A minority of candidates seemed to lose sight of the fact that this is a textiles examination, producing designs made completely from metal, plastics and card.

Although the majority of candidates understand the importance of showing colour as opposed to simply labelling it, there are still some candidates who do not use coloured pencils, even though it is stated on the front cover of the paper that this is necessary. Full colour is an important feature in the presentation of the final design.

There are still concerns that some centres are teaching to the Preparation Sheet only, and not to the specification as a whole; this does not help candidates achieve high marks on papers which are designed to test broad knowledge and understanding of textiles technology. Many candidates also rely far too heavily on Preparation Sheet images when presenting their ideas for the design question; centres are reminded that the Preparation Sheet should be regarded as a starting point, and that candidates are expected to research beyond what has been presented to them as inspiration.

Full Course Higher Tier

Question 1

- (a) Many responses were about recycling fabrics, especially denim, to make new items, but few candidates described how they were to be used in the new products. A very wide range of designers were quoted but the style of their work was rarely described. Answers were generally disappointing, especially since the Preparation Sheet gave ample opportunity for candidates to be well prepared. Where information had been copied information directly from the preparation sheet the higher marks were not awarded. Candidates should be encouraged to conduct personal research using this sheet for guidance purposes only.
- (b) Very well answered with most candidates gaining full marks.
- (c) Many commented on the loss of strength as well as the fact that the items could be dirty. Some weaker responses stated that the materials would 'not be good quality' but provided

no further explanation and, whilst candidates were aware of need to disassemble, they did not relate this to the costs.

Question 2

- (a)(i) A good proportion of candidates showed two distinctively different proposals; where marks were lost, it was usually down to unimaginative ideas or showing two similar ideas. A significant number had spent a lot of time colouring in their designs which is unnecessary at this early stage, and a few candidates got carried away designing a non-textiles item.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to identify the originality factor of their designs as being a good selling point and those who identified specific aspects of the design and related it to a target market scored the higher marks.
- (b) As always, the quality of design ideas covered a wide spectrum of marks. Examiners saw evidence of vibrant, original work, showing a high level of understanding of different fabrics, components and construction techniques and many candidates were creative in their use of re-cycled materials. At the other end of the scale, there were many uninteresting and predictable ideas, such as denim jeans made into shorts and lots of layered skirts and dresses using a mix of unsuitable and ill considered recycled fabrics, e.g. old curtains, bedding, lace and calico.

Recycled components included the use of zips, beads, buttons and lace, but also lots of card, cartons, bottle tops, tyres, and other non textile and inappropriate examples. Decorative techniques were used to good effect with many choosing to use patchwork or appliqué which allowed recycled fabrics to be incorporated into the decoration. Most candidates presented their designs using colour effectively; however, some candidates still do not take coloured pencils into the examination and it is then difficult for the examiner to award full marks to something described as “blue”. Most papers exhibited good levels of presentation, at least two views with sound and descriptive annotation.

Question 3

- (a)(i) Appliqué was the most popular technique.
- (ii) Candidates needed to concentrate on the qualities and suitability of the technique selected in relation to their design, and the majority were able to do this. Including manufacturing and target market needs helped gain the higher marks.
- (b) A mixture of drawings and notes helped many candidates achieve top marks, although it was surprising how few candidates managed to gain full marks for appliqué since they must all have had experience of working the technique in coursework projects.

Question 4

This question was not answered well; many candidates either made changes so radical that the whole design altered, or else repeated the same points such as “use less buttons, less appliqué” etcetera. There was very little understanding of how to change design without altering the design features.

Candidates were expected to develop three changes with detailed reasons; those who managed to do this gained full marks, as did those whose ideas did not drastically change the original design concept. The most frequently cited response was to change a stitched

decorative technique into a printed one. Some thoughtful and applicable points were seen but the majority of answers were ill considered.

Question 5

A mixed response was seen to this question; there were some very knowledgeable candidates but also many who were ignorant of the problems. Those who heeded the advice given on the Preparation Sheet to consider environmental issues relating to textiles were able to describe a range of ways in which the environment can be harmed. Many had a fair idea of the problems but tended to get repetitive and muddled, whilst others focused entirely on recycling and waste disposal issues.

Top marks were awarded to those who were able to describe the impact and consequences to the environment of many current textile uses and manufacturing practices. Weaker responses tended to concentrate on the growing of cotton and the use of dyes only. A minority gave thorough answers, covering all aspects of textile production.

Question 6

Examiners were amazed at how few candidates knew the name and construction of the most basic weave.

- (a)(i) This was a straight forward question and it was disappointing to see so few correct responses.
- (ii) The selvedge was usually correctly named, but quite a significant number of were unable to differentiate between the warp and the weft.
- (iii) A number of candidates found this difficult, but most were able to suggest at least one feature, mostly “flat” or “smooth” with some referring to strength.
- (b) A significant minority of candidates are still confusing classroom practices with industrial methods. However, it was pleasing to see sublimation printing, with correct descriptions of the process, as one of the techniques chosen.
- (c)(i) Candidates continue to be confused about CAD and its application in different situations. This question was about preparing a design for printing; weaker responses mistakenly referred to using it for sending designs to other manufacturers. Top marks were awarded when candidates understood the specific nature of this particular application of CAD and were able to show understanding of how computers are used to adapt shape, colours and features of designs, although few knew specific details of how programmes could be used in print design.
- (ii) As in (i), there was a lack of understanding displayed here, with fewer candidates able to link CAM to printing of fabric. There were many generalised responses such as “quicker”, “easier”, or “more accurate”. Higher marks were awarded when candidates had identified CAM as being about the application of computers to drive machinery, in this particular case, printers. Encouragingly, more able candidates were able to identify the use of lasers to cut printing rollers as well as accurately placing colour in the correct position on the fabric.
- (d) This question was well answered with many candidates referring to matching up the complex pattern and using one-way lay-plans. Many were awarded full marks.

Question 7

- (a)(i) This question was not well answered considering that many candidates would have made a cushion as a coursework project. Some repeated many of the stages, for example, writing “cut out squares” and then, in the next box, “cut out fabric”. Candidates did not appear to have studied the diagrams on the paper as hardly any prepared a hem on which to place buttons and buttonholes, and many inserted a zip.
- (ii) Quality control checks were identified well in the majority of cases. Weaker answers tended to repeat the same check for all steps, instead of linking it to the particular stage of manufacture and used terms such as ‘properly’, ‘correctly’ or ‘right’ without qualification.
- (iii) Few candidates were able to suggest problems that may result as a consequence of not following quality control steps and many were confused about the difference between consequences and checks.
- (b)(i) It was pleasing to see that most candidates understand sub-assembly and how it is used.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to identify a part of the cushion suitable for sub-assembly.
- (iii) This was a straight forward question and many candidates gained full marks. Less able candidates tended to offer vague answers, such as “cheaper” and “quicker”.

Question 8

- (a)(i) A number of qualities of cotton were clearly identified and high marks were awarded to those who were able to evaluate positive as well as negative qualities in terms of its usefulness for a cushion. Less able candidates tended to offer a list of points, some of which were confused or incorrect and which were, in general, limited to positive qualities only.
- (ii) “Additional strength for the fabric” was the most commonly given property; higher marks were awarded to candidates who also identified polyester’s easy-care and crease-resistance qualities.
- (b) The fire warning symbol was identified well and many understood its importance as a warning to consumers. Many thought that the second symbol was an environmental symbol, some knew that it was associated with cotton, many thought it was to do with organic cotton. Few candidates knew that it is a Quality Assurance mark.