



**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Design and Technology  
(Textiles Technology) 3557/H**

**Short Course**

**Higher Tier**

**Report on the Examination**

*2008 examination - June series*

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## General Comments

The overall standard was improved on last year with all papers eliciting a wide range of marks, suggesting that most candidates had been entered for the correct tier in relation to ability. Most candidates attempted all of the questions and scripts were usually well presented and easy to follow.

The theme appeared to have been well received and researched by candidates, and examiners saw a very wide variety of products, especially hat designs. There were also many ideas for decorative products and examiners accepted a wide range of different designs inspired by hats. The majority of candidates understand the importance of showing colour as opposed to simply labelling it, and there are very few who do not use coloured pencils; full colour is such an important feature in the presentation of textiles design ideas.

Basic knowledge of fabric properties and construction continues to be a concern although, candidates are quite good at suggesting appropriately named fabrics for their design ideas – some of this knowledge should have been used when answering those questions based directly on fibre and fabric knowledge.

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. Centres are also reminded that the information given in the preparation sheet is to support candidates in preparing for the design questions, and that other questions on the paper will be outside of the scope of the set theme; this is clearly stated in the specification.

## Short Course Higher Tier

### *Question 1 (a)*

Responses to this question were mixed. Most commented on the stuffed bird used as a trim, and the elaborate decoration of the hat, and many were able to relate to ways in which society has changed, e.g. the role of women, attitudes to animals. Weaker responses failed to make the link between the hat style and social issues.

### *Question 1 (b)*

Most candidates were able to identify a feature that they could use. More able candidates developed their answers to include suggestions as to how the selected feature might be incorporated into a new design.

### *Question 1 (ci)*

Most gained two marks but few understood that a trend forecast relates to the future selling potential.

### *Question 1 (cii)*

Many candidates focused on the differences between batch and mass production, or mass and one-off production. Some referred to cost implications and a significant minority, discussed quality issues associated with manufacture, instead of methods of manufacture.

### *Question 1 (ciii)*

The term 'target market' was well understood but this was often answered in general terms only. More able candidates were able to expand their answers by providing examples relating to style issues or, very occasionally, on where it might be sold.

*Question 2 (ai)*

Some candidates spent too much time on this question, colouring and labelling in too much detail, and a few candidates got carried away designing a non-textiles item. Low achieving candidates tended to present two very similar ideas and failed to label them clearly. A good proportion of candidates showed two distinctively different proposals; where marks were lost, it was usually down to unimaginative ideas or showing two very similar ideas.

*Question 2 (aii)*

This part was usually well answered with various aspects of the design considered in relation to the target market and possible end uses of the product.

*Question 2 (b)*

The majority of candidates chose to design hats, some opted to show fascinators but many of these designs were weak and often little more than decorated combs. Those who chose to design other products appeared to find it relatively easy to incorporate various elements of 20th century hats into an original and imaginative product. Originality was often lacking as many hat designs included bands and feathers but little thought to overall shape and form of the product. Only a handful of innovative, creative designs were seen, the theme was usually interpreted as copied hat styles rather than individual designer pieces. Stronger candidates showed more creativity and made reference to designers such as Philip Treacy but a lot of the designs were unable to gain top marks for originality as they lacked interest and excitement, and/or the decorative technique was not used to the best effect.

Fabric and component choice was well researched and candidates made relevant choices. The majority of candidates presented well drawn ideas, using subtle choice of colour to good effect.

*Question 3 (ai)*

Most candidates were able to identify a decorative technique that was appropriate for their product - appliqué was overwhelmingly the most popular technique selected.

*Question 3 (aii)*

Although most techniques were appropriate, many candidates gave only generalised explanations of their suitability for the product.

*Question 3 (bi)*

This question was not well answered with many candidates struggling to select a construction technique; weaker candidates gave another decorative technique or a fabric finish.

*Question 3 (bii)*

Reasons for choice of the construction technique were also very generalised.

*Question 3 (c)*

This was not well answered. Most candidates made points relating to the design of new products rather than for the planning of manufacture, and there were many low scoring responses.

*Question 4 (a)*

Most were able to provide two acceptable reasons for advertising.

*Question 4 (b)*

This part of the question was also well answered, and there were many well considered descriptions with some sound attempts to evaluate the likely success of the method selected.

*Question 5 (a)*

Answers were mixed with a significant number of candidates lacking basic knowledge and understanding of the properties of cotton. The plain weave construction was even less well understood although some higher ability candidates were able to link the properties of both fibre and fabric. There is much confusion about cotton's absorbency – many were convinced that it would enable baby dribble to be absorbed easily into the fabric.

*Question 5 (b)*

The majority of candidates related to the aesthetic qualities of satin, but, although many made some reference to polyester fibre, the satin weave was given scant attention.

*Question 5 (c)*

This question was well answered, with detailed and considered references to the use of the two fastenings for a baby's book.

*Question 6 (a)*

Many candidates either failed to note the reference to industrial manufacture; others seemed not to know appropriate techniques. Most were awarded one mark here but a number of answers referred to domestic methods, including appliqué. There are still a significant numbers of candidates offering the meaningless terms 'CAD' or 'CAM' as a technique – such responses are not given marks.

*Question 6 (b)*

There were many instructions to measure the pages carefully and the need for accuracy. Many candidates did, however, demonstrate an awareness of quality in bulk manufacture and made appropriate suggestions such as the use of laser cutters and automated sewing processes. Few were aware that care is required at both the cutting and sewing stages of manufacture.

*Question 7 (a)*

Candidates were able to link the qualities of polyester to its use as a bag although the use of fleece fabric was not so well considered. Many referred to its softness as a quality but without developing the benefits this brought to such a product. The 3-D qualities, obvious in the photograph, were rarely mentioned.

*Question 7 (b)*

Candidates' ignorance of the dangers associated with molten polyester is very worrying. A significant majority of candidates did not understand the burning qualities of either polyester or of fleece fabric and many candidates simply reworded the question.

*Question 7 (c)*

The question was answered enthusiastically with most candidates covering a range of issues. Some candidates scored only low marks with very basic answers, but the question allowed for the most able candidates to provide thoroughly aware and thoughtful accounts, which included both positive and negative points surrounding the issues discussed.

Where lower marks were awarded, it was usually because candidates discussed supply and demand issues, sales matters, and wrote very generalised answers or focused heavily on one point.