

DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Paper 9631/01

Theory

General comments

Most of the candidates had been well prepared for this component although more detail could have been included by candidates in some of the answers. Candidates should also read the question carefully so as to ensure that the answers are appropriate to the questions. It may be helpful for candidates to highlight key words and phrases in a 'plan' before answering the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The answers varied from excellent, to those which lacked detail and could score only very few marks, if any. A few answers showed detailed knowledge and understanding in the responses and were able to score full marks in more than one part of the question.

- (a) There were some excellent answers explaining how a latch needle works. The best answers had included labelled diagrams, which made the explanations very clear. A series of simple diagrams was acceptable as long as the notes were clear. A few answers had muddled latch needles with bearded ones, which was incorrect in this instance. A small number of answers did not give details of how the latch needle works.
- (b) Names of fabrics were not always given correctly. Terms such as 'jersey' or 'tricot' were given credit, although to gain full marks, the fibre content should also be given, in which case, 'cotton jersey' or 'nylon tricot' would be awarded full marks. There were some well-informed answers, which included diagrams to illustrate the 'course' and 'wale' construction features. Some candidates muddled the 'warp' and 'weft' knitting construction types; these terms should be known at advanced level. Credit was given when labelled sketches had been included.
- (c) There were some very good comparative answers, with detailed points given for weft knitted fabrics and plain woven fabrics. The main points discussed by many candidates included stretch, drape, absorbency, comfort, cover, and stiffness.
- (d) The construction of fabrics was not always discussed, as asked for in the question. Some answers included points such as types of fibres or yarns used (such as staple yarns, compared with continuous filament yarns), for which some credit could be given. However, the question was asking specifically about the construction of fabrics, such as weaving, knitting and other methods of construction such as non-wovens.

Different types of woven fabrics such as plain/twill/satin weaves, and their variations were well known and were related to end uses as asked for in the question. Types of knitted fabrics were less well known although there were some high scoring answers, which included well-discussed points.

Question 2

- (a) The terms 'staple' and 'continuous filament' fibres were usually well-known and specific fibres were given in both cases.
- (b) The 'microscope' view was not so well-known; this is also an area which is specifically noted in the specification for this subject and is expected at advanced level. It helps to explain the theory behind the properties of fibres and fabrics, for example, 'absorbency' is easier to explain if the structure of a fibre is known.
- (c) Where candidates had described the structures of specific fibres in the previous part, it made it easier to discuss the relevant points in this section.
- (d) This section was the least well-known with variable answers. The answers scoring highest marks were able to discuss various relevant points such as cost, speed of production, thickness, surface friction and modification of fabrics for specific end uses.

Section B

Candidates were able to choose one question in this section and both questions were well attempted although **Question 3** marks were usually higher.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to answer this section well, gaining full marks.
- (b) This section was well-known although not all answers related 'line' and 'balance' to the designing of garments as asked for in the question. Some answers included labelled sketches, which was acceptable.
- (c) There were many well-discussed answers which contained points about the use of CAD being used to develop textile designs. Some of the answers were rather general in nature, which meant full marks could not be awarded; however, where specific examples were given about the use of CAD software, such as changes of colour, size/scale of design; 3D visualising, etc., many credit points could be awarded.
- (d) This was usually well-answered and it was pleasing to read the answers which contained specific details of how traditional designs had been modified to be used in modern textiles. It was acceptable to include labelled sketches, for which some credit was given.

Question 4

- (a) This was often not well-answered. 'Batch production' was sometimes muddled with 'mass production' and 'one-off' production. Batch production is when a specific number of items is manufactured; mass production is used in the production of clothing on a continuous basis and a 'one'-off production is when only one is produced and it could be a prototype item which is made before producing a quantity of identical items.
- (b) The marking of fabrics on items 'made at home' was usually well known, as the methods used could have included tailor tacking or marking using tailor's chalk. The answers for methods used in industry were not well-known. Answers could have included the use of a 'hot notcher' (used at the edge of fabric); or a 'fluorescent marker', which shows up under ultra violet light; or a 'fabric drill' which can mark certain positions such as pockets, on garments.
- (c) This section was usually well-answered and there were many well assessed points given about closures and fasteners. Popular choices included zippers, buttons and buttonholes, hooks and eyes and Velcro. Answers were often able to comment on the different types of fastenings available, such as the types of materials they were made from as well as where they could be used on garments. Sketches were sometimes included which was acceptable.
- (d) The answers for this section varied, with more marks being gained for part (ii) on information labels, and fewer marks awarded for (i) 'pressing/steaming'.

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Paper 9631/02

Practical

General comments

The tests chosen by Centres were in general, appropriate, and included suitable processes, which could have been completed in the allocated time scale. Types of test included a skirt, a bodice, a section of a dress, shorts, etc. The pattern alterations depended on the type of garment being made. For example, a skirt pattern changed from an A-line style to a more full skirt, or a section of shorts were lengthened/shortened. It is recommended that when the tests are chosen by Centres, a number of different types of processes should be included so that there is not too much repetition in the test.

When Centres choose the tests, they need to specify how the marks are allocated in the main parts of the test, e.g. seams [5 marks]; zip insertion [10 marks]; hem [5 marks]; etc. The work from some Centres had very good pattern alteration skills, and this is to be commended.

It is recommended that the practical tests which have been chosen by the Centres are tried out by the teachers before finalising the tests. This is to ensure that the processes/techniques chosen, can be worked in the allocated time. (The details of planning a suitable practical test is specified in the subject syllabus booklet, for reference.)

The 'shopping list' written by candidates needed to be in more detail on some scripts. Fabric width could be added to fabric length or amount needed. Details include points such as button size (e.g. diameter), length and colour of zip fastener, and whether it has metal or plastic teeth. Interfacing details could include woven or non-woven type; iron-on or sew-in; colour; width; etc.

The 'analysis of the task' involves the candidate in thinking about all the main stages, which need to be done to carry out and complete the task. The 'plan or order of work' should include all these main stages. 'Justification of choices' was usually well done with reasons given for the use of fabrics, thread, colour choice etc.

The 'organisation and timing' of the test needs to be included at the 'preparation stage and approximate timing of processes could be included as an 'order of work' list. This could be presented on the script as a table or list or bullet points, so that it is easy to follow at a later stage. It is also beneficial to have such a time plan, as it will give points for comparison later, in the Evaluation section. Centres should also note that candidates must stop working after the allocated time for the implementation/examination session.

It is important that the 'order of work' section has processes listed in a correct, logical order.

The evaluation section should include strengths and weaknesses. It is straightforward to comment on weaknesses, as problems do inevitably occur during tests. However, candidates should also include strengths, such as good cutting out; or working in an organised way; or keeping to the order of work, etc. The evaluation needs to analyse the test as a whole – not just a description of what was done – some suggestions for improvements or how things could have been done differently. 'Results achieved' should also be more than just a description of what was done – comments could include points about accuracy of the work (e.g. width of seam allowance); quality of work (e.g. is the stitching always even); and 'fit for purpose' (e.g. has a wearable garment been produced?)

The forms and printed mark sheets submitted were usually in order. Most of the candidates' answers were clearly labelled although a few scripts were on loose sheets and were not fastened securely as would be expected for examination scripts. Some scripts did not have candidate names and numbers on every page. A few test pieces had loose paper labels, or had been attached with pins. It is advisable to stitch the labels securely onto the fabrics, even if tests pieces are submitted in an individual envelope.

When marking the practical tests, only whole marks should be used, no half marks.

Centres must make sure that candidates stop working after the allocated time allowance. The only exceptions to this are that they may continue to cut out fabric pieces during the preparation session so that they have all pieces ready for the implementation/examination session. Also, candidates may continue to press their work (final pressing) and stitch the label into their test pieces so that it is securely labelled. Some Centres had allowed the candidates to continue the tests even after the time allocation had ended. This should be discouraged.

When marking the processes carried out in the practical test, Examiners will be looking for good quality work and that candidates have been able to show that they understand how processes are worked correctly. In a few cases there was very well planned preliminary/preparation work yet the practical work was of poor quality. It is better for candidates to work a section of a process or part of a process, to show the best quality work, rather than rush through all the processes to finish the garment – but at the expense of quality and, inevitably, lower marks. For example, if a garment has two pockets, one pocket could be completed, and the other left unworked as it is a repetition of the same process. Or, if there is a long hemline, a section of 10 cm of the hem could be worked so that the candidate can show that they know the correct method for the process.

In general, the test pieces reviewed varied in quality from very good to very poor; a variation in overall performance which would be expected at AS Level.