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General Certificate of Education

Design and Technology: Product Design (Textiles) 1561

TEXT1 Materials, Components and Application

Report on the Examination

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General

The style and format of this paper is now well established and candidates appeared to have been familiar with what was expected. The overall standard of achievement was disappointing, and it was obvious that a significant number of candidates lacked sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject content in order to answer the questions with the level of detail expected. Candidates would be well advised to become familiar with basic classification of fibres, the main methods of producing yarns and fabrics, and a range of common fabric finishes in order to ensure greater success in this examination unit.

Most scripts were well presented and legible and sketches and diagrams often showed extra information which was given credit as appropriate.

Question 9 was the more popular optional question having been attempted by about 70% of the candidates.

Section A

This is a compulsory section of the paper and candidates are required to answer a number of short questions testing basic knowledge of textile materials and processes. This section of the paper produced a mixed standard of responses, although the overall standard was quite good.

- 1 The vast majority of responses were awarded full marks.
- 2 This question was also well answered with 85% scoring one or more marks. The most common error was to confuse the dart with a pattern notch. Candidates who used a diagram to show the shape of a typical dart tended to score better than those who attempted a written description only.
- 3 The structure of quilted fabrics is well known and more than half of responses were awarded full marks. Again, those who answered using a labelled diagram tended to score well on this question.
- 4 Although most were knowledgeable about the typical uses of interfacings, many confused underlining with lining. Approximately 64% of responses were awarded two or more marks.
- 5 This should have been an easy question yet only about 80% were able to accurately identify the bleaching and dry cleaning symbols, and only 56% knew the 'do not dry clean' symbol.
- 6 *Proban* is the most commonly known flame retardant finish for cotton fabrics yet only 22% were able to give a correct answer to this question.
- 7(a) 75% of candidates were able to explain the meaning of *prototype*. Some of the responses were confused and lacking the precision necessary for a mark. Candidates should be practised in giving definitions of these basic textile terms.
- 7(b) The most common reason given was related to the testing and development of ideas giving rise to some high scores on this question; approximately 96% achieved one or more marks.

- 8 The role of the BSI is not well understood and there were many incorrect and confused explanations with only about 20% of responses being awarded two marks.. Candidates should be aware that BSI sets standards but does not test textile products – this is the responsibility of other bodies such as Trading Standards. The more aware were able to give specific examples of the standards in relation to named textile products.

Section B

Candidates are required to answer one of the two questions in this section.

Question 9

- 9(a) As always with this type of question, there was a varied range of responses and a good spread of marks. The most common reason for failure to collect marks was that candidates simply listed the properties of silk without reference to the cushion shown. Additionally, few made a *critical evaluation* of silk's suitability for a cushion which further reduced their achievement. Many weak candidates gave a list of generalised qualities which a cushion fabric might have with no evidence they knew specifically about silk's properties.
- 9(b) Weaker responses simply described the different fastenings with no consideration of how they would be used. Better responses made reference to the appearance and strength of the fastenings and the cushion.
- 9(c) This was generally well answered with most candidates achieving two or more marks. There was a lack of accurate terminology when referring to the various trims and a tendency to describe the decorative techniques rather than to consider texture were the reasons why full marks were not awarded in many cases.
- 9(d) Any technique which would achieve a neat and flat finish was accepted. The best responses referred to binding and it was obvious that the candidates who selected this technique had experienced its use in coursework activities. Many elected to describe a hem but few made a double hem – simply overlocking the edge and then stitching a single turning would not achieve the neat enclosed finish show and such responses were not awarded more than one mark. A significant number suggested a French seam, top-stitched edge or piping, none of which were accepted.
- 9(e) This was reasonably well answered with many candidates referring to the obvious need for accurate sizing of the various panels making up the front of the cushion. Many make life difficult for themselves for selecting more obscure areas such as the back opening which they are then unable to explain in any accurate detail.

Question 10

- 10(a) Good explanations made reference to a web of fibres, randomly arranged, and held together with adhesive, thermoplastic fibres or needle punching. Candidates who elected to answer this question were generally aware of this method of fabric construction but failed to achieve full marks because they omitted one of the stages of manufacture. Some described how felt fabrics are made which was a more specific response than the question demanded and often led to a loss of one or more marks *because* it was too specific.
- 10(b) Responses to this question were extremely poor. The question was basically about the use of non-woven fabrics in applications where disposability and hygiene are critical, yet so many completely missed this point and wrote about some interesting, and often amusing, but totally incorrect concepts. Candidates need to be aware that non-wovens are an important group of fabrics with applications which go much further than use as interfacings.
- 10(c) Approximately 73% of responses gave the correct definition of a smart fabric for two marks, but more than 20% failed to score a mark on this straightforward question.
- 10(d) A wide range of interpretations of *performance* was accepted by examiners although it was expected that candidates would refer to sportswear and survival type applications rather than theatrical type performances. Medical and electronics applications were not accepted as these were other parts of the question. Candidates should be aware that Gore-tex type fabrics are modern, but not smart, and will not be accepted for this type of question. If candidates knew about smart fabrics and their applications they tended to pick up marks easily – sadly more than 25% failed to achieve any marks.
- 10(e) This question produced a good spread of marks as many were aware of applications such as jackets with provision for MP3 players. Marks were often lost because of a lack of detail about the uses and links with the electronics.

Section C

This is a compulsory section of the paper and the format is very similar to that used in previous papers. Although the question had a historical context, it was about progress in the development of textile materials rather than fashion history.

Question 11

- 11(a) This question differentiated well between the candidates. The majority of responses referred to the differing roles of men and women at the start of the 20th century, enabling well over 70% to score two or more marks. Examiners interpreted '*about 100 years ago*' in its widest sense, accepting responses which made references to the Second World War. The more able discussed how the nature of women's employment has changed along with the fact that it is not frowned upon if women wear more revealing clothes.
- 11(b) Many candidates wrote about the fabrics used in the different outfits rather than the styles resulting in many low scores for this part of the question.

- 11(c) The question differentiated well with some detailed answers identifying that street music and media, and different cultures all have an important influence on modern fashion ideas. Some astute candidates also noted that wealthy women, such as celebrities, are still setting styles in fashion.
- 11(d) The vast majority of candidates perceived this as a question about fibre blending rather than advances made in synthetic fibres and fabric finishes. The effect of this was that only about a third of responses achieved more than 50% of the marks available. It was expected that answers would make wide reference to the strength, weight and easy care properties of synthetic fibres when compared with natural fibres, not to explain the advantages and disadvantages of blending in relation to the example given on the insert sheet. Candidates should be advised to read questions carefully and develop their answer to include a wide range of examples as required by the question.
- 11(e) Here again, failure to read the question carefully resulted in some low scores, although the question differentiated well. Many wrote at length about a wide range of advertising methods but failed to relate to modern technology such as websites, e-mail, I-phones, virtual catwalks and electronic bill boards. Those who showed awareness of some of these newer methods tended to score well.
- 11(f) Candidates have become very knowledgeable about the reasons for lining textile products and there were some very good responses – approximately 70% achieved four or more marks.
- 11(g)(i) This part of the question was also well answered with candidates making clear differentiation between the two types of boards. If marks were lost, it was because of a lack of detail, although a small number clearly had no knowledge of either.
- 11(g)(ii) The most common points related to the use of colour and the range of garments in the collection. Some related to the graphic presentation and the disposition of the model rather than the collection of garments and a small number of marks were allowed for this.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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