

GCE

# Product Design:Textiles

TEXT3

Report on the Examination

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## **Principal Examiner's Report on the TEXT 3 Examination June 2013**

The questions on this paper were straightforward and based on familiar topics which have appeared regularly in the past, and the majority of candidates did not appear to have found any of the questions especially difficult. As in previous years, many candidates answered one part of a question well whilst scoring badly in a different part. And many apparently able and knowledgeable candidates were unable to maintain the same high standard shown in some of their answers across the whole paper, which was very disappointing.

Scripts were mostly well presented although the quality of the sketches for Questions 09 and 13 was very poor with a lack of detail and clarity about what was intended. Few used colour – which is acceptable – to indicate their intentions.

Question 1 was the most popular question, attempted by the majority of candidates, and eliciting a wide variety of responses. Many based part of their answer on Question 08 on the 2012 paper, but some of this information was not used in a meaningful way and many did not go much beyond the impact of Make Do and Mend.

Question 6 was almost equally popular with candidates although responses were very slightly weaker than for Question 1. This question was based on a design and manufacture topic which should have been easy for candidates, but examiners were surprised at the generally poor quality of the answers seen.

Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 were equally popular choices, with candidates performing slightly better on Questions 3 and 4.

It was surprising that the two design based questions (5 and 6) were the least well answered, whilst Question 4, based on a technical topic, had the highest mean mark of the six questions on the paper.

There were a significant number of very poor papers seen, with total marks only just managing to reach double figures. Some of these candidates appeared to have been poorly prepared for the examination, often writing answers which did not make sense, and completely missed the focus of the questions. Many candidates do not appear to take note of the mark allocation as evidenced by the fact that they write only half a dozen lines for a twelve mark question.

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

01 Examiners saw some very high scoring answers but there were also many weak responses which showed a complete lack of knowledge and understanding. There were many accounts with confused versions of events during the twentieth century and wildly incorrect dates given. Many candidates wrote a potted history of twentieth century costume which, whilst being accurate, did not address the issue of how the differing influences actually changed fashions.

Sport was the least popular influence selected and the one which elicited the weakest responses. The other three influences were selected in equal measure. Some candidates did not make a clear distinction between the two different influences they had selected, writing a general essay with some references to both.

Those who opted to discuss the role of women and the influence of war and conflict often used the same material for both and were not able to make clear distinctions between the two. There were many general references to the war with candidates hedging their bets about events in WW1 and WW2, and a lot of confusion about specific influences on prevailing fashions in each of the two

eras. Where candidates explored the events taking place and gave details of specific fashions and how they had changed because of the wars, then they tended to score well.

When considering the role of women, many did not make reference to women's struggles for equality throughout the twentieth century and the influences on clothing. Many chose to write lengthy accounts about women starting to wear trousers, mainly in response to wartime conditions, and continued with detail about various trouser styles rather than moving on to other issues related to equality. The best responses looked at where women stood socially at the beginning of the Edwardian period and how this was reflected in their heavily corseted bodies and impractical clothing, and traced their developing status up to the present day, giving specific examples of clothing styles to support the points made. Some became stuck on the achievements of Coco Chanel so that their accounts became narrow in focus and lacking evidence of a broader understanding. A sizeable numbers of promising answers did not go beyond the late 1940s, missing out on women's' continued progress in the world of work and the power dressing of the 1980s.

The influence of youth culture was slightly better understood, with the achievements of Mary Quant and Vivienne Westwood dominating the accounts. Again, those who started with the scenario after WW2 and considered the various social and economic factors of the time tended to include relevant detail such as the influences of music and film, Teddy boys, Mods and Rockers, punk, skinheads, grunge and street fashions. The weaker responses tended to relate only to the fashions of the 1960s, concentrating on the mini skirt.

## Question 2

02 The concept of comfort was generally well understood. Many answers concentrated on fibres – and often a narrow range – at the expense of the effects of yarns and fabrics. This was the reason that many candidates failed to score in the top mark range. There was generally sound knowledge of the natural fibres but there were weaknesses in relation to the synthetics, and whilst the issue of comfort in relation to thermal insulation was usually included, the effects of absorbency were often missed. Candidates have a poor understanding of what is meant by absorbency and how it affects the comfort or otherwise of clothing.

03 Candidates' understanding of modern and smart materials continues to be a serious weakness. Many appeared to have taken the TEXT1 examination this summer and there were many references to brushing and calendering which are not modern finishes. Some candidates stretched the concept of comfort to its limit, including much irrelevant material in their answers. There were some excellent descriptions of Gore-Tex®, Sympatex®, Outlast® and Stomatex®, including accurate detail of how they work.

Unfortunately, many wrote about smart and modern materials in general terms and did not confine their discussion to those which might increase the comfort of the wearer, instead moving on to safety and sporting performance which were not acceptable.

## Question 3

04 Answers were very mixed with some offering only the most basic of explanations whilst others presented detailed accounts. Trade Fairs were the least popular whilst candidates found it difficult to write about shop reports/sales figures in any detail.

05 There is good awareness of environmental and ethical issues in relation to textiles and many candidates scored well on this part of the question. The best responses gave factual information about the impact of textile manufacture and related it to changed behaviours in consumer buying trends. But many took the opportunity to air their grievances about the way in which certain retailers are perceived to treat workers in the textile industry. This tended to lead to a one-sided and narrow discussion which often had a negative effect on achievement.

## Section B

### Question 4

06 There were some very good responses here; most achieved a good mark for accurate knowledge of the ways in which fabric is prepared for dyeing and printing. Some were confused about the effects of accurately named processes on fabrics and why they are necessary. Others did not understand what was being asked of them and wrote about tying fabric prior to tie-dyeing, waxing areas for batik, and the weaving and knitting of fabrics. Candidates should be aware that fluorescent whitening is not used to whiten fabric before it is dyed – it is a finish in its own right.

07 There were many high scoring descriptions of a variety of methods, including rotary and flat-bed screen prints, digital and sublimation printing. Some of the methods were more appropriate for art classes than for commercial textile manufacture. Marks tended to be lost to a lack of clarity or inaccurate information. Diagrams often aided descriptions in this part of the question.

08 Whilst most understood the term colourfastness, a significant number think that it is a finish. Some good answers made specific reference to the need for different types of fastness and provided relevant examples to support their explanations.

### Question 5

09 Examiners saw some interesting and well-thought through designs, but there were just as many where a simple motif had been dropped onto a product. A sizeable number presented ideas for non-textile products such as plates, cups, tiles and wallpaper. The highest scoring responses used sketches to show how the large motif could be broken down into its constituent parts and used to make a new pattern for a wide variety of textile products. Consideration of different techniques also helped some candidates to score marks.

10 A very high percentage of methods were not fabric manipulation, eg brushing, calendaring, burn-out effects, leading to the award of a zero mark. Where candidates provide acceptable techniques such as pleats, tucks and appliqué, they tended to score well although some instructions lacked sufficient detail to enable a third party to follow them successfully.

11 Most made repeated reference to the idea that branded goods mean higher quality – although this is not always the case. Some explained the availability of other products in a range whilst others erroneously thought that only branded goods would be covered by various consumer legislation, such as the Sale of Goods Act.

12 There were some very varied responses to this question with many treating it as a question on environmental and ethical issues and finding yet another opportunity to air their views on the ethics of overseas and sweatshop manufacture. Those who fully understood the issues relating to global manufacture usually achieved high marks.

### Question 6

13 The ideas presented were generally very weak with little modification of the basic design. Fabrics were not well considered, and mostly fibres only; in some cases a polyester/elastane blend was offered as two different fabrics. This level of thinking is not befitting of an A2 candidate. Many sketches were of a poor quality with style lines not shown and only limited explanation and justification of the changes made. The highest marks went to those candidates who changed the shape completely and included more imaginative style details, especially the pockets.

14 There was evidence of a lot of misunderstanding here; many candidates think that JIT means speedier manufacture rather than a form of on-demand stock distribution and control. The vast majority of answers concentrated on fabrics and components being delivered ready for the start of manufacture. There is a considerable misunderstanding that the manufacturer constantly replenishes stock on a daily basis according to what has been sold.

15 Many answers did not go beyond quick and accurate which is a low level GCSE response, not A2 understanding. A high proportion of candidates did not confine themselves to the manufacture of the trousers and included much irrelevant material on the making of the fabric and designing of the trousers. The candidates scoring the highest marks made detailed reference to specific automated machinery and processes, such as buttonholing, seam, dart and pocket stitching, robotic control of pressing using steam dollies, and automated factory distribution and warehousing systems.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

## **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)