

GCE

Product Design: Textiles

TEXT3

Report on the Examination

2561

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Principal Examiner's Report on the TEXT3 Examination June 2014

The paper was well received by students and covered a wide variety of topics from the specification. Questions 1, 3 and 5 were very popular choices and these produced a good spread of marks. Question 4 was the least popular but usually well answered by those who attempted it. Scripts were mostly well presented with labelled diagrams used to explain various points, although some students have very poor handwriting making their scripts almost illegible. It was encouraging to see many students making plans before beginning their answers and this seemed to help them write more focused accounts without repeating points already made.

The standard of answers was slightly better than in previous years although responses to questions based on designing are still very poor. Many students scored highly on one or two questions but were unable to maintain their performance across all three of their options leading to some disappointing total paper marks. It appeared that some did not apportion their time well so that answers to the last question were rushed and this affected their achievement.

Many students do not show their knowledge well as they do not make wise choices in terms of the examples they use in answers, or which questions they opt to attempt. This is apparent when they present badly drawn and simplistic ideas in response to design questions with high marks attached to them, or fail to write in detail and to give relevant examples when responding to questions which carry high marks.

Teachers and students entering for future examinations are advised to study past papers and mark schemes and the relevant examiner's report in order to become familiar with the requirements. Practising answering questions within a limited time can help students to plan their time in examinations.

Section 1

Question 1

01 Examiners accepted a broad interpretation of *shocking* in relation to a wide range of designers. Coco Chanel, Christian Dior, Vivienne Westwood and Mary Quant were the most cited designers with Paul Poiret and Alexander McQueen following closely in second place. These designers were the most obvious choices and ones that provided plenty for students to write about. Inevitably some chose more obscure designers whose work could not always be described as having a shock factor and about whom there was little to write for 14 marks. Some responses did not deal with the social issues of the time but were an account of the chosen designer's life and career which was not required.

Students were expected to explain why the designs caused disquiet when they were introduced and that invariably meant describing the social attitudes and prevailing fashions of the time. Whilst most had some understanding of the issues many students did not explain with sufficient detail and/or accuracy to allow for the award of the highest marks. This was especially the case when the timing of WW1 or WW2 was involved; students continue to be very confused about these two different eras and the designers associated with them.

There were some excellent descriptions of the main garments and other styles associated with the selected designers but the impact on future fashions was less well covered. The main reason for this was that students tried to reference the garments they had described with today's equivalents rather than ones which were influenced by and immediately followed the launch of the shocking fashion. For example, those describing Dior's *New Look* of 1947 thought that it had directly influenced the current vogue for floral dresses rather than its development into the full skirted and fitting dress styles of the 1950s.

A number of students wrote a very strong account about the work of one of their chosen designers but were unable to do so for the 2nd designer which led to some lower total question marks from obviously able students.

Question 2

Answers to all parts of this question were poor with little understanding of the realities involved in either recycling/upcycling materials or modern manufacturing methods.

- 02** The majority of answers made relevant reference to the reduction of textile waste in landfill sights and many explained the advantage of being able to make unique garments from re-working clothes. Whilst the reduction in the costs of buying new fabrics was a common theme, many students did not seem to realise that the additional costs of sorting old garments and one-off manufacture required for the new garments would make them very expensive for the buyer. Some did not appreciate the fact that the question was about small scale manufacture and based their answer on individuals customising and re-vamping their old clothing.
- 03** Some weak design ideas were shown, lacking in creativity and failing to take the fibre content and fabric weights into account when mixing them in new garments. Ironically, some had written about these very same issues when answering Part 02 Annotation to explain thinking was also poor. Students need to be aware that questions of this type require high quality and original designs for the award of top marks. There were 12 marks for this question requiring something more challenging than cutting the denim jeans down to make shorts, or putting tartan cap sleeves onto the lightweight cotton dress. Few students considered the effects of mixing the cotton garments with those made from wool and the subsequent care that would be needed; many appeared to see only the pattern in the tartan jacket fabric which they used with abandon to decorate cotton garments, eg by putting patch pockets on the cotton dress or corded trousers. Back views were rarely shown and there was little to explain which new component had been used. The average score for this question was 5 out of 12 marks.
- 04** Answers were generally poor. This question invited answers on the use of CAD and CAM in modern manufacturing and the impact on efficiency and reduction of waste. Instead, candidates gave accounts of the recycling of waste water, installation of chimney filters to reduce *fumes* from factories, recycling of fabric, sewing more slowly or only operating factories during hours of daylight to reduce energy use, and using *recycled energy*.

Those who did have a more realistic understanding usually referred to the use of CAD to make efficient layplans and the greater accuracy from automated machines leading to a reduction in the waste generated by faulty products. The more knowledgeable candidates explained how JIT makes a significant contribution to the reduction of waste and also explained the savings made when CAD is used to prototype new products rather than making physical samples.

The average mark for this question was less than 3 out of 8.

Question 3

- 05** Students offered a very wide range of points about their selected outlets, many of which were clearly based on personal experience. This part differentiated well and was far from being an easy question about shopping. The internet was a very popular choice and the one which often elicited the highest score for the student. Factory outlets were the least popular outlet and some students mistook them for the actual factory where goods are made rather than the more common *village* type environment. Answers relating to department stores were also less strong as students tended to repeat the same points relating to the extensive choice of products. To their credit, most students made very different observations about each of their choices and managed to avoid using the same point for the different outlets selected. Drawbacks and benefits of the outlets were expected for the award of full marks.
- 06** There was strong evidence of understanding of what is meant by a *brand name* and how it can help to promote awareness of a fashion company. Almost all answers referred to the level of quality associated with a brand name – whether that be high or low quality - and the ensuing client loyalty. More detailed accounts included examples of notoriety associated with some brands, and opportunities for the company to extend their range once the brand is established. Some otherwise excellent responses were not awarded full marks because of a lack of examples of specific designers or companies.

Section B

Question 4

This was the least popular choice but the one which attracted the highest marks. Those opting to answer this question were clearly confident in their knowledge and responded well to all parts. Many included drawings to illustrate the points they were making.

- 07** Air-jet texturing, false twist, stuffer box and knit-de-knit were the methods most commonly described and these were often accompanied by a sketch to show the effects of the texturing. There were some excellent descriptions of the various processes and many scored full marks. Where a mark was lost, it was usually because of a failure to refer to the need to allow the fibres to cool after heat setting, or not making reference to the thermoplastic nature of the fibres involved. A small number of students incorrectly included brushing – which is a fabric finish – or the spinning of staple fibres to make a staple yarn.

- 08** There were some high quality responses with most giving detail of the ability of the textured yarns to trap air, making them better insulators. Many also referred to the added surface interest but few explained clearly how the texturing allows the yarns to wick moisture more effectively.
- 09** Bouclé, slub and chenille yarns featured heavily in answers to this part of the question with diagrams frequently used to good effect in many explanations. The most common reasons why responses were not awarded full marks was a lack of detail in the description of how the yarns are made or inaccurate descriptions of the effects on the fabric. For instance, many students thought that a boucle yarn makes a fabric soft and fluffy rather than bumpy and slightly harder. Crepe yarns were not accepted as they are not classed as fancy yarns.
- 10** Most students were familiar with the wrapping of the different yarns around the elastane core – this was the most common method described. Some lack of detail and explanation in many descriptions meant that full marks were not awarded. Diagrams were often used to explain the process and markers gave credit for information included in these. Whilst most students recognised that elastane fibres give stretch to a yarn, there was a lack of clear explanation about the need for them to be core-spun when making yarns.

Question 5

- 11** A straightforward question which could have been answered by listing three different methods. Many students, however, found this challenging and offered inappropriate shapings such as the use of elastic or belts, cutting on the bias or vague references to panelling, and inclusion of elastane fibres in the fabric.
- 12** Many students clearly considered that they needed to show a pattern development for their design in part 13 of the question but, whilst designs were adequate, they often lacked flair and originality. 8 marks were allowed for this question and a more complex design than a simple shift type dress was expected. Having been unable to accurately name shaping methods in (11), many students correctly included them in their designs. Darts were frequently shown in strange positions, eg underarm darts on the back bodice. As with Question 03, designs were not well presented, often lacking clear annotation, especially with reference to fabrics; A2 students should be able to describe fabrics in detail and give more information than just the fibre content. The representation of darts was poor – these were often shown as triangles rather than a line, or were left *floating* in the middle of a bodice. Little thought appeared to have been given to fastenings; zips and buttoned fastenings frequently ended at the waistline of fitted bodices so that it would have been impossible to get into them, or there was a lack of clarity about where the fastening was to be put in the dress.

- 13** Examiners recognised that the pattern draft was a difficult skill to show in a written examination. They looked for evidence of understanding of how the basic blocks should be altered to achieve pattern pieces for the dress design shown in (12) rather than perfectly drawn pattern pieces.. A more complex draft than simply extending the length of the blocks was expected for 9 marks, and this was the knock-on effect of a weak design in (12). Darts shown in the original block were often made to *disappear* without trace in the new pattern as students did not understand that the fullness needs to be transferred to a different part of the garment. Many candidates clearly had difficulties in showing how new fullness in the design would be transferred to a pattern template, for example, when no additional allowance was included for pleating and gathering in the basic skirt block. Where sleeves were included, the top was often a strange shape. Pattern markings were often overlooked and there was a lack of information about how many pieces would need to be cut to make the dress. Those students who understood what was required produced some impressive drafts; the average mark for this part of the question was 4 out of 9.
- 14** This part was not well answered for two main reasons; students referred only to the fibre content and its appropriateness in terms of comfort for the wearer, and also failed to make reference to the style of the dress as the question asked – this is difficult if there is no indication of how the fabric is constructed or its weight. The average mark was less than 2 out of 4.
- 15** Darts and gathering were the two methods most chosen. Whilst there were some clear and well explained accounts, supported by well labelled diagrams, there were a number of confused and inaccurate descriptions; darts in particular seemed to cause problems for students.

Question 6

- 16** There was good awareness of the need for different types of finishes to be applied to different textile products. Whilst many students described a range they rarely referenced the finish to the fibre properties that necessitate the finish in the first place, eg the high absorbency of cotton and viscose makes them ideal candidates for stain resistant finishes. A high proportion of responses did not go beyond the basic finishes that have appeared on the TEXT 1 papers in recent years and, whilst these were perfectly acceptable, a wider range of different finishes is expected of an A2 student, especially for the award of high marks.

The average mark was about 7 out of 14 and this was in part down to the lack of information about fibres and fabrics rather than simply listing the products where the finish might be used. There was also a lack of understanding about what constitutes a finish; laser cutting, Tencel, Nomex and *colourfast* are not fabric finishes. Confusion about which finishes are used on which fabrics was also a contributing factor to low achievement, eg wool fabrics are not calendered, a mothproofing treatment is not required for linen fabrics, Proban is not used on uniforms for fire service personnel.

- 17** Students either knew the differences between the two types of fabric or they struggled to answer this part of the question. Most referred to the layering of fabrics in a laminate, giving Gore-Tex as an example but were unable to clearly explain the nature of a coated fabric or give an appropriate example. Some used diagrams to aid their explanation and these often helped them to secure at least one mark.
- 18** Students either understood the nature of the microporous membrane in the laminate or they struggled. Some excellent diagrams supported many responses allowing students to access the top mark band. Weaker answers were often in simplistic terms explaining that raindrops are too big to get through the fabric but perspiration can escape.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion