



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Art and Design – Textile Design 42042

(Specification 4204)

Unit 2: Externally Set Task

Report on the Examination

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GCSE Art and Design (4201-4207, 4211)

General

This was the first year candidates could enter for both Unit 1 and Unit 2 as a full course award and claim certification for the new specification in all GCSE Art and Design endorsements.

Moderators reported that many centres had taken the opportunities presented by the specification to restructure courses and offer more flexible approaches to teaching and learning. Others had been more cautious, retaining the best practice from legacy course models, sometimes with the addition of workshops and one-off activities, to reflect the individual needs of their own candidates. Overall, whichever approach was taken, it would appear that the specification and its enhanced opportunities have been very well received by schools and colleges.

For Unit 1 there is no prescribed approach to development of work, but for the full course the submission must show the coverage of all four assessment objectives through “more than one extended collection of work, or project”. For some centres the portfolio ethos was actively pursued with teachers encouraging candidates to take a lead role in the selection and organisation of work to be presented for examination. For others, candidates submitted two or three complete projects, as in previous years, with little selection.

Work for this unit may also be produced in the form of one sustained project supported by work generated by other experiences such as visits, workshops, experimental exercises in handling media and engagement with a wide variety of sources from which to develop individual responses. Alternatively, two or more projects of similar or different scope and complexity could fulfil the assessment criteria. Therefore, themes for projects, assignments and briefs were often wide ranging and varied and candidates were able to engage with a wealth of possibilities and developmental opportunities. In many centres, the use of starting points from the previous year’s test paper was common practice.

For Unit 2, the extended preparatory time available for the externally set task, was well received. More time allowed centres to select a delivery approach to suit individual candidates’ needs and working practices. Some centres chose to use the full lead-in time available from early January, allowing candidates the time to explore their ideas and intentions in greater depth. Other centres opted for a shorter preliminary time followed by a much longer period over which the 10-hour supervised sessions were spread to support candidates’ ‘momentum’. The flexibility afforded by the extended preparatory period was deemed to be a major factor in the success of this unit of work.

The externally set task papers for each endorsement were also well received, with many centres welcoming the familiar paper format, which allows candidates the choice between focused questions with suggested sources, or an open-ended starting point. Each paper is designed to ensure candidates have access to a range of different, equally valid, ways to achieve the assessment objectives. Please remember that candidates should be allowed to select their own question from the full range in the paper. Teachers should not pre-select questions on behalf of learners or offer them a narrower range to choose from. AQA regards this as a form of malpractice.

In both units, visually engaging assessment evidence in the form of sketchbooks, ideas books or journals, as well as mounted loose sheets were seen.

Teacher Standardisation Meetings

The meetings not only illustrate standards, but give teachers the opportunity to view a variety of practices in all specification endorsements from both Unit 1 and Unit 2. The generosity of centres in loaning work for training purposes at teacher standardisation meetings is gratefully appreciated.

Attendance at teacher standardisation meetings was deemed essential this year for centres new to the specification. At moderation, those centres that did not send a representative do not appear always to have fully grasped how to evidence the new assessment objectives.

Delegate feedback indicated that fundamental issues such as the administration of paperwork, deadline dates and reminders of the support available were a vital part of the meetings, but that the emphasis on standards and training through the marking of 'live' work is why the AQA teacher standardisation sessions are so highly valued. Understandably the absence of grade boundaries in this first year of full course certification was an issue for many delegates. Presenters endeavoured to allay fears and confirmed that although the raw mark boundary may change, the overall standard will stay the same and be carried forward.

The provision of CDs, for delegates to take away from the meetings, that included a 'visual reminder' of the training and marking sets and associated attainment commentaries was welcomed. This compensated for delegates now being unable to photograph the exhibition for copy-right reasons. Please note, the reminder notes and all other Teacher Resource Bank information are also available through the AQA website.

Administration

Administration was generally good this year, although in a few instances moderators did receive paper work after the 31st May deadline. It is essential that centres send two copies of their Centre Mark Form (CMF) or EDI printout to the moderator. This ensures the moderation sample is selected in good time, and the centre's copy is returned in advance of the agreed moderation date.

Transferring marks on to forms still posed some problems, for example, confusing Unit 1 with Unit 2 when adding marks on the CMF or adding up the marks incorrectly on Candidate Record Forms (CRF). Generally, however, inaccuracies such as these were dealt with by moderators during centre visits.

Please remember, it is a mandatory requirement that CRFs are signed by both the candidate and the teacher responsible for delivering the course of study. This is to signify that the work submitted is solely that of the candidate and is an essential part of centre administration. Thankfully, there were very few instances this year of incomplete forms, although the supporting information boxes (to expand on information about candidates' individual circumstances or to explain the awarding of marks) were rarely used.

Assessment and Moderation

The change to the sample selection process caused some confusion in centres this year. A single sample of candidates' work is now chosen according to the range of marks submitted across Unit 1 and Unit 2 for each endorsement. For this reason, it is much less likely that both units of work of the same candidate will be seen. The selection is also proportionate to the number of units entered for each endorsement. So if a centre enters equal proportions of Unit 1 and Unit 2 for an endorsement, for example, 20 Unit 1 and 20 Unit 2, 15 units will be selected for moderation, 8 for Unit 1 and 7 for Unit 2 or vice versa.

In terms of the accuracy of centre marking, where centres had sent a representative to a teacher standardisation meeting, used the assessment criteria appropriately and with reference to AQA's standards, marking judgements were generally sound. Where this had not been done and where there appeared to be a lack of internal standardisation marking appeared to be erratic. In these cases, the use of marks that were too high or too low in the four-mark band was a common problem. Where teachers had marked to the requirements of the assessment objectives, using the key words of "Develop", "Refine", "Record" and "Present", and the distinguishing characteristics "Just", "Adequate", "Clear" and "Convincing" in the four-mark bands, they were better equipped to differentiate when proposing marks for their own candidates.

Moderation meetings and visits were generally very successful this year, with fewer instances of inadequate provision and/or presentation of samples. Whether submissions are presented in the form of an exhibition or carefully labelled folders, a quiet, undisturbed area is essential if the moderation process is to be effectively conducted.

Assessment Objectives

In both Unit 1 and Unit 2 candidates are required to evidence all four assessment objectives through appropriate means. The document “Interpreting the Assessment Objectives” offers valuable guidance for centres and is available through the AQA website.

Assessment Objective 1

The combination of instructions to “develop ideas” with the wording “informed by contextual and other sources” saw many candidates move beyond the frequently accessed artists typical to previous years’ submissions. The breadth of possibilities under the heading of “sources” has been evidenced through what one senior moderator described as “an eclectic mix of increasingly contemporary and very stimulating practitioners” as well as song lyrics, dance displays, objects and artefacts, cultural gatherings, trips, visits, exhibitions, poems, posters and films. Where candidates had simply downloaded information from the Internet, little evidence of analytical or cultural understanding was seen, and their own work was rarely “informed” as a result.

Assessment Objective 2

In some cases, refinement was simply evidenced through the eventual selection of one version of the same image that had been replicated in a range of media with little consideration of alternative possibilities. In others, candidates had experimented extensively to evidence the creative selection and rejection of a wide range of media in a journey of exploration through a project or series of stand-alone experiences. Digital media was in evidence across all ability ranges, with candidates often using software packages such as ‘Photoshop’ to good effect in considering a range of possibilities. Screen shots were also used by some candidates to effectively demonstrate the manipulation and refinement of ideas.

Assessment Objective 3

Recording in a wide range of both two and three-dimensional media was seen this year, with digital recording used effectively for a variety of purposes, and a balance of primary and secondary sources was noted in the most successful portfolio and test submissions. These included documenting work in progress, design ideas and working drawings, as well as recording through drawing. One moderator reported that “drawing as a recording tool appears to be as strong as ever” whereas another reported that drawing continues to “wither on the vine”. Candidates also evidenced their own insights and opinions through written annotations, with thoughts and reflections complementing associated visual materials. Once again however, the presentation of written information that had simply been downloaded from the internet or copied from books without subsequent development rarely formed evidence for the marking criteria.

Assessment Objective 4

Personal responses were varied, with some showing ambition and creativity as a result of individual journeys of enquiry. Many candidates progressed their ideas through a wide range of projects or client-orientated briefs, often showing sound understanding of process and intention. Encouragingly, fewer examples of pastiche were reported this year. Please remember, an “informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding” does not have to be seen as a separate outcome, and there was more evidence this year of candidates showing personal responses through collections of related work centred on a particular theme, sketchbook investigations and/or design sheets. Equally some excellent examples of fully resolved outcomes were submitted in a wide range of styles, media and sizes that evidenced the candidates’ abilities to handle materials sensitively and with a clear understanding of their appropriateness, given intended purposes.

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The Textile Design endorsement has continued to draw from a variety of areas within the curriculum. In most cases courses were delivered by art departments, but there was growing evidence of successful programmes of study evolving from KS3 technology courses. At times these tended to

follow prescriptive briefs, but a number adopted an open approach with freely developed themes generating more individual outcomes. Some courses were based on the assessment criteria, others grew from a focus on learning technical textile techniques and some had a primary emphasis on the creation of an end product. This year there appeared to be an increase in the number of students choosing fashion as their area of study.

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The question paper was well received in centres and there was a positive response to the format and the content of the individual starting points provided. There were no negative comments regarding the unlimited time for preparation and although most centres welcomed the fact that distribution was at their discretion, some centres still experienced difficulties securing sufficient time, generally due to internal policy issues.

Most candidates used the reference points as stated in the questions. In the strongest sets of work these led to considerable investigation and discovery. In less successful submissions they were considered within initial research but the information collected was not used to inform further study or inspire personal engagement with the theme.

Question Paper Starting Points

1. The Everyday

This was a popular and accessible question that candidates found easy to research. Although most responded to the suggestion of ‘an everyday task’ or ‘an everyday scene’ rather than ‘a current event,’ several moderators commented that work inspired by the Royal Wedding had been attempted and images from newspaper headlines had been translated onto fabric through the use of Image Maker. In several instances this provided a surface for further embellishment with hand and machine stitching. Preparation work included collages of everyday products such as fashion items, makeup, shoes and kitchen objects. A number of candidates collected and used mixed media with pieces of fabric, tickets and photographs frequently employed as a surface for machine or hand stitching. Several realised pieces illustrated strong tactile qualities, including panels illustrating daily activities and garments used in domestic routines. Aprons and overalls were decorated and assembled; some used everyday objects within their construction.

Named artists Laura McCafferty and Tilleke Schwarz were researched by most candidates. Pop Art images also provided suitable sources and the work of Patrick Caulfield and Michael Craig- Martin led to examples of cut-work appliqué. Victoria Frazer’s influence led to objects being created from tickets used in daily travel.

Technical strengths were demonstrated by several candidates using free machining to create linear drawings on cloth. Examples were seen of stitched studies of figures in movement, which had evolved from photographs and sketched observations, ‘drawn’ with the machine onto fabric, and one candidate produced stitch and appliqué work showing a washing line of clothes.

Another produced work inspired by her daily journey to school, with the final piece taking the form of a map.

2. Self-Image

This was one of the most popular questions with candidates electing to explore emotional themes and visual issues concerning themselves and their personal identity. Interesting work was produced where photographic self-portraits often provided the starting points. A number of candidates used traditional media in preparatory studies such as pencil and paint. Others experimented with photography, computer generated imagery and text before developing work utilising stitching, image transfer and textile media.

National identity provided a further source for investigation. Candidates used this opportunity to explore fabrics, symbols, colours and motifs associated with a particular region or a national identity

with which they were familiar. Final outcomes included designs for Cornish tartan fabric in gold, black and white and ethnic style prints which reflected elements of regional and cultural identity.

Developmental work frequently illustrated collages of faces exhibiting different expressions or emotions. Use was also made of costume and props which candidates felt would reflect or disguise their personality.

The textile pieces of named artist Rozanne Hawksley provided a starting point for some students, but a significant number extended their sources to include the work of Tracey Emin.

3. Seasons

Centres suggested that the skills candidates had acquired during their course of study prepared them particularly well to respond to this question. Personal photographs led to successful developmental work and creative outcomes. Careful consideration was given to the choice and selection of colour and its related meaning. Contextual references to the work of Klimt, O'Keeffe, van Gogh and Monet were made. Studies of trees led candidates to consider how they may appear in summer or winter conditions. Swirls and curves derived from investigations into the work of Klimt influenced decorative compositions, and brushwork seen in van Gogh's paintings were interpreted through dye experiments, couched fabric scraps, stitched fibres and applied yarns. The stitching techniques employed by Alice Kettle inspired some candidates to build up images through intensive machine sewing. Art Nouveau stylisation of plants and foliage also proved influential.

A large number of candidates did explore elements from all four seasons. Some amalgamated elements from different seasons within a single piece of work such as one high quality example of a wall-hanging that illustrated spring leaves and summer flowers against grey winter clouds. At the base autumn fruit provided the border. Another took the form of a line of bunting with each section illustrating wildlife or flora from a specific season. In a number of centres the most complex outcomes were created by candidates who had focused on one particular season. Small panels and cushions illustrated dyed, stitched, applied and embellished images derived from or associated with a selected season. Several candidates produced creative hats incorporating seasonal products such as dried leaves, flowers, seed heads and feathers within their developmental studies and construction of the final response.

Moderators commented that this question was selected by candidates across the attainment range and there were numerous examples of lower attaining learners demonstrating positive results and acknowledging a sense of achievement. One candidate used simple leaf shapes to produce an appliqué panel in the realisation of intentions.

4. Signs and Symbols

This too proved to be a popular and accessible choice of question across the ability range. Although it was frequently selected by less able candidates it also enabled the most able to be very creative and produce some extremely well resolved outcomes.

There were examples of all three suggested options providing ideas for development and a number of candidates drew inspiration from textiles that related to family background and culture. The ethnic research selected for initial investigation was often very good and several centres had arranged visits to exhibitions to gather additional sources and ideas for further development. One centre's visit to 'Indian Experience' encouraged candidates to explore traditional patterns and symbols in depth, resulting in personal responses reflecting a much greater understanding of the context of specific signs and symbols.

Outcomes demonstrated considerable variety, ranging from simple prints to more adventurous responses incorporating fabric and dyed backgrounds which had been stitched, layered, bonded and worked into in considerable depth and detail. Shawls, t-shirts, dresses and numerous silk paintings were also presented.

5. Costume

Moderators commented that this was by far the most popular question and many candidates had selected a starting point that facilitated a progressive route of investigation through to a very personal response.

The majority referred to fashion magazines for sources of inspiration and work by Alexander McQueen, Christian Dior, Philip Treacy and clothing worn by Lady Gaga all provided initial inspiration for personal studies.

Candidates explored a wide range of processes and materials, and in a number of instances developed some highly imaginative pieces. Beading, ribbons, shards of mirror, coloured wire, plastic, acetate and feathers were used in abundance for embellishments. Rich and tactile fabrics appeared to have been ruffled, pleated, twisted, woven and stitched into some elaborate creations; particularly, collars, hats and headdresses.

'The Snow Queen' was the most preferred option, and recorded observations through personal photographs of snow, ice and icicles helped to suggest ideas and surfaces for further investigation. The recently released film 'Black Swan' was referred to within the contextual development of a number of candidates' ideas. The contrast of black materials against white fabrics was explored, often in an attempt to bring a sense of menace into a design. Contextual studies also explored visual and descriptive illustrations in publications of 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe' and the costumes and creations of designers in the recent 'Chronicles of Narnia' films and DVD releases. At the lower end of the ability range candidates tended to make links to Disney's animations but here there was often little evidence of progress made towards original work.

Artefacts from Egyptian art were utilised to suggest themes for the creation of a costume for Cleopatra. Patterns derived from wall paintings were repeated, enlarged and combined to produce elaborate collar designs and pieces of body adornment. These were mainly created from stitched, bonded, beaded and manipulated fabrics.

Responses to the science fiction option were less popular but the use of face paints to help develop ideas for masks for characters from 'Avatar' were effective.

In a number of instances although the design work undertaken by candidates was often very good, the consideration of construction skills was less confident and a number of final outcomes were disappointing. Where care had been taken to plan construction approaches and techniques were clearly understood, production of garments and accessory pieces was much more successful.

6. Imprint

This question appealed to students who clearly enjoyed using materials and experimenting with technical processes. Strong supporting work was often in evidence with drawings and photographs of rock formations, textured bark and fossils all providing ideas that were developed in a variety of ways. A number of candidates had used bleaching techniques with considerable success while others had taken rubbings from car and bicycle tyres and made collagraph blocks for printing. Critical references frequently explored the abstract mark making and intense repeat pattern prints indicative of African textiles. Examples of successful outcomes included fabrics patterned by stencil, heat transfer, assorted vegetables and lino prints.

Several centres felt they would have liked the question to name specific contextual references; however the majority enjoyed the fact that candidates had the independence to select artists and cultural elements that were particularly appropriate for individual investigation and routes of study. Investigations into the work of Peter Randall- Page provided a starting point for several students who produced very successful resolved textile pieces. Imprints on the mind inspired some students and memories, phrases, dreams and scars were all considered. One candidate explored images of child soldiers in Africa and related these to Banksy. The final piece depicted a bleak, pale background of a Banksy-style wall with a photograph of a young child holding a rifle transferred onto it. The words 'I just want to play' were embroidered across the wall in red and the rifle illustrated machine stitching.

7. Structures

Experiences undertaken in Unit 1 again provided candidates with a firm foundation for the development of a more focused and personal investigation in response to the Externally Set Task themes within this question.

All three options had been attempted and there was an even balance between those choosing to find their own starting point and those using one suggested on the question paper. A rich variety of natural and manufactured forms were considered as starting points, with bridges, branches, leaves, mosses and lichens featuring regularly. In a number of centres sketchbooks were particularly strong, with mixed-media drawings used to inspire collage investigations that led to felted, stitched and applied samples. These reflected diverse colour palettes and highly textured surfaces; popular materials included wool, string, and found objects. In a number of instances moderators commented that the developmental work and textile experiments in these supporting sketchbooks often outshone the final responses. A woven framework inspired by webs provided a structure for a number of very successful outcomes. One piece depicted a large, white web-inspired piece draped over rocks and branches

References were made to the work of Andy Goldsworthy, and his structures of arches in rocks, overhanging trees and ice provided a stepping stone to investigations of arches in the local environment.

Several candidates used microscopic studies to devise work that evolved into small panels through stitched patterns and appliqué technique. The use of human body structures under magnification was confidently explored and led to highly effective outcomes 2D and 3D, functional, conceptual and decorative work was created in response to this question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html . The UMS conversion calculator can be found at www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion .