



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**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 (4204)**

### **General**

It has been another successful year in which centres embraced the flexibility and diversity of the GCSE Art and Design Specification within each endorsement. Many centres developed new courses that accommodated a variety of teaching approaches and were tailored to suit available facilities, staffing strengths and creative enthusiasms, as well the needs of students. In other centres, courses similar to those used during the legacy specification were retained.

Teacher Standardisation allayed any uncertainty about the requirements of the 'new' specification, and as a result many courses have become more holistic and less rigid or linear in design. Examples included initial skills-based experiences allowing students to investigate such things as the use of materials for different purposes; specific visual elements; mark-making and sources of design. Workshop-style approaches allowed students to build up a bank of skills in readiness for extended collections of work or projects, designed to show coverage of the four Assessment Objectives. Even where all students followed the same project, moderators reported evidence of much more diverse journeys of enquiry and personal responses building on confidence gained during the introductory phases of their courses of study.

Unit 1 portfolio work showed appropriate and well-structured responses to the Assessment Objectives. Moderators reported a good range of tasks evident in projects across the endorsements. Themes were wide-ranging and varied from familiar schemes based around the natural world, portraiture and landscape, to issues-based topics and individual assignments based on students' personal interests, identities, cultures and beliefs. Sources were, in the best instances, integrated within the theme and provided rich focuses for investigation, exploration, research and analysis. Past paper starting points featured extensively, and allowed centres to refresh the themes used with students on an annual basis instead of re-presenting the same projects year on year.

There were fewer reports of students experiencing visits to galleries and exhibitions, especially where travelling great distances was required. Some centres made better use of local visits, and there was evidence of extended "sources" being integrated into schemes and programmes of study, where local woodland, city centres, ports, harbours and seashores were used to engage students and inform the development of ideas.

Visiting artists made a valuable impact on some courses, to provide stimulus and lead workshops, involving activities such as life drawing, printmaking, 3D construction and the exploration of textile techniques.

Sketchbooks, working logs, ideas books, design sheets and mounted boards were all very much in evidence, each offering students a way of working and style of presentation that suited their individual needs. It was pleasing to see fewer cases of sketchbook pages or worksheets labelled as "recording"; "AO..."; "Artist Research" etc.

In some instances, sketchbooks were deemed to be "stunning examples" of how students had worked through the creative process and documented their thoughts, ideas and findings in a wide variety of visual means. In other cases, they were seen as problematic in terms of selection of work for moderation. Some students chose to select and mount up work from their books whilst others accepted that they represented a journey of personal development and maturity and presented them as that within their portfolio.

Some moderators highlighted 'selection' of work as an issue in a number of centres. It is a requirement of the specification that students present "a selection of thoughtfully presented work that demonstrates the breadth and depth of the course of study". In some cases no selection had taken place and work from the entire course was submitted, whilst in others there was too much, so submissions were sparse and disjointed.

In Unit 2, the unlimited preparatory time available was used by teachers to tailor the time to students' individual needs. It was the case that in a number of centres' students overlapped some weeks with

work for both Unit 1 and preparation for Unit 2. In others, students were given the maximum time available. Flexibility was deemed to be the key to success, by allowing centres to organise timing for the preparatory period and the 10-hour sessions to meet the wider needs of both the centre and the students.

The Externally Set Task papers for each endorsement were well received. It was evident, though, that some centres had restricted access to some questions from papers. Whilst there may be reasons why students might be guided in their choices, it is a contravention of Awarding Body rules if students are not issued with a full copy of the E.S.T. paper.

## **Teacher Standardisation Meetings**

Delegate feedback this year indicated that the distribution of a CD containing even more extensive 'visual reminders', as well as sections containing information about dates and deadlines, administration details, copies of important documents and links to specification materials, was very well received. The process is an on-going one; ideas and suggestions received have been taken on board, to continue to improve what is already seen to be a highly valued AQA resource.

The fundamental focus of each meeting was to illustrate standards by giving teachers the opportunity to see examples of 'live' work from each endorsement and both Unit 1 and Unit 2. "Training rather than testing" was one comment received following the decision not to collect in marks. The inclusion of an "anchor set" for the purpose of group marking in both the Training and Marking exhibitions was also unanimously welcomed. Reinforced at Teacher Standardisation, and used much more effectively by teachers during centre marking this year, were the terms "just", "adequate", "clear" and "convincing" for awarding differentiated marks within each Assessment Objective band.

The initiative for meetings to be hosted in schools and colleges was generally successful. Funding received for this was positively used by participating centres for a wide range of educative purposes. During moderation, samples used at previous Teacher Standardisation Meetings, illustrating different approaches within endorsement presentations, were seen to have influenced both portfolio work and responses to the Externally Set Task. Teachers had, on occasions, encouraged students to move away from traditional responses and to integrate new materials or new ways of working with media. Soft sculptures to accompany work within Graphic Communication portfolios as well as three-dimensional presentations of photographic material were seen, and students had been more adventurous in their choice of media within three-dimensional design submissions.

## **Administration**

Administration was deemed to be good this year despite problems caused by national holidays. The majority of centres ensured that moderators received the necessary two copies of mark sheets by the 31 May deadline. This in turn guaranteed that centres received sample information in good time for visits and Area Moderation Meetings. Very few instances of missing or incomplete Candidate Record Forms or Centre Declaration Sheets were reported, and fewer cases of incorrect transference of marks were seen. Any occasions where administration was problematic were generally dealt with by moderators at the time.

Arranging dates and times for visits and meetings was reported to be increasingly difficult. It is hoped that more use will be made of e-mail in future to reduce the problems of contacting teachers during the school day.

## **Assessment and Moderation**

Marking each unit out of 80 is now established and in the majority of cases, marking was deemed to be fair and accurate. Where the assessment criteria were used regularly during teaching sessions, shared with students and seen as an integral part of the course, a familiarity with terminology and interpretation of requirements led to confidence in pitching marks accurately within bands. For some students, an emphasis on the language of art was started during Key Stage 3; this led to excellent foundations for GCSE courses and the coverage of Assessment Objectives.

Most centres had understood the process of sample selection across both units and the principle of marking and moderation taking place in numerical order from lowest to highest, regardless of whether they were portfolio or Externally Set Task samples. In the majority of cases, centres had taken on board the requirement for quiet and uninterrupted conditions for effective moderation to take place. Problems arose when work had been exhibited in areas that were difficult to access or samples had been poorly or incorrectly labelled. Whether samples are presented in folders of work or as an exhibition, or in some cases as electronic portfolios, ease of access is essential.

Area Moderation Meetings were generally successful and provided centres with an alternative moderation process.

## **Assessment Objectives**

Students are required to evidence all four Assessment Objectives in both Unit 1 and Unit 2. By using the terms “develop”, “refine”, “record” and “present”, students showed an understanding of the requirements in their submissions. A better understanding of the integration of the Assessment Objectives enabled a more flexible approach and evidenced more holistic submissions of work.

### **Assessment Objective 1**

Many subjects provided the starting point from which ideas were developed, including images; artists; craftspeople; artefacts; visits; materials and techniques. Evidence seen exemplified the breadth of sources that had been made available to students or that they themselves had selected. Relevant contextual influences informed very individual personal journeys of enquiry, and in the best examples, students independently discovered contemporary references that both enhanced and extended their work. Less successful submissions relied heavily on downloaded biographical narratives, much of which had been neither read nor understood and made little if any connection to the student's own work. As a result there was little evidence of how work had progressed or ideas had been developed in relation to the findings.

### **Assessment Objective 2**

This was seen to be the most successful in some submissions and the least successful in others. The most successful students had accessed a wide range of media, materials, techniques and processes with which to progress and expand their developmental journey. Evidence of thoughtful review and refinement through clear and considered selection and rejection of media and processes was a prominent feature. Digital media had been used both to chart the progress of work and also to show discriminating changes and decisions made during 3D and textile construction, large-scale paintings and assemblage. In less successful cases, media, techniques and processes had been simply addressed by way of repeated images in a range of media and colour-ways with little evidence or reference to judgements or decisions made.

### **Assessment Objective 3**

Recording in its widest sense was seen this year. The cross-over between endorsements where students have used wide-ranging techniques and media manipulation to record ideas, thoughts, developments and outcomes, was noticeable. These took the form both of traditional drawing techniques through the use of graphite, charcoal and other dry materials, to drawing with wax, sand, glue and mud. Sewing machine stitching, carving and modelling, constructions in paper and card as well as printing and mixed media techniques were all used to record from both primary and secondary sources. Above all, digital recording was at the forefront as a tool to record progress, intent, development and realisation. The instant access to a visual record was used to excellent effect in the most successful submissions and offered a whole new dimension to the concept of recording. Highly rendered drawing still featured, as did drawing for design purposes and as personal responses to projects. Recording through annotation was in the best examples insightful and expressive whereas in other cases it was merely descriptive. In some instances, annotations were simply re-presentations of existing information copied directly from secondary sources such as the internet.

### **Assessment Objective 4**

In both Unit 1 and Unit 2, personal responses varied from well-executed and considered outcomes resulting from extensive exploration and development of ideas, to unrelated pieces that showed no links with the focus of study. Projects, assignments, briefs and starting points generated some exciting, innovative and inventive responses. These included collections of related work, large scale paintings, detailed and decorative books, story boards, textiles, sculptural forms, ceramics, mixed-media and digital displays by way of photographs, animation and show reels. Students responded to a range of critical and cultural sources in well-organised and reflective submissions where connections had been thoughtfully embedded in the work and materials had been chosen appropriately.

## **Textiles 4204**

### **Unit 2: Externally Set Task**

The question paper was well received and recognised as being fair, open and accessible. Successful responses were the result of students building on strengths established during their Unit 1 course and selecting a starting point of personal interest. The best examples showed evidence of students developing an idea and testing it through different compositions and materials, whilst often including additional sources to those named. Less confident responses reflected a reliance on numerous repeats of the same image in different materials and a reluctance to engage with sources in any depth. The earlier release of the Externally Set Task paper and the longer preparation period has been generally welcomed, with a number of centres moving Unit 2 to earlier in the spring term. This allowed departments to avoid clashes with other demands on student time. In some instances, though, insufficient time was allowed and many students produced disappointing and unfinished responses as a result.

Recording was often evidenced in the form of digital photographs. Stronger students tended to use skills mastered in portfolio work to present sources and record the development of ideas and resolution of intentions. Some centres had continued to encourage students to experiment with media, whilst others were encouraged to exploit existing strengths.

## **Question Paper Starting Points**

### **Question 1 - Sense of Place**

The local environment provided a popular starting point. Close-up observations of surfaces, discarded objects, rubbish and the contrast between manufactured and natural structures provided images, colours and textures for exploration through a wide range of textile media and techniques. Maps were stitched into, and study of the work of Sandra Meech encouraged a number of students to experiment with stitching onto their own photographs of particular places.

Much of the work seen was objective although a number of students did investigate their own emotional connections associated with a place. Several considered their place in the world whilst others focused on aspects of a personal space such as their bedroom or places connected with members of their family. The best responses to this question aimed to convey a feeling about a specific place. References to Hopper were used to help explore the atmospheric imagery suggested or evoked by a particular place. Few students considered creating work for a site-specific space. Appliqué pieces, batik panels and stitched boxes featured among the final outcomes.

### **Question 2 - Animals**

This question was very popular and appealed across the ability range. Less confident students produced outcomes that were more literal and predictable in content, with a focus on simplified animal patterns. The more able created experimental work evidencing considerable levels of maturity, perception, understanding and skill. All of the Assessment Objectives had been addressed in the majority of responses, although the overall standard of responses varied in terms of quality and refinement.

Sources included fabric swatches and photographs of animals, with secondary images of leopard skin spots and zebra stripes featuring prominently. Contextual inspiration was drawn from the fashion world, with the collections of Roberto Cavalli and John Galliano proving particularly popular. Reference to Vivien Westwood was also evident and Victoria Beckham's cat print dress had been considered. Printed textiles and embroidered pieces referencing the cat in Egyptian culture were also seen. Paintings by Franz Marc were analysed and the strong colour and fragmented images were explored through dye and fabric experiments. Work by contemporary artists was evident with influence drawn from the graffiti work of Denis Gonchar and superimposed human and animal portraits by Peony Yip.

A number of students explored the role of animals within their own culture. Indian ideology and the right of the elephant to coexist with human beings were researched and explored using a variety of textile transfer techniques. Asian elephants provided a focus for visual research and in-depth investigations and insightful written evidence, which revealed a great deal of learning. African textiles were studied, alongside indigenous wild animal markings. These were developed and refined into fabric designs using computerised photographic processes, with batik and machine embroidered collages inspired by the multi-media artist Derek Gores. African ceremonial animal masks and reference to costumes for the stage production of the Lion King inspired extravagant headdresses, richly decorated panels, printed and embroidered wall hangings and batiks.

Applied images of very simple animal shapes with little consideration of colour, texture or pattern were seen in the work of a number of lower attaining students. Many of the most successful outcomes derived from extensive research. This provided the foundation for the design of various garments (dresses, skirts, corsets, tops), accessories (hats and shoes), panels and wall hangings. Other outcomes included high quality prints and numerous cushions.

### **Question 3 - Crockery**

This question was popular with students from across the ability range, with opportunities for students to approach it from a number of different directions. Able students used text with subtlety and statements such as “woman’s work is never done”, song lyrics, and sections of poetry were integrated into focused investigations and adventurous outcomes.

Ceramics by Clarice Cliff and Susie Cooper provided inspiration for some outstanding fabric designs and developments that resulted in stunning appliquéd wall hangings and decorative but functional items such as cushions.

The textiles of all the named designers had been considered by students, with the style, content and techniques used by Poppy Treffry proving particularly popular. In several centres, still life arrangements of tea pots, cups and saucers, stacked plates and milk jugs provided students with rich sources for first hand recording. Colourful paintings, biro drawings and photographs suggested patterns, colours, shapes and forms, which were then investigated through processes such as batik, machine stitching, silk painting and printmaking. Outcomes included appliquéd wall hangings, simple garments and panels embroidered and stitched to illustrate designs derived from domestic objects. T-towels, cushions for kitchen chairs and some very impressive tea cosies were also presented.

### **Question 4 - Music**

Most of the students who responded to this question used either primary observations of musical instruments or (a) the opportunity to design a costume, as their starting point. Cubist-inspired studies of modern musical instruments were considered, as were works by Braque, Picasso, Klee, Klimt, Kandinsky and Cy Twombly. Imagery associated with various musical styles was also investigated.

Drawing, painting and photography was used to analyse the shapes and forms of musical instruments and close-up observations suggested interesting patterns for further study. In one centre the school band and their instruments provided images for printed fabric; in others, students used mark making techniques and incorporated dyes, stitching, batik, felting and applique to respond to dance music, hip-hop and jazz.

### **Question 5 - Recycling**

Many students favoured this starting point. A significant number studied how Cas Holmes incorporates a wide variety of found materials within her textiles and how Alison Willoughby uses recycled fabrics to create highly decorative skirts. In numerous instances, initial research took the form of collecting objects and materials, and the quirky use of media and exploration of techniques underpinned some very genuine and informed submissions. Teachers commented that the question enabled students of all abilities to access the Assessment Objectives, and most students presented a balanced coverage. The question was well suited to those who preferred to work in an exploratory manner; trials and samples which investigated colour, pattern and texture were incorporated effectively as work developed. The sketchbooks submitted in support of this question were often exciting, highly personal and original. Lots of found bits and pieces provided surfaces to work on, incorporate, dissect or layer. Transfer prints enabled the application of text and image onto fabric and these too were stitched into. Felts were made and papers torn, scorched and embroidered. Heat shrunk plastics, bonded fibres, crushed cans, wire, stripped cable and waste fabrics including plastic bags and newspaper had all been employed within a variety of structures or used to create new ones.

Outcomes included bags, cushions, hats, skirts, new garments from old, and fabric wall hangings. In one piece, a selection of found objects including keys were used to explore pattern and texture. The outcome consisted of a sculptural piece evidencing use of a broad range of techniques.



## **Question 6 - Composition**

A number of the students who selected this question researched the work of Matisse, although a diverse selection of other still-life painters and artists also provided inspiration. Some students used the theme to explore the rule of thirds or symmetry while others focused on the arrangement of objects, colours, textures and patterns. In several cases, the work presented was dominated by excessive downloaded biographical information that did little to inform or inspire the students' own personal developments or outcomes.

Several students used lino prints based on tools including hammers, spanners, and pliers to transfer images onto fabric.

Stitching proved to be the most popular technique, although woven assemblages inspired by a variety of natural forms were also evident. Everyday household products provided objects to record and a number of students used their own still life arrangements to suggest the structure of a final composition. Cushions reflecting the bright colours and decorative patterns indicative of Matisse's work proved popular as outcomes. Similarly, several students presented stitched figurative panels derived from the consideration of figures and forms as arranged within compositions by Matisse.

## **Question 7 - Traces**

There were relatively few responses to the theme of Traces. A number of these were, however, impressive and reflected thoughtful and perceptive investigations which led to original and creative outcomes. Several students explored the idea of traces as things left behind such as feathers by a bird or seed heads. Motifs were considered which included organic forms such as mushrooms, snowflakes and fossils. These were usually stitched with thread onto dyed fabric or were drawn in wax for batik or gutta for silk painting. Students had addressed all the Assessment Objectives and artists such as Peter Randall Page and Andy Goldsworthy were principal sources of inspiration. Some students succeeded in producing reasonably strong outcomes although the visual journeys were rather predictable. A number of responses to this question took the form of decorated cushions, fashion pieces or printed fabric.

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

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