



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Design and Technology
(Textiles Technology) 3557/F**

Short Course

Foundation Tier

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

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General Comments

The overall standard was improved on last year with all papers eliciting a wide range of marks, suggesting that most candidates had been entered for the correct tier in relation to ability. Most candidates attempted all of the questions and scripts were usually well presented and easy to follow.

The theme appeared to have been well received and researched by candidates, and examiners saw a very wide variety of products, especially hat designs. There were also many ideas for decorative products and examiners accepted a wide range of different designs inspired by hats. The majority of candidates understand the importance of showing colour as opposed to simply labelling it, and there are very few who do not use coloured pencils; full colour is such an important feature in the presentation of textiles design ideas.

Basic knowledge of fabric properties and construction continues to be a concern although, candidates are quite good at suggesting appropriately named fabrics for their design ideas – some of this knowledge should have been used when answering those questions based directly on fibre and fabric knowledge.

There are still concerns that some centres are teaching to the preparation sheet only, and not to the specification as a whole; this does not help candidates achieve high marks on papers which are designed to test broad knowledge and understanding of textiles technology. Centres are also reminded that the information given in the preparation sheet is to support candidates in preparing for the design questions, and that other questions on the paper will be outside of the scope of the set theme; this is clearly stated in the specification.

Short Course Foundation Tier

Question 1(ai)

This question was well answered with the majority of candidates gaining full marks by showing understanding that the colours, stuffed bird, and size of the hat would not be considered popular today.

Question 1(aii)

Most candidates were awarded a mark for suggesting that the brim and/or feathers could be used within a modern design.

Question 1(bi)

Responses were mixed with the majority gaining one mark. Specific detail about manufacturing methods and considerations was often lacking.

Question 1(bii)

This part was answered well on the whole with candidates often referring to the manufacturers' profit and customer affordability.

Question 1(c)

Most responses suggested using questionnaires and surveys of potential consumers but some more able candidates referred to looking at sales of similar existing products.

Question 2 (ai)

There was some strong evidence of good research but many of the ideas presented were copied or tried and tested ones with the addition of a feather or hat band. Some candidates had obviously done additional research and were able to show good, innovative ideas. The majority chose to show a design for a hat rather than a decorative product. Where a decorative product was chosen it was often contrived e.g. a cushion with a picture of a hat on it. The initial ideas were often well annotated and clearly presented but many were for similar products, with only minor modifications to the shape or decoration.

Question 2 (aii)

This part was usually done well with the majority gaining full marks. Answers varied greatly, from simple statements such as 'colourful, eye-catching', to detailed thoughts relating to the product idea and the intended market.

Question 2 (b)

This question was answered reasonably well although there was a lack of originality in almost all of the products presented. There were many hats that were straight copies of current fashions with added features such as a feather. The originality and inspiration from the 20th century was very weak in the majority of cases but there were some innovative and sensational designs. Not many made reference to their source of inspiration, nor to any past designers or research. Most candidates used colour to present their ideas and annotated well, enabling markers to understand their design ideas.

Question 3 (a)

There was a varied response to this question with many candidates simply writing 'CAD/CAM' and mentioning research without any qualification. The internet and the use of design programmes were the most popular uses cited. Very few referred to the ability to manipulate designs/colours and there were many responses where research and development had been confused.

Question 3 (bi)

The vast majority of candidates were able to name a suitable method of decoration.

Question 3 (bii)

Most candidates gave valid reasons for their choice of technique and some referred back to the design brief.

Question 3 (c)

This question was not answered so well with many candidates giving reasons for making a prototype rather than using it to test various aspects of the design.

Question 4

The whole of this question was generally well answered and high marks achieved.

Question 4 (ai)

Most gave two clear reasons with many gaining full marks.

Question 4 (aii)

Candidates were aware of various advertising methods although many lost one mark because of a lack of detail.

Question 4 (a)

Most candidates achieved a mark here.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates showed good understanding of the reasons for packaging products with the majority awarded full marks.

Question 4 (c)

The majority of responses were sound, with many referring to environmental issues and cost implications as reasons why products should not be packaged.

Question 5 (a)

Most candidates understood that this was a question relating to the properties of cotton and answers were generally good. However, many concentrated on the fact that it was a product for a child and commented on safety issues, e.g. "it can be put in a baby's mouth", "it is suitable for a baby" or "it is not dangerous".

Question 5 (bi)

This question was generally well answered with most responses relating to the aesthetic qualities of the fabric being smooth and shiny.

Question 5 (bii)

This question was not answered well. Most referred to its cleaning properties.

Question 5 (c)

Velcro was well known for its safety and ease of use and most responses were worthy of full marks.

Question 6 (a)

Most candidates were able to give two suitable methods of lettering but some did not seem to realise that the question was about manufacturing of the product, not research.

Question 6 (bi)

This question was not answered well; many candidates referred to quality control and failed to address the specific problem of the corners. The majority made reference to accurate measuring, cutting or adding a card insert. Very few gained full marks for this question.

Question 6 (bii)

Many appeared to find this part of the question difficult but many understand that there was a need for double stitching/strengthening of the fraying edges.

Question 6 (biii)

Most candidates gained a mark for this question, with the majority referring to double stitching and reversing of stitching at the ends to give additional strength.

Question 6 (c)

This question was generally well answered with the majority referring to safety and quality issues. Nearly all candidates gained at least one mark.

Question 6 (d)

Safety in the workplace is a topic increasingly well understood by candidates and most achieved at least three marks here. Where marks were lost, it was usually because of repeated points.

Question 7 (a)

Candidates were able to give valid properties of polyester in relation to its suitability for the bag. Some answers referred to it being safe for a child rather than specific fabric properties.

Question 7 (b)

A significant number of candidates appear not to be aware of what a component is, and there were many references to fabrics, handles, equipment and techniques. Many answers lacked detail of the components or did not explain the need for them on the bag. Fastenings were the most popular component selected.

Question 7 (c)

Many candidates repeated the question but references to safety were the main reasons put forward.

Question 7 (d)

This question had a mixed response with many candidates having a clear understanding of the issues associated with overseas manufacture, whilst others simply referred to them as being “cheap” but not knowing why. Many responses were not awarded more than three marks as they lacked detail to explain the advantages and disadvantages given.

Many had clear awareness of the moral or ethical stances on sweatshops, child labour, poor working conditions in factories, and the low wages.

Question 7 (e)

Most candidates were able to give two sound reasons for the price reduction.