



A-Level

Design & Technology: Fashion and Textiles

7562/1

Report on the examination

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General Comments

Paper 1 focused on the technical principles of the specification subject content and combines short answer and extended response questions.

It is important that students have a good awareness of the whole of the specification content; in this series there was a lack of knowledge in some responses. Students would benefit from focusing on the following areas of the specification: classification of materials (3.1.1) through to performance characteristics of fibres and fabrics (3.1.2).

In general, responses showed a good knowledge of the topics covered, more so in extended response questions. Students should focus on developing their knowledge and understanding further to be able to reach the descriptors in the top mark bands.

There was a continued improvement in the maths aspect of the paper, with nearly all students at least attempting the questions. It is important to remember that marks are awarded for correct working out, students should be encouraged to show *all calculations* in the answer space provided.

The following points should be noted:

- It is important that students understand the meaning of *command words*. For example, drawbacks were often included where a question only required the benefits. Also, this was an issue for 'analyse and evaluate' questions, where both positive and negative information was required; many students did not include *negative points*, which was a requirement to gain credit from the top mark band.
- For 'explain' or 'discuss' questions, *detailed information* was required to reach the top mark band. Many responses were 'good', meeting the requirements for the middle mark band. These responses generally gave a few key points but lacked either the depth or breadth of knowledge and understanding or lacked technical information to gain credit from the top mark band.
- Students are encouraged to respond to a question without writing an introduction and to launch directly into their response. Similarly, conclusions or summaries should be avoided; quite often these simply repeat the information in the body of the answer.
- Where students feel constrained by the number of lines in the answer space provided, we recommend using the *additional pages* at the back of the question paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Identify two fabric structures: weft and warp knitted fabric.

Over half of responses correctly identified both structures. A high percentage, over 40%, did not score and could not give a correct response, instead suggested various alternatives, usually named weave or fibre types. Only a few students scored 1 mark for correctly identifying one of the knitted structures. A lack of very basic technical knowledge had impacted many students in answering this question.

Question 2

Complete the table by inserting the appropriate term from the list into the correct category.

A very good set of responses, most students could correctly identify the appropriate smart and modern materials and were credited with 4 marks.

Question 3.1

Describe the **properties** of terry towelling fabric.

Students were able to correctly describe some properties of terry towelling fabric, however only a small number, less than 20% were awarded 3 marks. Many incorrect responses described the *structure* or *appearance* of the fabric rather than the *properties*. There was also confusion in some responses about its properties, which were not credited. A few drawings were given of the fabric, but these were not useful in supporting students' answers.

Question 3.2

Describe the **characteristics** of herringbone fabric.

A limited number, less than 15%, were able to correctly describe the characteristics of herringbone fabric. These students made references to its zig-zag pattern, twill weave structure and use of contrasting colours. Responses were significantly less knowledgeable than Q3.1, with some confusion with the number or formation of yarns and colours, and a lack of knowledge about the fabric itself. Nearly a third of students did not score at all on this question.

Question 3.3

Describe the **structure** of quilted fabric.

Most students were able to correctly describe the structure of quilted fabric, with over half gaining 3 marks. A few responses described the *properties* of quilting, which were not required or credited; however, most students correctly described layers of fabric, with wadding in the centre stitched together with a patterned design. Diagrams of quilted fabric were helpful in supporting students' answers.

Question 4.1

Calculate the total amount of sales for the period March to August for a standard cycle.

Question 4 focused on interpretation of data. Students were presented with a chart giving the volume of sales for three fashion cycles. Two thirds gave the correct answer and were credited with 2 marks. Some students incorrectly interpreted the data, and as a result gave incorrect values. Although there was an allowance on tolerances and values in the mark scheme, some answers had more than one incorrect value or went beyond tolerance and were not credited.

Question 4.2

Calculate the percentage increase in sales for the fad cycle between June and July.

This question was a good differentiator; some students gave incorrect workings out or used incorrect data from the chart in figure 2. Credit was given in correct working out for 2nd mark for 'their' calculation, however many students divided by 7000, not 4800, giving an incorrect final answer. About one third of responses were awarded 3 marks.

Question 5

Explain how the **structure** of Gore-Tex® fabric protects the wearer in different weather conditions.

In general, a reasonably well answered question, although average responses were awarded just under 3 of 6 marks. Many were able to explain that Gore-Tex® allows perspiration to escape, making it a breathable fabric; while raindrops are prevented from entering the fabric, keeping the wearer dry. These types of responses often focused on the *properties* of the fabric, and may have lacked information about its structure, as required in the question.

Fewer were able to explain or understand that Gore-Tex® itself is a microporous membrane, laminated between two fabrics, and it is this membrane that works to protect wearers in different weather conditions. This lack of understanding meant that over 50% of all marks were between 0–2-marks.

Question 6

Explain how the fibre content in the care label shown enhances the properties of a knitted jacket.

Overall, there was a reasonably good understanding of the four individual fibres and their properties. The average mark was 5 out of 9, meeting the 'good' descriptors in the middle mark band. However, a lack of depth or breadth of knowledge and understanding prevented many from gaining credit from the top of the middle and higher mark band. A significant number of students did not realise that the four fibres *work together* and would be blended to create the fabric for the knitted jacket. More detailed responses explained how the fibres balance out or complement the properties of other fibres e.g. although wool can be a coarse fibre, the smoothness of polyester and silk help to make the knitted fabric softer on the skin.

Question 7

Name **two** fancy yarns.

Nearly 60% of students correctly named two fancy yarns, with about only 30% able to name one correct yarn type. Around 10% were awarded 0 marks showing a lack of basic technical knowledge.

Question 8

Explain how the **properties** of synthetic fabrics are affected by the structure of continuous filament fibres.

Generally, a limited understanding of technical principles in relation to this question. Around 15% of responses were awarded credit from the 3–4-mark band, with 65% from the 1–2-mark band.

Many students were able to explain how the linear structure of continuous filament fibres creates smooth and lustrous fabrics with high strength. There was confusion in terms of warmth; although synthetic fibres can be modified in the spinning process to create thermal insulation, as a rule they are cool and unable to trap air but can become uncomfortably warm to wear as they do not absorb moisture.

Question 9

Describe how **specific** CAM processes are used at each stage to increase efficiency in the manufacture of the skirt shown in the image.

Some fair responses overall, the average for this question was just under 4 out of 9 marks. Most of the marks were awarded in the 1–3-mark band, fewer in the 4–6 band, and 15% of marks were credited from the top mark band.

Most students correctly identified areas on the skirt where CAM processes could be used to increase efficiency in manufacture. Several points were given from the indicative content and a range of different reasons for efficiencies were described.

Credit was not awarded for describing garment production systems such just-in-time, overhead material handling or barcoding, nor for using CAD for designing the skirt.

Question 10.1

Calculate the amount of thread needed for the embroidered decoration for one skirt.

Approximately half of all students correctly worked out the answer, scoring 2 marks. A similar number of students had calculated the amount of thread for the decorative embroidery only, and did not add the sum to the amount of thread used for construction of the skirt. As a result, credit was given for the 1st mark where the sum 3.456 was rounded up to the nearest penny i.e. 347cm.

Question 10.2

Calculate how many reels of thread are needed for a batch of 10 450 skirts.

Most correctly calculated 242 reels of thread, gaining 3 marks.

Question 10.3

Calculate the cost of the decorative embroidery on a batch of 245 skirts.

About half of responses were awarded 3m, with a further 30% achieving 2 marks. Those who missed out on 3 marks did not round their final answer to the nearest penny or had rounded unnecessarily during working out. Students should be advised to use the values shown on calculators.

Question 11

Discuss the **moral issues** that can arise from the sourcing of plant and animal fibres and offshore practices in fashion manufacturing.

The average mark was 3.5 from maximum of 9 marks. Although students scored across all marks, most responses were at the top end of the lowest mark band.

References were made to the inhumane sourcing of silk and hair fibres, irrigation & loss of land for cotton crops, poor working conditions, low pay and issues of child/slave labour. Many references were made to environmental concerns; however, examiners were looking for more issues affecting local communities. E.g. many responses discussed the use of pesticides on cotton crops affecting wildlife; but did not go beyond this one point to reference issues such as resulting soil and crop contamination, affecting food chains and potential damage to human health.

Too many responses gave statements such as cotton crops cause deforestation' or use 'vast amounts of water', with no further discussion or reasoning. These responses gained very little credit, as they did not show an understanding of the issues.

Question 12

Give **three** reasons why copyright is important to designers.

A good differentiator, with a spread of marks across the board. There was some knowledge shown, about 25% of responses gained 3 marks, 45% gained 2 marks and 30% gained 1 mark. Many students gave three different reasons in their answers. Some however, repeated the same point in at least two of the answer spaces provided, e.g. copyright protects designers' work *and* prevents others from copying. There was some confusion with brand identity and patents, which were not credited.

Question 13

Explain the safety measures that must be put into place when handling and working with hazardous substances in a factory setting.

A fairly well answered question, many students demonstrating an understanding of safety measures in a factory setting, the average mark was 3 of 6. Correct references were made to many of the points on the indicative content, with more detailed responses giving information about COSHH, Health and Safety at Work Act, and the requirement to legally follow the regulations. A few students gave a basic recount of general health and safety precautions at work e.g., tie hair back and provide safe working spaces, these were awarded little, if any credit.

Question 14

Analyse and evaluate the importance of social media to fashion marketing and brand identity.

Responses were generally good. Few students went beyond the more obvious points e.g. fashion marketing can attract global/new audiences, use of influencers/celebrities to increase sales, and fewer understood the importance of social media to brand identity.

This was a 9-mark question, examiners were anticipating a wide range of points in answers, along with benefits and drawbacks. It is important that students take note of command words, as so few students recognised the instruction in the question, and either gave a narrow range of points or did not provide drawbacks. Approximately 10% of responses gained marks in the 7–9-mark band, with the majority gaining credit in the 4–6-mark band.

Question 15

Calculate the volume of each cushion in the image. State which cushion has the smaller volume.

Most students were able to correctly give the answer as A, or the cylindrical shape, as the smaller volume of the two cushions. Examiners were looking for evidence of working out of *both volumes* to be able to award marks for the final answer. Some students correctly worked out the volumes of both shapes, but selected the incorrect final answer, this would have been credited with 2 marks for showing the correct calculations. Over half of responses were awarded full 3 marks, with around 15% not scoring at all for this question.

Question 16

Explain the benefits of trade fairs for designers.

Generally, a basic range of responses. Most were able to explain a range of different benefits of trade fairs to designers, as outlined in the indicative content. The average mark was 2 out of 4, although there were also a number of very good responses. Approximately 10% mis-read the question and incorrectly gave information about fair trade.

Question 17

Analyse and evaluate the environmental benefits of using new generation Lyocell® instead of cotton fibres.

Most answers were credited from the low mark band; the average was 3.5 of 12 marks. Many gave information on the use of pesticides, water, extensive processing for cotton; and Lyocell® is sourced from managed forests and made in a closed loop process. Few students went beyond these general points, examiners were looking for a much more detailed analysis and evaluation to award higher marks, and a wider or deeper range of discussion points. Only around 3% of responses were awarded marks from the 9–12-mark band.

Given the command word in this question was analyse and evaluate, very few responses presented *negative* points. To reach the top mark band there needed to be a detailed response to include both positive analysis and drawbacks.

Question 18

Explain how textile products are designed to be thermally insulating. Give examples of specific **fashion** and **interior** textile products in your answer.

A lack of detail and understanding was shown in many responses. Half were awarded 1 or 2 marks, with fewer than 10% reaching the top mark band. Most responses appropriately included points relating to wool fibres, quilting, knitted structures and trapping air to create warmth. However, few went beyond these more obvious points to explain how warmth is created e.g. many stated that wool creates warmth, few were able to go further and explain that the crimp structure of wool fibres trap air and make products thermally insulating.

Examiners were looking for a technical understanding and often this was not given. Credit was not awarded for simply naming products that provide thermal insulation, nor for smart or thermo-regulating materials. Gore-Tex® was quite often named as an example of a fashion product; although it has many properties it does not trap air to create warmth.

Question 19

Using the data from the table calculate the cost of all fabrics for 945 coats.

Approximately 50% of responses were awarded 4 marks, 28% 3 marks, 10% gained 2 marks and 8% 1 mark.

A very good response to this maths questions, with a confident set of answers. Students who scored three marks often gave the correct working out but gave an incorrect answer - the final answer was nearly always outside of the accepted range, due to rounding, up or down, at different stages in calculations. Students are advised to only round up if a question specifically asks for a sum to be given, for example, to the nearest penny or metre.

Question 20

Explain the differences between underlining and interfacing.

A basic to good understanding of the differences between underlining and interfacing. Students referenced many of the points on the indicative content, although there was generally more understanding of interfacings over underlining. Some students incorrectly gave details about linings in place of interfacing.

Generally, there was a narrow range of points in many answers, for a 6-mark question students should present a wide range of explanation points, to show an understanding of the technical principles of the topic.

Marks were awarded across the board, 17% from the 5–6-mark band, 35% from the 3–4-mark band and 40% from the 1–2-mark band.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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