

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2011

**CLOTHING AND TEXTILES
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The 30th examination in Clothing and Textiles was administered by the Caribbean Examination Council in May/June 2011. Approximately 2,500 candidates across the various territories wrote the examination comprised of three papers.

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper comprised 60 questions designed to test all the areas of the syllabus and was divided equally to test Knowledge (Profile 1) and Use of Knowledge (Profile 2).

Paper 02 – Structured Essay Questions

This paper comprised seven structured essay-type questions from which the candidates were expected to answer five. Part A of the paper was comprised of three questions which were compulsory and Part B comprised four questions from which candidates were required to choose any two. Each question was worth a total of 16 marks.

Paper 031 – School Based Assessment

The School-Based Assessment comprised three practical assignments designed to test the practical garment construction skills of candidates. Each of the assignments was worth 20 marks. The assignments were prepared by class teachers and assessed by them. One of the three assignments was assessed jointly by the class teacher and an external examiner.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on this paper revealed several weaknesses in candidates' knowledge and understanding of key concepts in the syllabus. Although candidates' performance on the knowledge component of the examination was satisfactory, many candidates were unable to apply their knowledge of those concepts in novel situations. Candidates are encouraged to pay careful attention to the stem and options in responding to the multiple-choice questions.

Paper 02 – Structured Essay Questions

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidate's knowledge of basic textile terms, fabric finishes and methods of applying appropriate designs to fabrics. In many instances, candidates were unable to give a good definition of the term 'yarn' even though, from some of the words used in the responses, it was evident that they had some knowledge about yarns.

Many candidates were also able to name two types of yarns used in fabric constructions but were unable to define the yarns which they named.

The following is an example of a good response: *Yarn can be defined as fibres which are twisted or spun together to form longer lengths for use in forming fabric. Two types of yarns are two-ply and novelty. A two-ply yarn is two single yarns twisted together.*

Part (b) was poorly done by many candidates. In some instances, fabric finishes were interpreted as seam finishes. Some examples of responses given were edge stitching, binding and sergeing. Candidates also gave responses such as mercerization and permanent press/crease resistant. The question asked for the *most appropriate finish* for a tablecloth. Since there is always the possibility of food stains on a tablecloth, especially one that is regularly used by many as in the scenario given, the expected answer was a soil and stain resistant finish. In at least two instances candidates gave brand names (for example, scotchgard) for the finish.

The following is an example of a good response: *The most appropriate type of fabric finish required for the fabric to ensure that the tablecloth maintains its appearance and durability is an anti-soil finish.*

Part (c) was fairly well done by most candidates. Most candidates were able to outline the procedure for applying a tie and dye design. However, the sequence of the procedure was not always in the expected order.

Generally, most candidates had difficulty explaining the reason for the tie and dye method being most suitable for the skirt of the dress. The responses were unexpected in that very often, they made no mention of the absorbency and dye affinity of cotton which was the fibre used in the making of the dress fabric.

The following is an example of a good response: *The tie and dye method is most suitable for the dress because it is made of the right type of fabric which is cotton voile which absorbs dye very well.*

Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of fabric selection guidelines, fabric properties and the elements of design.

Most candidates did well in Part (a), in that they were able to give three guidelines for the selection of fabric for the end use which was specified. Candidates were able to state factors such as the cost of the fabric, suitability for the occasion, the figure type of the wearer as well as the suitability of the fabric to the design of a ball gown.

Part (b) was poorly answered in many instances. Candidates were required to list essential properties of the fabric used in making the gown. Many of them did not differentiate between what was asked in Part (a) and what was required in Part (b) and gave basically the same response. It was also interesting to see that some candidates interpreted this to mean sewing tools and notions.

Generally, candidates did very well in Part (c) (i). Garments shown in their sketches were appropriate for the occasion. Those who did well in this section drew very detailed sketches. The lines were sharp and clean, and colour was added in many instances. Those who answered this question well gave both front and back views of very elaborate designs. Some sketches, however, were very poorly done and were too small. Many candidates drew short garments – an indication of the current blurring of the lines between what is considered fashionable and what is appropriate for an occasion. It seemed that many candidates did not translate the term 'gown' to mean long dress. Many attractively sketched cocktail dresses were shown.

Part (c) (ii) posed a challenge to candidates. Many of them received zero for this part. Some candidates listed a design principle (balance, rhythm) rather than design elements (colour, line, texture). Although some candidates knew the difference and were able to say which element of design was utilized in the design which they sketched, they did not identify where on the sketch it was used. They paid no attention to the instruction to *identify on the sketch* which required them to label the position where the element of design was utilized.

In Part (c) (iii), candidates continued to confuse fibres and fabrics. Many listed fibres such as silk, nylon, polyester and cotton instead of fabrics such as *dupion*, *taffeta*, *crepe-de-chine* or *sateen*. In addition, some fabrics chosen were not suitable for the design or the occasion. For example, one candidate named denim as suitable for a soft flowing gown. Marks ranged between zero and one.

In Part (c) (iv), candidates gave suitable characteristics to match the fibre named but often the reason given was not relevant to the gown shown in the sketch. The reasons were mostly general ones. Candidates earned between zero and four marks.

Question 3

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the classes of stitches, control of fullness in garment construction, the use of openings and suitable fastenings on garments and the construction of seams.

Part (a) was generally well known. Many candidates were able to name the two classes of stitches used in assembling a skirt. However, some of them actually named examples of stitches such as a 'back stitch', 'running stitch' and so on while others named decorative stitches as a class rather than temporary stitches or permanent stitches.

Part (b) was very well known. A wide variety of both hand and machine embroidery stitches were named.

Part (c) (i) was well answered. Most candidates were able to name the correct method of controlling fullness used on the wrapped 'A' line skirt, probably because it was shown on the diagram, although a few candidates stated tucks, pleats or gathers.

Part (c) (ii) was generally not well handled by many of the candidates who were unable to explain fully why the particular method of controlling fullness was used. Most candidates gave partial answers and others gave some generalized comments that did not address the question.

For Part (c) (iii), most candidates were able to name appropriate fastenings which could be used on the skirt shown in the diagram. However, candidates were generally unable to give a valid reason for their choice of fastening for that particular garment. They simply stated the functions of fastenings in general, for example, 'to hold the garment in place'.

Part (d) of the question was generally not well answered. Many candidates were unable to explain how to construct and finish a plain seam in a logical sequence. Some candidates began their answers explaining how the garment would be cut and sewn, not paying attention to the words *constructing and finishing a plain seam on the skirt*.

Question 4

In this question candidate's knowledge of the social and psychological impact of clothing, pattern symbols and basic construction processes was tested.

Part (a) was handled extremely well by the majority of candidates, with most receiving full marks for their responses.

Most candidates also scored full marks on Part (b). However, though some candidates were unable to sufficiently discriminate between the responses required for Part (a) and those for Part (b), most of them were able to respond as anticipated. Marks ranged from four to six in this part of the question.

In Part (c) (i), candidates were required to identify three out of four pattern symbols on a sleeve and to say how each of the symbols identified is used during construction.

In some instances, candidates did not number their responses and since there was a choice of three out of four symbols it could not be determined which of the responses corresponded to each symbol. From the responses given, it was evident that candidates were familiar with the symbols and their meanings.

Part (c) (ii) was very poorly done by many candidates. Most candidates ignored the clause *preparation of the sleeve for insertion* and gave instructions for the insertion of a sleeve. Some candidates were able to gain marks for specific steps although not necessarily in sequential order.

This was a very popular question.

Question 5

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the use of mixtures and blends in fabric construction. Parts (b) and (c) focused on clothing selection, pattern adaptation and basic laundering processes.

Parts (a) and (b) were fairly well done. Some candidates, however, confused the two definitions using the words *fibres* and *yarns* interchangeably and, in many instances, making no mention of the critical phrase *different fibre types*.

Some candidates were able to explain why fibres and yarns are mixed and combined in fabrics. In many instances, candidates were unable to correctly distinguish between a fabric which is blended and one that is mixed.

Candidates who were able to correctly answer Part (a) did equally well on Part (b), suggesting that there was a good understanding of the concept.

For Part (c) (i), most candidates were able to list the four guidelines for designing and making appropriate clothing.

Part (c) (ii) was not well done. Many candidates did not follow the instruction to copy the block pattern as it appeared on the question paper. Some candidates simply sketched an outline with a V neckline and did not indicate how they derived the neckline using the block given. Many candidates were unable to indicate how the front pattern piece could be adapted to obtain the shirt front shown on the question paper. A very popular answer was to 'remove the dart'.

In some instances, Part (c) (iii) was well answered. However, many candidates ignored the fact that the garment was a white cotton crinkle shirt and described procedures for general laundering of garments.

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of pressing tools, equipment and techniques for handling fabrics requiring special treatment during pressing or ironing.

Part (a) (i) was well done by most candidates. However, candidates still named the iron and ironing board in spite of the instructions in the question to exclude them from the list of equipment.

In Part (ii), many candidates stated the use of one of the pieces named but did not describe the piece of pressing equipment as instructed.

The majority of candidates who attempted Part (b) of this question gave the definition for pressing and ironing instead of giving an instance when each process may be used.

Parts (c) (i) – (iv) were not handled well as candidates gave general procedures for each situation neglecting the fact that the fabric required special handling.

Question 7

This question tested candidates' knowledge of pattern drafting tools and equipment and their ability to draft and apply facings.

Part (a) was generally well handled by the majority of candidates. Most of them were able to name four tools necessary for drafting garment patterns.

Part (a) (ii) was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to state the use of two of the tools which they named at (a) (i).

In Part (b) (i), although most candidates copied the outline of the bodice front into their answer booklets, many of them did not draft the neckline and armhole facings on to the outline as instructed. Some of the candidates who attempted this question seemed to have misinterpreted 'separate' to mean sketch separately.

In Part (b) (ii), the grain line marks were often not properly inserted. In some instances, candidates showed the stitching line and identified it as the grain line.

Part (c) was the most challenging to candidates. Many interpreted preparation of the front facing to mean the cutting out of the facing, and no attention was paid to the term *prepare and apply*. Some candidates used the word *facing* and *interfacing* interchangeably. In some cases, candidates were unable to write the steps in a logical sequence.

This question was not attempted by a large number of candidates.

General Comments

One of the recurring observations is that many candidates seem not to read the questions thoroughly and do not answer specifically what is asked. In many instances, responses are not tailored to particular situations as in the pressing of specific fabrics.

Labelling continues to pose challenges to candidates. For example, candidates were asked to show on their sketch where they used an element of design. This required that the part of the design as shown on the sketch be identified by an arrow; many candidates simply stated what was included in the design instead of showing where in the design it was located.

In many instances, candidates attempted only parts of questions demonstrating an absence of complete mastery of the concepts. Even the parts attempted were sometimes poorly done and suggested some measure of guesswork.

A lack of structure in how answers were organized presented a challenge to the examiners. Some answers were incomplete and sometimes candidates moved from one part of a question to another with no demarcation. While content posed a problem in the examination, organization of the answers also impacted on candidates' performance.

It may be beneficial to instruct candidates to begin the answer to each question on a new page so that they have some flexibility if there is the need to insert additional information. The answers will then be readily identifiable to the examiner. Candidates also need to be reminded that numbering of the questions also impacts the marking of the scripts.

Paper 031 — School Based Assessment (SBA)

The CSEC Clothing & Textiles School Based Assessment produced varying results. Many of the candidates achieved good results, some candidates got average grades while many others achieved disappointingly less than average grades. The marks ranged from three to twenty from a possible maximum of twenty marks for each assignment.

Recommendations for Improvement of the SBA

1. Clothing and Textiles teachers should develop effective strategies for adequately preparing the candidates for the SBA activities.
2. Some teachers need improved skills to appropriately guide the students.
3. SBA workshops maybe helpful for both external assessors and teachers.
4. Pattern adaptation needs to be given a greater focus in delivering the curriculum in the schools.
5. Teachers should make sure that equipment, tools and classrooms are conducive to teaching and to examination activities.
6. Agreed grades should be entered in the columns. There should be no blank spaces on the assessment forms submitted.