

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
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2012

**CLOTHING AND TEXTILES
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The thirty-first examination in Clothing and Textiles was administered by the Caribbean Examinations Council in May/June 2012. This examination comprised three papers: Papers 01, 02 and 03.

Paper 01 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).

Some of the questions proved challenging for candidates which seemed to stem from an inability to correctly interpret the questions. Some of the responses seemed to indicate that the topics were not familiar to candidates or that they did not sufficiently analyse the questions, especially those testing Profile 2.

Some of the broad topics that were challenging for a large number of candidates were:

- Cultural influences on Caribbean fashion
- Guidelines and techniques for handling fabrics requiring special treatment
- Pattern drafting
- Construction of soft furnishings, particularly the seaming of drapery

Paper 02 comprised seven structured essay questions from which candidates were required to answer five. Part A comprised three compulsory questions and Part B comprised four questions from which candidates were required to choose two. Each question was worth a total of 16 marks – six marks for the Knowledge component and ten marks for Use of Knowledge.

Paper 031, 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 set and assessed by class teachers. One of the three assignments was assessed jointly by the class teacher and an external examiner.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 02 – Structured Essay Questions

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of yarns as used in fabric construction, methods of fabric construction and methods of applying designs to fabrics.

Generally, candidates handled the knowledge part of the question quite well with many candidates gaining full marks. Where candidates were asked to determine the most suitable method of fabric construction for particular end uses, however, it was clear that some were not clear on the difference between fabric construction and types of fabrics/fibres. It is evident that part of the question was misunderstood by some candidates. However, many candidates were familiar with appropriate methods of applying designs to fabrics for specific uses and consequently scored full marks for this part. Scores for this question were generally satisfactory. However, a small number of candidates scored zero.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of fabrics, names of fabrics made from natural fibres, appropriate uses for fabrics based on their characteristics, and care of fabrics based on their fibre types.

While many candidates handled this question well, too many candidates confused fibres and fabrics. Many candidates did very good sketches of designs appropriate for use as a dress for a bridesmaid at a wedding. However, many of them were unable to appropriately select a fabric for a design that they sketched. In many instances, the sketch and the fabric named were inconsistent, which suggested that candidates were not fully conversant with the topic. It is also apparent that some candidates did not read the instructions before attempting the question, demonstrating lack of knowledge of the requirements for the design.

Symbols used on apparel care labels were known by some candidates and applied appropriately as required in the given situation. However, many of them were unable to provide correct symbols with a few making up their own symbols.

Question 3

This question tested the concepts of classes of stitches with an emphasis on embroidery stitches, and introducing and controlling fullness. Candidates showed excellent working knowledge of the groups of stitches, rules for working stitches and methods of controlling fullness.

Again, it was clearly evident that candidates did not read the questions carefully as they were required to sketch a shirt with a yoke but many candidates sketched a skirt. Many of those who sketched a shirt did not draw the yoke, either because they were unable to do so or because they did not read the question carefully.

In this question, candidates were asked to label their sketches. However, many were unable to label as required or gave statements instead of labelling.

Question 4

Candidates' knowledge of laundry aids and laundry processes was tested in this question. Part of the question required candidates to explain, in clear steps, the procedure for removing mud stains from a garment.

Many candidates handled this exceedingly well, though many others were unable to sequentially list the steps in the procedure and, in a few cases, listed some strange procedures like 'presoaking' and 'prewashing'. Some candidates were able to clearly use their knowledge of stain removal of chewing gum and appropriately apply it to the removal of red chewing gum from a cream linen jacket — removing the gum and then the residual colour. Some responses were unacceptable and included the use of kerosene and butter. Others made no mention of the removal of the chewing gum from the garment but simply explained how to launder a linen jacket. The part of the question that dealt with removal of the mud stain was better handled although a number of candidates outlined the four steps as 'soak', 'wash', 'rinse' and 'dry', completely missing the important cue, outline. Most candidates gained full marks for knowledge of the concept; however, applying the knowledge presented some difficulty.

Question 5

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the use and care of sewing tools and equipment and various aspects of measurements in pattern drafting.

Most candidates who attempted this question showed excellent knowledge of tools and equipment. However, many candidates were unable to use this knowledge in applying the principles. For example, naming the French curve for maintaining a smooth curve from the waist to the hip when drafting a skirt proved challenging. From candidates' responses, it was clear that greater focus needs to be placed on recognizing faults in pattern drafting and fitting. Emphasis should be placed on the use of equipment and this should be demonstrated in the classroom as some candidates learn concepts in the abstract.

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the use of commercial patterns. Most candidates got full marks for the knowledge component of the question.

For the parts of the question that required candidates to apply the knowledge to concrete situations, there were mixed results. Too many candidates were unable to show how adaptations to a pattern for a basic skirt should be made.

Pattern adaptation may be taught by the use of quarter-and-half-scale blocks, which can be part of the classroom's teaching aids and materials. Candidates may be required to have their own full set of blocks made out of reinforced Bristol or tag board so that it will be easy for them to replicate the basic bodice, skirt and sleeve for pattern adaptations. While it appeared that some candidates had an idea of what was required, they were unable to sketch the adjustment that should be made to the pattern as required by the question, and in cases where they attempted to explain it, were not able to do so clearly.

The question presented a design and candidates were asked to recommend a suitable fabric for it and give reasons for their choice. There was a wide range of responses, including the names of fibres rather than fabrics. Some candidates gave reasons appropriate for their choice of fabric, for example *it will pleat well*. Although a few candidates gave commendable answers, the use of language for the discipline needs improvement. For example, a few candidates used the terms *weight*, *hand* or *texture* of the fabric chosen but instead described it as *not too stiff and not too soft*.

Question 7

This question tested knowledge of terms related to fashion, selection of fabric for appropriate end uses, the influence of migratory cultures on Caribbean fashion and the use of indigenous materials in Caribbean fashion design.

Very few candidates were able to clearly define the terms *godet* and *peplum*. The responses suggested that some candidates knew what a *peplum* was but the definitions were sketchy at best. In general, candidates were able to apply appropriate guidelines for choosing fabrics for toddlers' clothing.

Candidates were able to sketch a design that reflected the influence of the Chinese culture as required by the question and demonstrated the creative use of indigenous materials in fashion design.

Further Comments

The observation is again made that many candidates do not read the questions or the instructions completely and so lose marks. For example, for the question that dealt with the removal of red chewing gum, many candidates gave general stain removal guidelines and never addressed the chewing gum. Some candidates suggested that one should wash the garment with the gum on it. Additionally, candidates need to be reminded of what is required when the question asks to *list, describe* or *explain*.

The structure used by candidates in answering questions continued to pose a challenge to examiners. Candidates should begin each question on a new page as this allows them to add additional information if required. Numbering of the questions that are attempted also needs to be stressed.

Fibres and fabrics continued to pose substantial challenges to candidates. While it is recognized that in some territories accessing fabric samples may not be easy for teachers, new and creative methods need to be utilized in order for improvement to be seen in this area. The fabric names contained in the older books may not be applicable, since in many fabric stores samples are not available. Familiarity with the trade names of fabric currently available in the stores and the ascribing of the correct fibre content on charts displayed in the classroom may help in reinforcing the concepts of fibre types and fabric names.

Paper 031 — School Based Assessment (SBA)

The SBA produced varying results. Many students achieved good results while some of them got average grades. The marks ranged from 3 to 20 out of a possible maximum of 20 marks for each assignment.

Recommendations for Improvement of the SBA

- Clothing and Textiles teachers should develop effective strategies for adequately preparing the students for the SBA activities.
- SBA workshops may be helpful for both external assessors and teachers.
- Pattern adaptation needs to be given greater focus in delivering the curriculum in schools.
- Teachers should ensure that equipment, tools and classrooms are conducive to teaching and to examination activities.
- Agreed grades should be entered in the appropriate columns. There should be no blank spaces on the assessment forms submitted.