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## **Fibre processing**

**Prior to weaving or knitting the respective fibres have to go through various processes.**

- a) Describe these processes in general terms, or make a flow chart to show the sequence of processing that is generic to all fibres.
- b) Choose one of the following fibres and describe the processing of that particular fibre into yarn:
  - wool
  - silk
  - cotton
  - linen
- c) What simple methods are employed to create a different 'touch' and visually more interesting yarns? Suggest some specific yarn types and describe their visual and tactile appearance.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabrics page 9

Wool page 33

Silk page 39

Linen page 49

Cotton page 53

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Fibres to fabrics pages 12-15

Wool pages 66-71

Silk pages 114-119

Linen pages 136-141

Cotton pages 147-152

Glossary pages 252-260



## Weaving and knitting

**The two principal methods of making fabric are by weaving or knitting.**

- a) Describe how these two processes differ in construction. What would you say is the main defining characteristic of each? Describe what types of garments are ideally suited to each.
- b) Visit a fabric retailer and obtain samples (buy the minimum possible or ask for a small cutting) of three different knitted fabrics and three different straight or twill woven fabrics. Compare these to similar swatches from the Swatch Book and describe how they differ in weight, touch and the way in which they drape.
- c) Visit a well-known retailer and select (and try on if possible) and compare three different garments made of knitted fabric and three different garments made of straight or twill woven fabrics. Describe how the fabrics differ in weight, touch and the way in which they drape, and discuss why you believe they were the fabric of choice for their particular styles. Critically appraise how suited the choice of fabric is to the design.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabrics pages 10-14

Swatch pages 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45, 51, 55, 57, 59,  
75, 77, 79

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Fibres to fabrics pages 12-24



## Weaving

**The two most common woven fabric constructions are plain and twill weave.**

- a) Describe the principal visual difference between these two weaves and select a group of three plain and three twill weave fabrics from the swatch pages that you believe would suit each of the following:

a contemporary eveningwear collection for a fashion-forward retailer

a mid-market casual collection for a well-known brand

Describe in generic terms what type of styles you would offer in each of the fabrics and, if appropriate, what fabric finishes you might also apply to make them more practical, brand relevant and commercial.

Find an image in a fashion publication that appears to be made from each of your selected fabrics.

- b) Explain the visual characteristics of satin/sateen fabrics – the third basic weave type.
- c) Visit several stores and find garments made of the following:

cotton sateen and polyester sateen

silk satin and any synthetic or artificial satin

For each 'set', compare the differences and similarities in the visual appearance, touch and the way the fabric allows the garment to drape i.e. compare cotton sateen to polyester sateen. Using both 'sets', discuss which 'set' has the greatest difference between fibres that is reflected in the price and overall image of the garment.

- d) Find two different fashion images both using double face fabrics. Discuss how the fabrics of the two styles differ, if at all, and also how they compare to the garment image on page 13 in the *Swatch Book* (see page 19 in *Fabric for Fashion*).
- e) Find five fashion images each with a different jacquard fabric. Discuss how the fabrics differ to each other. Consider if they lend drape or structure to the garment. Do they appear fine or dense? The jacquard weaving technique can produce fabrics that are very lightweight or super heavy.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabrics pages 10-13

Swatch pages 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 29, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45, 51, 55, 57, 59, 63, 75, 77, 79

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Fibres to fabrics pages 12-24



## Knitting

**Cotton jersey is often used as a generic description to describe several types of lightweight knitted fabric including single jersey, interlock, 'jersey' rib fabrics, as well as heavier weight sweatshirt-type fabrics.**

Research into clothing brands that are known for their jersey ranges and select six images of garments which are constructed from these fabric types. For each garment explain its particular knitted construction and why it suits the style.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabric pages 14-15

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Fibres to fabric pages 22-24



## **Stretch fabrics**

**There are many different ways elastane yarns can be integrated into knitted and woven fabrics.**

Discuss the following:

- a) In general terms what type of garments would benefit from a small percentage of stretch, often referred to as comfort stretch in woven fabrics? Identify which type of garments require full stretch in a knitted fabric from a practical perspective? In addition, select two brands that feature these fabrics within their collections and discuss why the fabrics are fit for function practically and aesthetically.
- b) Select three fabrics from the swatches on page 19 and then research and select several fashion images from fashion publications (magazines, catalogues, advertisements) that appear to be made from each of your selected fabrics.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabric pages 9-10, 16-19



## **Fabric weights**

**The weight of a fabric is a result not only of the type of fibre used but also its construction.**

Select three different fabrics from any swatch page (excluding page 23) that are all of the same weave construction (straight, twill, satin/sateen).

Discuss what makes them different in appearance to each other and suggest what type of garment each one would best suit for a commercial clothing brand.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabric pages 20-23

Swatch pages 11, 15, 19, 27, 29, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45, 51, 55, 57, 59, 62, 63, 74-79



## **Brand and product analysis**

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**Scenario: You work in a design, merchandising or buying department of a well-known brand or retailer.**

- a) Decide which brand or retailer you are.
- b) Draft four short paragraphs stating the brand's/retailer's ethos, the target customer, product profile and price points.
- c) Assemble a mood board to visually communicate the brand's/retailer's ethos and target customer.
- d) Select four fabrics from three different fibre swatch pages (e.g. 4 x wool, 4 x silk, 4 x cotton). Suggest garment types for each (e.g. short fitted jacket, camisole top, etc.). Ensure that these fully reflect the brand's/retailer's ethos and the target customer as presented on your mood board. The selected fabrics need to be reflective of the product profile that you have articulated.
- e) Use magazine images wherever possible to best show the styles you are suggesting for each fabric and present these as a well ordered range.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Swatch pages 11, 15, 19, 27, 29, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45, 51, 55, 57, 59, 63, 75,  
77, 79

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Wool pages 72-75, 82-83

Silk pages 122-125

Cotton pages 150-152, 162-165

Synthetic fibres pages 188-209

Artificial fibres pages 217-227

Fabric and the fashion industry page 237-239

Glossary pages 252-260



## **Fabric and fashion awareness**

**Scenario: You work in a design, merchandising or buying department of a price sensitive online fashion business (fictitious brand).**

- a) Draft four short paragraphs stating your online company's ethos, the target customer, product profile and price points.
- b) Discuss two or three designer brands that your online company tend to look at for design inspiration.
- c) Assemble a style board using fashion images from the two or three designer brands that your company uses as inspiration for its styles.
- d) Select inexpensive alternatives that would best suit the styles.
- e) For each of the fabric alternatives discuss what you think the visual and tactile difference might be.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabric pages 24-29

Swatch pages 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 29, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45, 51, 55, 57, 59, 63, 75, 77, 79



## Quality core products

**Scenario: You work in a design, merchandising or buying department of a company specializing in good quality classic men's shirts.**

- a) Draft four short paragraphs stating your company's ethos, the target customer, product profile and price points.
- b) Discuss two or three designer brands that are direct competitors.
- c) Look at your competitors' range offer in the retail environment and identify the different weaves and weights used in the range.
- d) Assemble a mood board using fashion and lifestyle images.
- e) Create a capsule range plan of twelve styles using magazine images.
- f) Fabricate your range plan by selecting swatches that are style appropriate, paying attention to weights and weaves.
- g) For each of the fabric options discuss what you think the visual and tactile difference might be. Which qualities lend a style a more formal or casual appeal?
- h) Make a chart which compares and appraises in detail your fabric choices.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabrics pages 9-13

Linen pages 48-51

Cotton pages 52-59

Fabric terminology pages 84-87

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Linen pages 136-141

Cotton pages 142-165



## **Sustainability awareness**

**Scenario: You work with the design team sourcing fabrics and materials for a contemporary fashion brand that has ecological concerns as a defining brand ethos and unique selling point (USP).**

- a) Draft four short paragraphs stating your brand's ethos, the target customer, product profile and price points.
- b) Bullet point your brand's eco criteria.
- c) Discuss two or three existing designer brands whose values and design identity make them competitors.
- d) Assemble a mood board using fashion and lifestyle images that reflect the visual identity of your brand.
- e) Your brand prefers to use natural, or naturally derived, fabrics. Select five fabrics that the design team have asked you to source and make a chart that assesses each fabric's status from an ecological perspective. How will this influence your selections?

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabrics pages 9-13

Alternative plant fibres pages 60-63

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Wool pages 84-85

Silk page 121

Linen pages 137-141

Cotton 153-159

Alternative plant fibres pages 166-179



## **Eco-friendly fabrics**

**Scenario: You work for a small company whose unique selling point (USP) is sustainable fashion on a budget. Past collections have included eco-friendly cotton and ‘peace’ silk, as well as linen and wool. The brand believes the way forward is to look at new developments using alternative plant fibres. You have been tasked with sourcing fabrics for the launch of the new capsule range.**

- a) Draft four short paragraphs stating your brand’s ethos, the target customer, product profile and price points.
- b) Discuss two or three existing designer brands whose values and design identity make them competitors.
- c) Assemble a mood board using fashion and lifestyle images that reflect the visual identity of your brand.
- d) List your existing eco-friendly fabrics and then select and list three or four alternative plant fabrics.
- e) Discuss the potential of each fabric from a design perspective and the fibres potential from a marketing perspective.
- f) Assemble a product line board of styles and their respective fabrics/fibres.
- g) Ensure all your fabrics work comfortably together as a collection.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Fibres to fabrics pages 9-13

Alternative plant fibres pages 60-63

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Wool pages 84-85

Silk page 121

Linen pages 137-141

Cotton 153-159

Alternative plant fibres pages 166-179



## **Man-made fabrics**

**Scenario: You work for a supplier of corporate wear looking to introduce a small range of higher-end corporate clothing using man-made fabrics. You have been tasked with sourcing suitable fabrics and putting together a capsule design package.**

- a) Assemble a mood board for your corporate clothing range using images that reflect the visual identity of your brand.
- b) Select two or three man-made fabrics and discuss their potential from a design and wear perspective.
- c) Produce a product line board of six or seven styles, together with your selected fabrics.
- d) List the advantages and suitability of your fabric selection.

Reading: *The Swatch Book*

Man-made fibres pages 66-79

Additional reading: *Fabric for Fashion*

Man-made fibres 180-233



## **Building a personal fabric library**

**Over the course of your studies you will collect many fabric swatches.**

Using these swatches you can very quickly build up a substantial fabric reference library that will be a useful resource as you study. You will need:

- a) an A4 lever-arch file with a deep spine
- b) light card in A4 size in a neutral colour for mounting swatches
- c) card file dividers in A4 size
- d) pinking shears
- e) double-sided sticky tape
- f) a variety of fabric swatches, preferably about 10 7.5 cm (4 x 3 in)

Neatly cut the swatches with the pinking shears and lay them face side up, with the straight grain running vertically. If the fabric has a 'nap' or pile (like corduroy, velvet or fabrics with a 'hairy' surface) make sure these run down the swatch. Turn the swatch over and place a piece of double-sided sticky tape across the top edge of the swatch, peel off the backing tape and stick the swatch on to the mounting sheet, leaving space for the information below.

### **Design your own mounting sheets**

The sheet of light card that your fabric swatch is mounted on should record the following information

- a) description and name of the fabric
- b) fibre composition, by percentage if possible
- c) the supplier (preferably the mill)
- d) the width of the fabric
- e) the weight of the fabric
- f) price per metre or yard
- g) space for your own notes – these may be observations about the nature of the cloth and its properties, or what it may be useful for

If you have actually cut and sewn the fabric you can evaluate and record its positive and negative aspects

Separate the file into categories using the dividers. To begin with it is probably simplest to categorize your fabric swatches by fibre.

As your library grows you can reorganize your file. You may want to categorize fabrics by suitability for different types of product, for example you may have a section for 'novelty evening wear fabrics' or a 'tailoring' section.