

2016 VCE Visual Communication Design examination report

General comments

The 2016 VCE Visual Communication Design examination assessed a range of key knowledge and key skills across Units 3 and 4.

Students generally handled the examination well and demonstrated creativity in the design tasks.

Students had difficulty with questions on the fields of design, evaluation of industrial and environmental designs, techniques for evaluating designs and creative thinking techniques. Students and teachers should continue to refer to the Technical Drawing Specifications Resource document, available on the VCAA website, when preparing for the examination.

A significant issue was that students often did not read the questions carefully and provided irrelevant answers or neglected to provide all of the required information. This was often the case with Questions 1, 2cii., 4b., 4cii., 7a. and 7c.

Students with high-scoring responses:

- used correct and relevant terminology from the study design
- attempted all questions and considered their use of time appropriately
- read questions carefully, were able to interpret what each question was asking and addressed every aspect of the question in their answers
- had a good understanding of the design process, and design needs and constraints
- demonstrated a clear understanding of the design elements and principles and were able to emphasise them visually.

The following should be noted:

- Students needed to demonstrate more clearly what the key features or distinguishing characteristics of the design fields were. They should know what types of drawings, final presentations, methods and conventions are used in each field of design specifically. They should be able to discuss typical contexts and specific purposes used by the design fields.
- Students needed to know the design elements and design principles as several questions focused on either identifying or discussing them, or using them in the students' own designs.
- Many students simply identified 'repetition' as a principle, rather than a 'repetitive pattern' or 'pattern (repetition)'.
- Students should be encouraged to use the design elements and design principles when discussing and evaluating examples of industrial and environmental design.
- Students must read questions carefully. Some students responded to a question in an incorrect way because they missed some detail in the question or misinterpreted it. For example, students did not address the collaboration part of Question 4b. or completed two-dimensional visualisation drawings in Question 7a. when the question required three-dimensional drawings.
- Using reading time effectively is important. Some questions required students to relate the answer of the second part of a question to the response they gave in the first part, such as

Questions 2ci. and 2cii., and 4ci. and 4cii. Some students answered the first part of a question in a way that did not allow them to show their full knowledge in the second part. For example, in responses to Question 2ci. students identified a design need before considering how appropriate it was for answering Question 2cii. As a result, students were often only able to discuss how the selected design element was used to address the stated need and not how the design principal was also used.

- Students are encouraged to further develop their rendering skills, looking at creating form through tone, representing texture and understanding the direction of light source for cast shadows on the object and ground.
- Students should practise applying their understanding of hierarchy to practical design tasks. The required hierarchy was not always correctly emphasised in Questions 7b. and 7c.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	8	22	30	38	3

Figure 1 – figure-ground

Figure 2 – contrast

Figure 3 – cropping

Figure 4 – asymmetrical balance

This question addressed students' understanding of the principles of design. This question was generally answered well, although many students selected elements instead of principles.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	33	11	22	14	19	1.8

Most students were able to correctly identify the design fields and distinguish between industrial and communication design. Their explanations were, however, sometimes lacking in sufficient detail. Students were not always able to discuss specific features or characteristics of the design field or they referenced the images incorrectly. There was some incorrect use of terminology, such as 'graphic design'.

The following is an example of a mid-range response.

Design Field 1: Communication design: The primary concern for the concept boards is to inform the viewer, explanatory diagrams & detailed illustrations give viewers information on how the product works & it's features.

Design Field 2: Industrial design: As this depicts a product that will be manufactured, illustrations of mechanisms & materials are evident with the diagrams of functionality & how to assemble the product.

Question 2bi.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	14	21	33	31	1.8

Most students were able to identify material used to produce the poolside furniture and provide reasons why the designer selected it. Many students had problems describing the visual effect in relation to design elements and/or principles, and there were a few students who did not answer that part of the question. Some students misread the question and provided an answer relevant to a model or prototype.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Plastic has been used to create this poolside furniture. This ensures that the furniture appears sleek and sophisticated, whilst remaining in prime condition for as long as possible given that plastic is waterproof and will not become damaged.

Question 2bii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	31	19	25	15	9	1.5

The image provided the opportunity for a range of responses discussing design elements and design principles, and aesthetics and function. Many students tried to list as many elements and principles as possible without describing how they were utilised in the design. Students who focused on the functional and aesthetic qualities of the poolside furniture generally gave answers that had breadth and were relevant and interesting. Students were usually able to identify the dominant elements and principles; however, many struggled to link these to the functional/aesthetic factors. A number of students discussed colour, but this was incorrect as white is not considered a colour. The most popular elements were line and shape, and many students discussed the principles of pattern and balance. Answers were often descriptive and did not address how the elements and principles enhanced the aesthetics/function.

The following is an example of a mid-range response.

The form of the furniture (slatted, linear segments) allows them to fold up for easy storage, working functionally to reduce the space taken up. These sections are using pattern to enhance the furniture's aesthetic value, adding a level of interest through the alternating raised and lowered sections that would not be present in a flat, uniform piece.

Question 2ci.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	37	45	1.3

Most students were able to describe an environmental need for the hospital. However, some did not provide evidence from the image as required by the question. A few students described a design need that did not have any relationship to the photos and was more of an assumption; for example, 'environmentally friendly', without having evidence on which to base this need.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response that provided scope for effectively answering the other parts of the question.

These images display the hospital in relation to many surrounding trees and plants. As such, the brief may have specified the need for such aesthetics and imagery to be incorporated into the design.

Question 2cii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	22	7	20	16	18	9	9	2.7

Most students could correctly name appropriate design elements and design principles, although at times their discussion was not expanded to fully connect the nominated elements and principles to the need that was identified in Question 2ci. Many students simply rephrased the question without providing in-depth discussion. A common example was that the element or principle gave a 'nice aesthetic', without expanding on how a 'nice aesthetic' was achieved. Many students did not note that both parts of Question 2cii. had to relate to the need provided in Question 2ci., and they struggled to provide a meaningful response that addressed the question. It is essential that students read all parts of a question before attempting an answer.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response by the same student as in Question 2ci.

Colour has been used to link the design to the imagery of plants. The varying shades of green on the external panels, creating a foliage-like sense that invokes the same environmental feel as the specified trees.

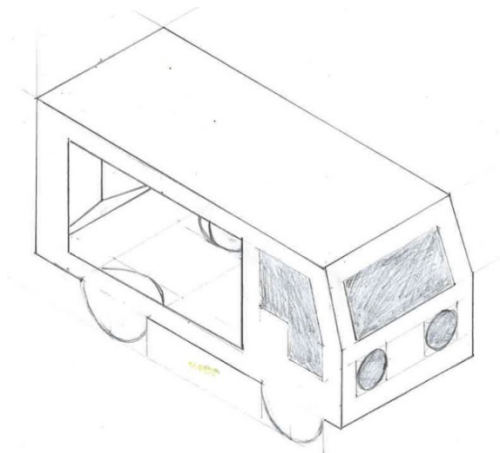
The repeated pattern of the thin panels is reminiscent of the leaves on a plant, and creates a resemblance that successfully invokes the imagery detailed in the brief.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Average
%	26	9	7	6	7	7	7	9	10	9	3	1	0	0	4

Most students attempted this question, although it was often not answered well. Many students did not draw the packaging net facing the correct direction or orientation from point A. It appeared as though some students did not visualise the packaging net as a vehicle when folded. Most students did not include the details that would be seen through the cut-out window on the side of the vehicle, such as the back doors or wheel hubs and wheel. Isometric circles were often incorrect, and a few students used circle or ellipse templates. When using an ellipse template, students often did not get the correct angle of the ellipse. Those who created the ellipses manually usually achieved a higher level of accuracy than those who used a template.

The following example indicates the expected response.



Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	28	15	28	12	17	1.8

Students who answered this question well were able to use descriptive language about how the designer addressed each constraint. Students struggled to identify a constraint and discuss how the designer addressed the identified constraint. Several students described or analysed what they saw on the image. Others were able to identify a constraint, but often did not discuss how the designer addressed the constraint, just stating that the designer addressed the constraint. A few students listed deadlines and budget constraints. Students had to identify constraints that were evident in the images provided.

The following is an example of a mid-range response.

Must prominently feature characteristic of Melbourne, as evidenced by the textual inclusion of the name, as well as various 'Victoria' logos. The designer responded by using recognisable imagery like trams and Flinders St. Station

Must use colour to achieve a sense of excitement only, as evidenced by this same sense being present in the busy, fluid imagery. The designer addressed this by prominently featuring yellow and red, bright colours that attract attention and generate this sense

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	51	19	23	8	0.9

Most students were able to describe a specialist, but did not discuss how the designer collaborated with the specialist. Students struggled to give a clear description of the collaboration process. Some students identified the graphic designer as the specialist, without realising that the graphic designer would have created the poster. This meant that a graphic designer was not a suitable option for a specialist. The students should have identified a specialist that the graphic designer would have collaborated with. In the context of this question the specialist could have been a design specialist such as a typographer or a general specialist like a photographer or cartographer.

The following is an example of a mid-range response.

The designer may have collaborated with a typographer during the process in order to produce the unique type. The typographer and designer may have worked together, discussing how to create a type that reflects Melbourne and the more stylish suburb at Southbank.

Question 4ci.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	20	80	0.8

Most students were able to address this question correctly, although some related their answer to Figure 13 rather than Figure 14.

The following are examples of correct student responses.

To inform

To guide

To identify

Question 4cii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	23	32	29	16	1.4

Students generally answered this question well but many responses lacked depth. The question required a discussion of more than one decision, which many students neglected to include. Some students described and analysed the image rather than discussing the decisions that the designers had made. Students needed to be more specific in their explanations, explaining how the designer created an effective solution to satisfy the identified purpose.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses to the identified purpose, to guide.

Example 1

The primary focus of the design is the map, using bright colours and the inclusion of a legend on the map makes the learning of locations & information very easy, along with the inclusion of major street names for easy locating

Example 2

A decision which may have been made was to use colours which indicate certain features – land, for example, blue means water, green means park/grass. Another solution to Guide the audience was the use of arrow shapes and type of numbers to indicate specific locations.

Question 4d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	38	19	29	14	1.2

Several students used critical design thinking techniques such as PMI, SWOT and POOCH to answer this question. However, most did not go beyond providing a definition of the technique, and therefore their discussions were lacking. Others identified surveys, getting feedback from the client, referring to the brief, etc. Only a few students elaborated on how that process would then help the designer to resolve the visual communication.

The following are examples of mid-range responses. Neither response effectively explains **how** the process helped the designer resolve the visual communication.

Example 1

Plus Minus Interesting (PMI), the designer would have used this technique in order to makes sure that the sites indicated can be easily read on the map. Positives of Red to make the map more vibrant on the page and interesting ways to get the audiences attention for the map.

Example 2

PMI analysis may have been used to assess the design in relation to the brief, establishing where the design does and does not satisfy the client's needs whilst also identifying areas that could be further developed.

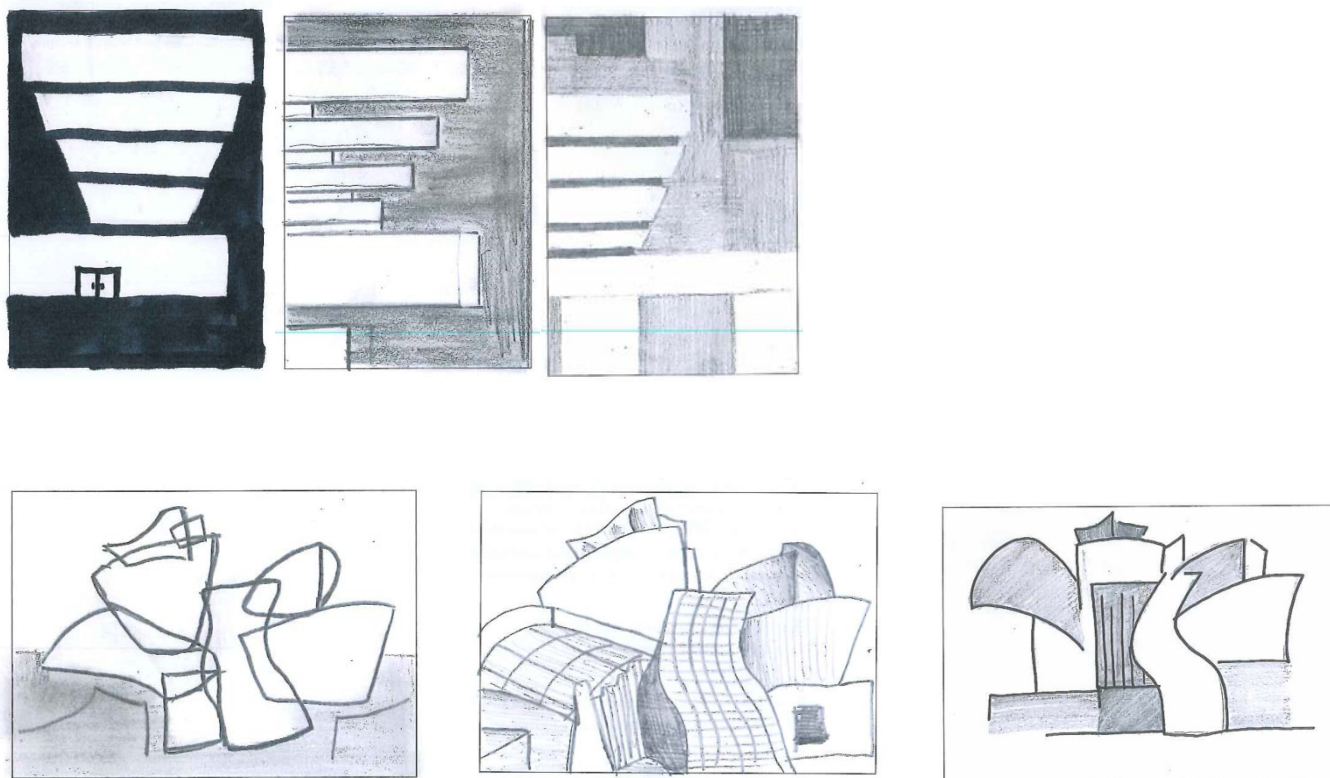
Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	6	3	7	9	18	17	21	11	9	4.8

There were some very high-scoring solutions and also some very low-scoring responses where students did not clearly address the design element(s) or design principle(s). Many students struggled to emphasise figure-ground in the first image or use line effectively in the second part. Most students were able to create shape, but often they did not simplify the image and remained too close to the original photo, therefore suggesting form and not clearly showing their understanding of the element of shape. Contrast was generally handled well by most students. Many students, however, used line in a basic way without considering how it could be emphasised. Very few students seemed to realise that when they only used outline, this created shape, which then became the dominant element. Only a few students explored varying the thickness of the line or used broken line.

Some students focused on the trees, pedestrians and vehicles, therefore taking focus away from the building. The highest-scoring responses used the entire area of the provided rectangle and focused on the main characteristics of each museum building.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

**Question 6**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	4	5	10	12	16	18	15	13	5	2	4.6

Many renderings of the kettle were not done well. Very few students included shadows cast on the body or lid of the kettle, although most students considered the shadows cast on the ground. The representation of the single light source was inconsistent in many of the drawings, with the light source on the kettle being correct but the cast shadows on the ground going in the wrong direction. There were many students who coloured in rather than rendered form and surface texture. This

was particularly true of the large area of enamel. Chrome was generally well done, although often responses lacked the high contrast associated with this reflective material. Students generally indicated a roughness to the rubber but often did not take into account the cylindrical form of the handle, neglecting to indicate tonal change.

Many students were not able to determine that the light source was coming from the top left and slightly in front of the kettle.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.



Question 7a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	23	19	24	15	9	6	2.7

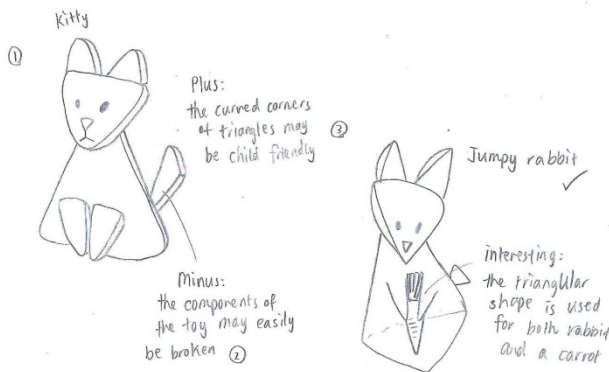
Most students attempted all or part of this question.

Popular design thinking techniques included PMI, SCAMPER and brainstorming/mindmap, with most students generally using these effectively. Students used the space provided to write down their ideas and narrow their concepts to the most successful design. Students often used annotations to clarify their design thinking.

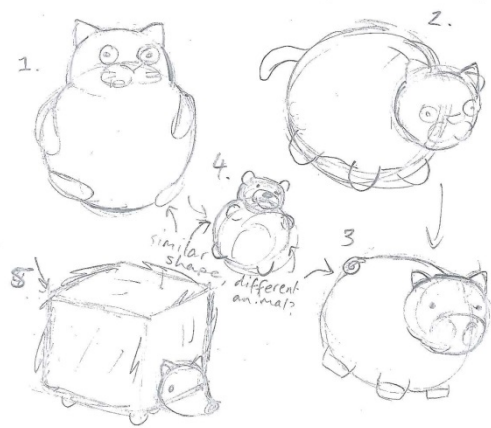
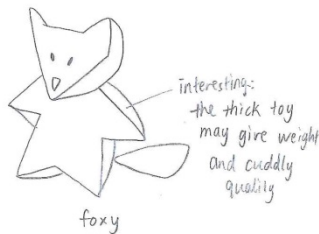
Many students did not appear to read the question carefully and used several geometric shapes from the list instead of just focusing on one, as the question asked. Many students also completed their visualisation drawings in 2D, when the question asked for three-dimensional drawings. Students needed to acknowledge that parts protruded and could easily break off, not meeting the needs of the brief.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Shape: triangle



light tone colours
 plus: warm, light tone of colours may give a positive and comfortable feelings to the preschool children



Positive	Negative	Interesting
1. Good consistent use of circular shape	Limbs appear unrealistic	Uses 2 base circles as main shape
2. More natural shape for a cat	Tail protrudes too much.	Appears very obese for a cat
3. Circular shape associated with pig better than a cat.	Snout looks stubby when not extended.	Tail works much better as curly
4. Relates well to well known idea of bear	Similar to #1?	
5. Unique square shape	Can't convey species with cartoonish	Square base animals are harder to Question 7 - continued

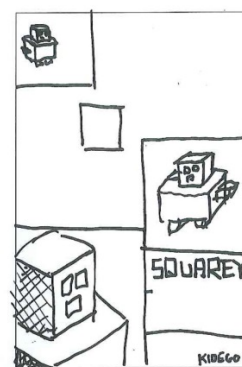
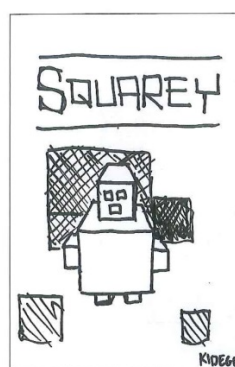
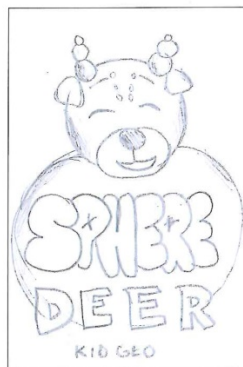
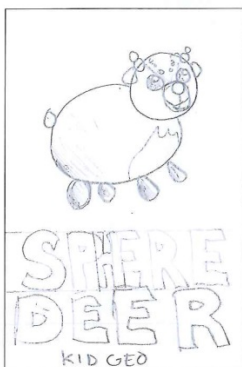
Question 7b.

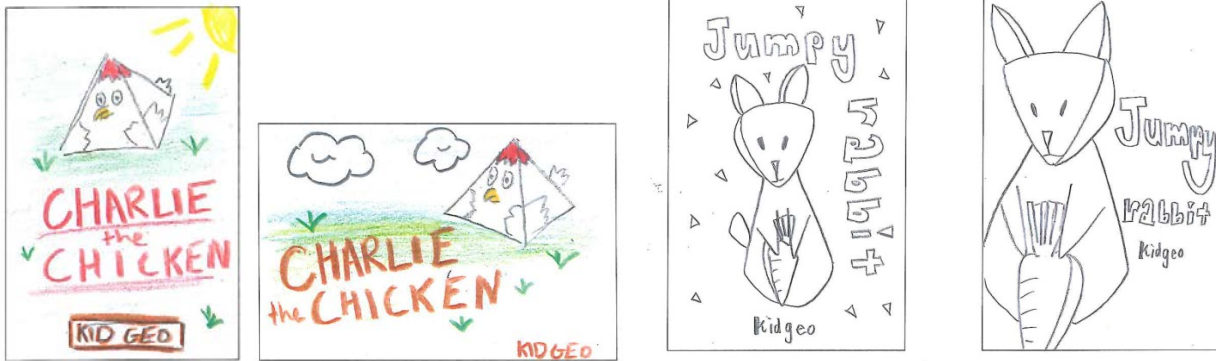
Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	12	8	36	15	29	2.4

Students produced postcard designs fairly well. However, few students recognised the importance of showing two **different** possible layouts. As this question allowed students to demonstrate design skill, they needed to focus on rearrangement of components and using scale to vary their designs.

Common errors included not giving the correct hierarchy required, not including the company name 'Kidgeo', not drawing characters in 3D or using different characters in the two layouts.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.



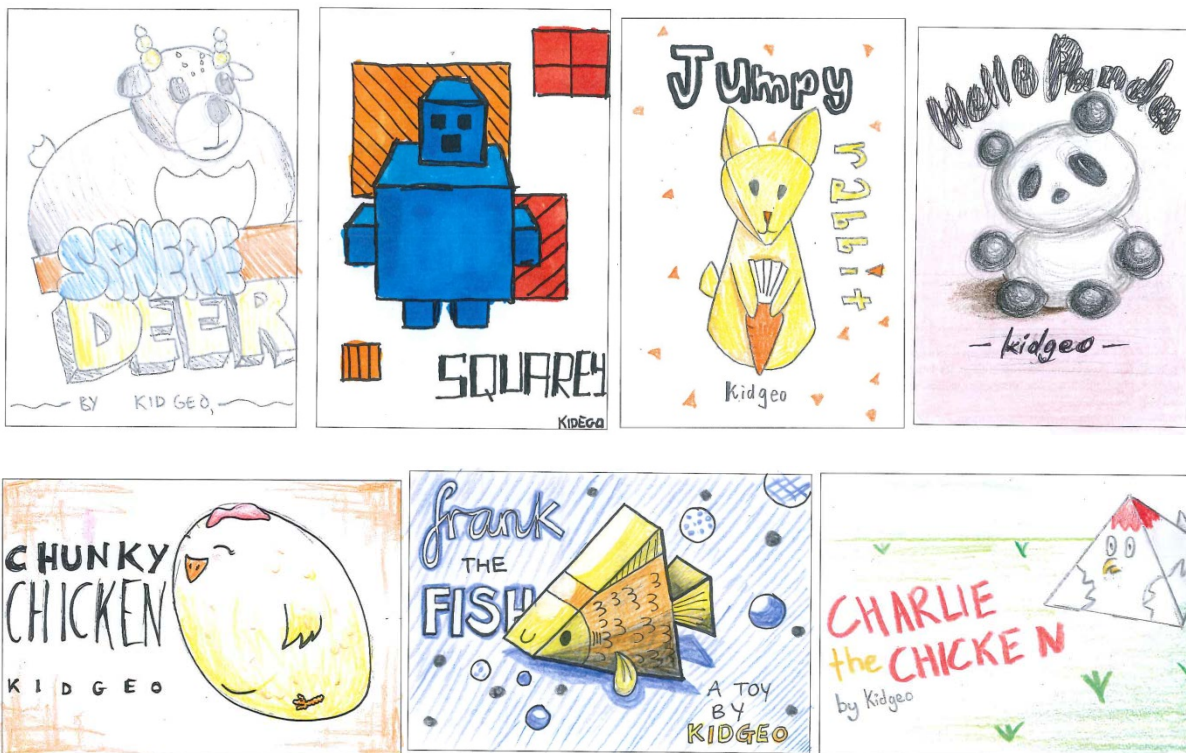


Question 7c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	15	1	1	4	9	13	15	17	14	8	4	5.4

The majority of students who attempted this question met most or all the requirements; however, only a few designs showed strong design thinking, producing a creative response that met the needs of the brief. Common errors made by students included not drawing the character in 3D or not using one of their designs from Question 7b. as required. A large number of students did not use tone to show form or did not correctly address the required hierarchy stated in the question. The company name 'Kidgeo' was sometimes misspelt or missing from the final design.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses that refined their designs in Question 7b.



Question 7d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	32	32	25	12	1.2

Most students gave very basic responses and did not consider the circular space they were required to work within. Some students drew their character in three dimensions or added type and/or colour when the question specifically asked for only shape and line to be used.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

