

VCE Visual Communication Design Units 1 & 2

Chapter 2 — Solving communication design problems

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Chapter 2 Solving communication design problems — 2A The brief as the working instrument

Theory

In Unit 1 Outcome 1 you **wrote** a brief: you reframed an ill-defined problem, identified a communication need and set out design criteria. In Unit 1 Outcome 2 the job changes. Here you are **given** a brief — one that details the **strategy of a brand or business**, its **communication need** and the **associated design criteria** — and you work to it through the **Develop** and **Deliver** stages of the VCD design process.

That change matters, because it exposes what a brief actually is. A brief is not an introduction to a project that you read once and put in a drawer. It is a **working instrument**: the document you develop *from* and the document you are later measured *against*. The same four criteria that tell you what to make are the criteria that decide whether what you made is any good. Everything in this subtopic follows from that one idea.

What a given brief carries.

Part of the brief	What it tells the designer	Why it matters in Outcome 2
Client	Who is commissioning the work and what they do.	Names the person whose problem this is; you answer to them, not to your own taste.
Business or brand strategy	Where the business is now, where it wants to be, and with whom.	Visual language is only part of a larger strategy — to increase engagement, influence behaviour or reposition the business among its audiences or users. The strategy is the reason the identity exists.
Communication need	What must be communicated, and what will be produced to communicate it — a visual identity applied to particular outcomes and collateral.	Fixes the scope of the job: what you deliver, and in what formats.
Purpose	What the designed outcome must do — identify, inform, promote, instruct, guide, persuade.	The single most important criterion; it is what the design is <i>for</i> .
Context	Where, when and in what conditions the outcome is created, used or viewed.	Decides legibility, scale, contrast, durability. Context is not the presentation format.
Audience or users	Who they are — demographic and psychographic descriptors.	Decides tone, language, imagery and hierarchy. Who they are, not what they want from the design.
Design constraints	The limits and expectations the designer must work within — materials, colours, sizes, production method, budget, timeline, legal or ethical requirements.	Decides what is producible. A concept that breaches a constraint cannot be made.

CLIENT + BUSINESS STRATEGY

Mulga Plants — a family-run native-plant nursery in the Wimmera, 18 years old, known locally for cheap tubestock sold at the roadside gate. The business is repositioning: it wants to be known as the district's specialist in dry-country planting, and to move buyers from single impulse plants to planned waterwise gardens. The visual language must carry that repositioning to a new, younger audience.

COMMUNICATION NEED

A visual identity for MULGA — wordmark, graphic mark, signature colour palette and typography — applied to two pieces of collateral: the tubestock pot label and the delivery-van side panel.

DESIGN CRITERIA

PURPOSE — what the design must do

To identify MULGA as a specialist in dry-country planting, and to inform a buyer how much water a plant will need at the moment they choose it.

CONTEXT — where, when, in what conditions

Labels are read outdoors in full sun, at arm's length, among forty other pots on a gravel bench. The van panel is read from 20–30 m by passing traffic. Both are seen year-round in dust and heat.

AUDIENCE OR USERS — who they are

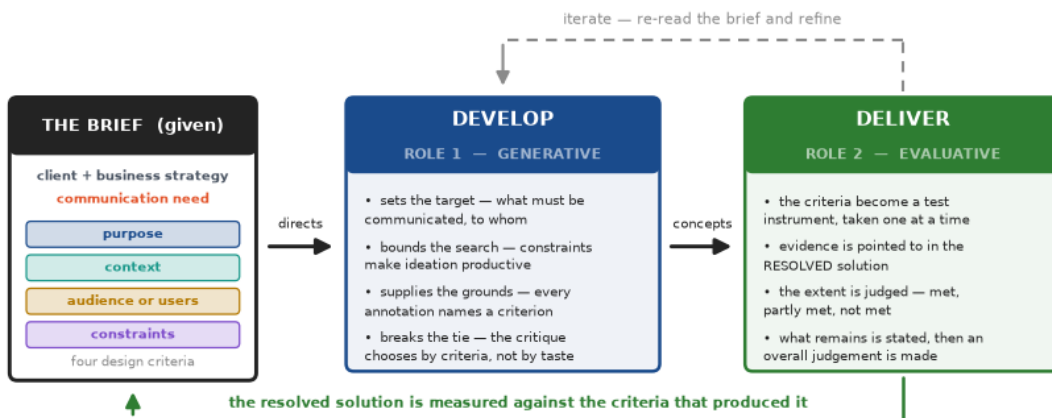
First-time gardeners aged 25–40, many renting, planting in pots and narrow strips; they value low effort and low water use. Plus long-standing customers aged 60+ who buy by common plant name.

DESIGN CONSTRAINTS — limits and expectations

Pot label: one ink, screen-printed on a pale grey moulded label 55 x 30 mm. Van panel: cut vinyl, three colours maximum. The mark must read at 55 mm and at 900 mm wide. No photography — the nursery owns none. Total identity budget \$4,000.

The brief above is the running example for this subtopic. **MULGA** is a fictional family-run native-plant nursery in the Wimmera that is repositioning itself: it has always sold cheap tubestock at the roadside gate, and it now wants to be known as the district's specialist in dry-country planting. Read the brief carefully — every judgement made later in this subtopic points back to it.

One document, two roles. The key knowledge for this area of study asks for “the role of the brief in developing **and** evaluating design solutions”. They are two different jobs done by one document.



The work changes to meet the brief. The brief does not change to fit the work.

Role 1 — the brief in developing a solution

In **Develop** the brief is **generative**. It does four things that ideation cannot do for itself.

1. **It sets the target.** Divergent thinking without a target produces attractive work that answers no question. The communication need and the purpose tell you what the visual language must achieve.

2. **It bounds the search.** Constraints are not the enemy of ideas — they are what makes ideation productive. “Design a nursery identity” is paralysing. “Design a mark that reads in one ink at 55 mm and in cut vinyl at 900 mm” is a problem you can start drawing.
3. **It supplies the grounds.** Every annotation you write on an idea should be able to name the criterion it serves. That is what turns a description into an explanation.
4. **It breaks the tie.** At a critique two concepts are rarely equally good — they are usually good against *different* criteria. The brief decides which difference counts.

Here is the generative role at work. Each decision in the resolved MULGA identity can be traced to a line in the brief.

The decision the designer made	The part of the brief that settled it
The mark is built from flat, straight-edged shapes with no fine detail.	Constraint — the mark must read at 55 mm and at 900 mm wide.
The palette is limited to three colours: olive, ochre and bone.	Constraint — the van panel is cut vinyl, three colours maximum.
A three-drop water-rating device was invented and added to the label.	Purpose — inform the buyer how much water a plant needs <i>at the moment they choose it</i> .
Type is set as heavy sans-serif capitals in dark olive on a pale ground.	Context — read in full sun, in dust, at arm’s length and at 20–30 m.
Nothing is illustrated with a photograph.	Constraint — no photography; the nursery owns none.
The written voice is plain and knowledgeable rather than folksy.	Strategy — reposition as the district’s dry-country specialist.

Notice what the brief did **not** do. It did not say “use olive”, “draw three leaves” or “invent a water rating”. A brief states **requirements**, not solutions. If a brief tells you what the design should look like, it has stopped being a brief and started being a bad instruction.

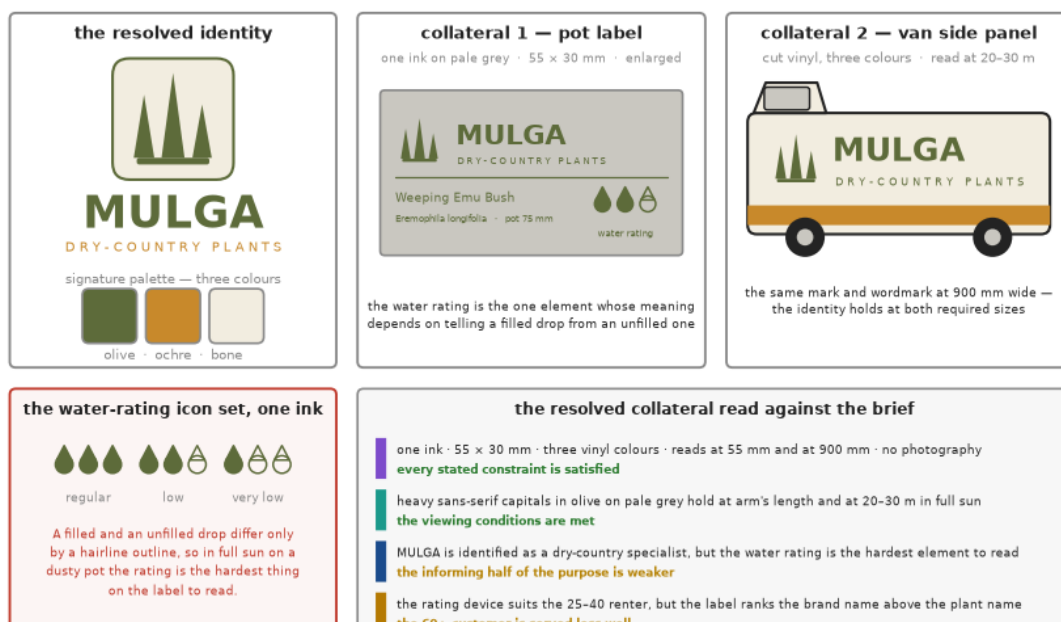
Criteria-referenced annotation. Annotations are how the generative role becomes visible to an assessor. An annotation that names no criterion is a caption; an annotation that names one is an argument.

Annotation that earns little	Annotation that evaluates against the brief
“I like this version best — the green feels natural.”	“The dark olive holds a strong tonal contrast against the pale grey label, so the wordmark still reads at arm’s length in full sun (context).”
“The little drops look cute.”	“Three drops give a water rating without words, serving the informing half of the purpose — though in a single ink the unfilled drop is the weakest mark on the label.”
“Simplified the mark.”	“Removed the fine veins from the phyllodes so the mark survives reduction to 55 mm (constraint).”

Role 2 — the brief in evaluating a solution

In **Deliver** the same criteria change function. They stop describing the job and become a **test instrument**. This is the second of the two key-knowledge dot points this subtopic rests on: *the extent to which resolved design solutions meet the requirements of the brief*.

Below is the resolved MULGA visual language — the wordmark, graphic mark, signature palette and typography, applied to the two pieces of collateral the brief asked for.



A complete evaluation of a resolved solution makes four moves, and makes them one criterion at a time.

1. **Quote the criterion**, in the brief's own words. Not "it works well" — *which* requirement.
2. **Point to specific evidence in the resolved solution**: a colour, a type size, a dimension, a material, an ink, a hierarchy. Evidence you can see, not intentions you can describe.
3. **Judge the extent** — **met**, **partly met** or **not met**.
4. **Say what remains**, and how you would do it.

THE CRITERION (in the brief's words)	EVIDENCE IN THE RESOLVED SOLUTION	EXTENT	WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE
PURPOSE to identify MULGA as a dry-country specialist AND inform the buyer's water choice as they choose	The mark, wordmark and "dry-country plants" line identify the nursery on both pieces. The water rating is present, but on the one-ink label a filled and an unfilled drop differ only by a hairline outline, so in full sun on a dusty pot the rating is read last, if at all.	PARTLY MET	Separate the states by SHAPE, not tone: keep the filled drops and replace the unfilled ones with an empty ring, or set the rating in words as well — both work in a single ink.
CONTEXT full sun, arm's length, among forty pots; van at 20-30 m; dust and heat year-round	Heavy sans-serif capitals in olive on a pale grey label hold their tonal contrast at arm's length, and the same wordmark at 900 mm on the van reads across two traffic lanes. Flat vinyl and screen ink both survive dust and heat.	MET	Nothing. Confirm on a printed label held at arm's length outdoors rather than on screen.
AUDIENCE OR USERS 25-40 first-time gardeners planting in pots; plus 60+ customers who buy by common plant name	The water-rating device speaks directly to a renter choosing a low-water plant for a pot. But the 60+ customer scans a bench of forty pots for the PLANT, and the label ranks the wordmark MULGA above the common name "Weeping Emu Bush" — so the brand is met before the plant.	PARTLY MET	Reduce the wordmark and raise the common name so the plant is the dominant line. The brand is already carried at scale on the van; the label's job is identifying a plant.
DESIGN CONSTRAINTS one ink, 55 x 30 mm label; three vinyl colours; reads at 55 mm and 900 mm; no photography; \$4,000	The label uses a single olive ink at 55 x 30 mm. The van uses olive, ochre and bone — three colours. The mark is built from flat straight-edged shapes, so it holds at both sizes. No photograph appears anywhere, so no image licence is required.	MET	Nothing. Record the ink and vinyl specifications so the identity can be reproduced consistently.
OVERALL JUDGEMENT	Every constraint is satisfied and the viewing conditions are met, so the identity is producible and legible. But the informing half of the purpose — the decision the repositioning depends on — is only partly achieved. ∴ the solution meets the brief in part; one further refinement to the water-rating device is needed before it can be called resolved against this brief.		

"The extent to which" is a graded judgement. The study design does not ask *whether* a solution meets the brief; it asks the **extent** to which it does. A tick-and-cross list under-answers the question. "Partly met" is the most informative verdict you can give, because it forces you to say which part works, which part does not, and what would close the gap.

Nor are the four criteria equal when you make the **overall judgement**. Weigh them, and say how you are weighing them:

- A solution that satisfies every constraint but does not achieve its **purpose** has not met the brief — the purpose is what the design is *for*.
- A solution that achieves its purpose but breaches a **constraint** has not met the brief either — it cannot be produced, so it does not exist.

- Where a criterion is only partly met, judge how much of the **strategy** depends on that part. In MULGA's case the whole repositioning rests on the buyer being able to read a water rating, so a weak rating device is a serious shortfall, not a detail.

The brief is a live instrument, not a movable one. The design process is iterative, so you will return to the brief many times: re-reading it after a critique, checking a constraint before committing to a material, testing a refinement against a criterion. If a criterion genuinely cannot be met — the budget will not stretch, the material does not exist — you go back to the client, agree an amendment and **record** it. What you may never do is quietly reinterpret a criterion so that the work you have already made passes. The work changes to meet the brief; the brief does not change to fit the work.

Watch-out — a brief sets requirements, not solutions. If you find yourself writing “the brief says to use green”, re-read it. Briefs specify what must be achieved and what the limits are. The visual language is the designer's answer, not the client's instruction.

Watch-out — keep the four criteria distinct. **Purpose** is what the design must do. **Context** is where, when and in what conditions it is met — *not* the presentation format. **Audience or users** is who they are, *not* what they want from the design. **Constraints** are limits and expectations, *not* the other criteria restated.

Watch-out — evaluate against the criteria, not against taste. “It looks professional”, “it's eye-catching”, “I'm happy with it” are preferences. An evaluation quotes a criterion, points to evidence in the solution and reaches a judgement. Without the criterion there is nothing being evaluated.

Watch-out — “extent” means a graded judgement. Give **met / partly met / not met** for each criterion, then an **overall judgement** that weighs them. Say what remains to be done. A yes-or-no answer cannot earn the marks the command term is asking for.

Watch-out — evaluate the resolved solution, not the process. The evidence is what is visible in the finished visual language: the inks, the sizes, the hierarchy, the palette. How many sketches you made, and how hard the job was, are not evidence that the brief has been met.

Watch-out — do not move the goalposts. Changing or “reinterpreting” a criterion so a concept passes is not evaluation; it is the opposite of evaluation. Record an amendment agreed with the client, or record the shortfall honestly.

Units 3 & 4 preview — beyond the Units 1&2 study design. Two requirements of the Units 3 and 4 brief do not apply here. First, that brief must define **two communication needs, distinct from one another in purpose and presentation format**, so the evaluation is run twice — once per need — against the one brief. Second, each resolved concept must be **pitched**: presented to an audience with the design decisions justified, before a final round of refinement. In Units 1 and 2 your given brief carries a **single** communication need and no pitch is required, so neither method appears in any question, worked example or assessment in this book.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain how the MULGA brief guided the designer's decisions during the Develop stage of the VCD design process. (4 marks)

Working	Comment
In Develop the brief acted as the target : the communication need specified a visual identity applied to a pot label and a van panel, so the designer developed one system to work across both, rather than two unrelated pieces.	Start with the generative role, and name the part of the brief you are using. “Explain” needs a cause-and-effect chain, so each sentence pairs a requirement with the decision it produced.
The constraint that the mark must read at 55 mm and at 900 mm ruled out fine detail, so the mark was built from three flat, straight-edged phyllode shapes on a plain base bar.	One requirement → one decision. This is the chain the command term is asking for.
The context — full sun, dust, arm's length and 20–30 m	A second, different criterion, so the answer shows the

Working	Comment
— drove the choice of heavy sans-serif capitals in dark olive on a pale ground, because that pairing holds its tonal contrast at both distances.	brief working as a whole rather than one lucky link.
The purpose required the buyer to be informed of a plant's water needs as they choose it, which is why a three-drop rating device was invented rather than a paragraph of care instructions.	The purpose is the criterion that generates new ideas, not just limits. Showing that earns the fourth mark.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Evaluate the extent to which the resolved MULGA identity meets the requirements of its brief. (6 marks)

Working	Comment
Constraints — met. The label is printed in a single olive ink at 55 × 30 mm; the van uses three colours (olive, ochre, bone); the mark is drawn from flat shapes and holds at both 55 mm and 900 mm; no photograph appears, so no image licence is needed.	Take the criteria one at a time and quote each in the brief's own words. Point to evidence you can see in the resolved work — inks, dimensions, colour counts.
Context — met. Heavy olive capitals on a pale grey label keep their tonal contrast at arm's length in full sun, and the same wordmark at 900 mm on the van reads across two traffic lanes. Flat vinyl and screen ink both survive dust and heat.	A second criterion, judged separately. Evidence before verdict, every time.
Purpose — partly met. The mark, wordmark and “dry-country plants” line identify MULGA as a specialist, so the identifying half succeeds. The informing half is weaker: in one ink a filled and an unfilled drop differ only by a hairline outline, so on a dusty pot in full sun the water rating is read last, if at all.	“Partly met” must say which part works and which does not. This is where the marks are, so give the mechanism, not just the verdict.
Audience or users — partly met. The rating device speaks directly to the 25–40 renter choosing a low-water plant for a pot. But the 60+ customer scans a bench of forty pots looking for the <i>plant</i> , and the label ranks the wordmark MULGA above the common name “Weeping Emu Bush” — so that customer meets the brand before the thing they came for.	The fourth criterion. Note the audience is judged as <i>described in the brief</i> , in both halves. Judge the hierarchy against the buying behaviour the brief states.
What remains. Separate the drop states by shape rather than tone — an empty ring for “unfilled” — which still works in one ink; and reduce the wordmark so the common name becomes the dominant line on the label, since the brand is already carried at scale on the van.	Stating what remains, and how, is part of a complete evaluation.
Overall , every constraint is satisfied and the viewing conditions are met, so the identity is producible and legible. But the informing half of the purpose — the decision on which the repositioning depends — is only partly achieved. ∴ the solution meets the brief in part, and one further refinement is needed before it can be called resolved against this brief.	Close with an overall judgement that weighs the criteria and says which shortfall matters most. Use ∴ before the conclusion.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

The MULGA brief states a business strategy as well as a communication need. Explain the role that strategy plays when a designer develops visual language. (4 marks)

The strategy tells the designer why the identity is being made at all. MULGA's strategy is to reposition an 18-year-old roadside nursery known for cheap tubestock as the district's specialist in dry-country planting, and to move buyers from single impulse plants to planned waterwise gardens. Visual language is one part of that larger strategy, so every decision has to work toward the shift, not merely look attractive. It is the strategy — not the purpose or the constraints — that explains why the identity is deliberately restrained and knowledgeable rather than cheap and folksy, and why a water rating was invented at all: a buyer who can compare water needs at the bench is being taught to think about a garden rather than a plant, which is exactly the repositioning the client is paying for. The strategy also gives the designer a way to rank ideas at a critique, because a concept that reads as a bargain outlet may satisfy every criterion and still work against the business.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

A designer cannot get their preferred concept to satisfy one of the design criteria, so they reword that criterion in the brief and record the concept as meeting it. Discuss why this is not an acceptable evaluation of a design solution. (4 marks)

An evaluation is only meaningful because the criteria are fixed independently of the work being judged. The brief's criteria come from the client's problem, the audience and the conditions the outcome must survive; they are the measure. Rewording a criterion so a concept passes removes the measure and leaves the designer judging their own preference — the concept has not improved, only the test has been weakened, and the client's actual requirement is now unrecorded and unmet. It also misleads everyone downstream: the client believes a requirement has been satisfied, and the shortfall surfaces in production or in use, when it is expensive to fix. The legitimate moves are the opposite of this. If the criterion can be met, refine the concept until it is met. If it genuinely cannot be met — the budget will not stretch, the material does not exist — return to the client, agree an amendment and record it as an amendment, so the change is visible and owned. Otherwise, record the verdict honestly as “not met” and state what would be required. ∴ the work changes to meet the brief; the brief does not change to fit the work.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Questions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 refer to the MULGA brief and the resolved MULGA identity shown in this subtopic.

Q1. Using the MULGA brief: (a) State the communication need. (1 mark) (b) Identify the purpose of the designed outcomes. (1 mark) (c) Explain how the context criterion would influence one decision about type. (2 marks)

Q2. Design criteria are grouped under four headings. (a) Name the four kinds of design criteria a brief specifies. (2 marks) (b) State which criterion each of these statements from the MULGA brief belongs to: (i) “read from 20–30 m by passing traffic”; (ii) “first-time gardeners aged 25–40, many renting”. (2 marks) (c) Explain why “the label is 55 × 30 mm” is a constraint and not a context. (2 marks)

Q3. Read this extract from the **BOAB** brief.

Client and business strategy. Boab Op Shop is run by the volunteer auxiliary of a regional hospital. The shop currently reads as a jumble of donated goods and is visited mainly by bargain hunters aged 70+. The auxiliary wants to reposition it as a *curated* secondhand store — sorted, priced and displayed by category — to draw shoppers aged 20–35 who buy secondhand by choice, without losing the existing regulars.

Communication need. A visual identity for BOAB applied to the shop window decal and the price stickers.

Purpose. To identify BOAB and to inform a passer-by that goods are sorted and priced by category.

Context. The window is seen from a footpath on a shaded main street, from 3–15 m, by people passing at walking pace. Stickers are read in the hand under fluorescent shop lighting.

Audience or users. Shoppers aged 20–35 who buy secondhand by choice and photograph finds for social media; plus regulars aged 70+ who visit weekly and know the shop by its old hand-painted sign.

Design constraints. The decal is cut vinyl in two colours on glass. Price stickers are 25 mm circles printed in one colour on a thermal label roll. The hospital's name must appear on the decal. Volunteers apply the stickers by hand. Total budget \$900.

- (a) Identify the business strategy in the BOAB brief. (1 mark)
- (b) Identify one audience characteristic and one design constraint. (2 marks)
- (c) Explain how the strategy should shape **one** decision about colour or type in the BOAB identity. (3 marks)

Q4. Evaluating a resolved solution against a brief uses a three-level scale. (a) Name the three levels. (1 mark) (b) Explain what a verdict of “partly met” tells a client that “not met” does not. (2 marks) (c) A complete evaluation adds one further statement after the verdict. State what it is and why it matters. (2 marks)

Q5. The brief has a role in Develop and a different role in Deliver. (a) Distinguish between those two roles. (2 marks) (b) Explain why one document is able to do both jobs. (2 marks)

Q6. Two annotations were written on the same MULGA label refinement.

A. “Made the leaf shapes simpler and bolder — it looks much better now.”

B. “Removed the fine veins from the phyllodes so the mark still holds at 55 mm, the smallest size the brief requires.”

- (a) Identify which annotation is criteria-referenced. (1 mark)
- (b) Explain what makes it criteria-referenced. (2 marks)
- (c) Rewrite annotation **A** so that it refers to a named criterion in the MULGA brief. (2 marks)

Unscaffolded

Read the **BRIGALOW SWIM** brief below, then study the resolved solution that follows.

Client and business strategy. Brigalow Swim is a learn-to-swim school operating from a district aquatic centre. It is known as “the pool that runs lessons”; it wants to be known as the place where every child in the district learns to be safe in water, and to lift enrolments among families who currently do not enrol at all.

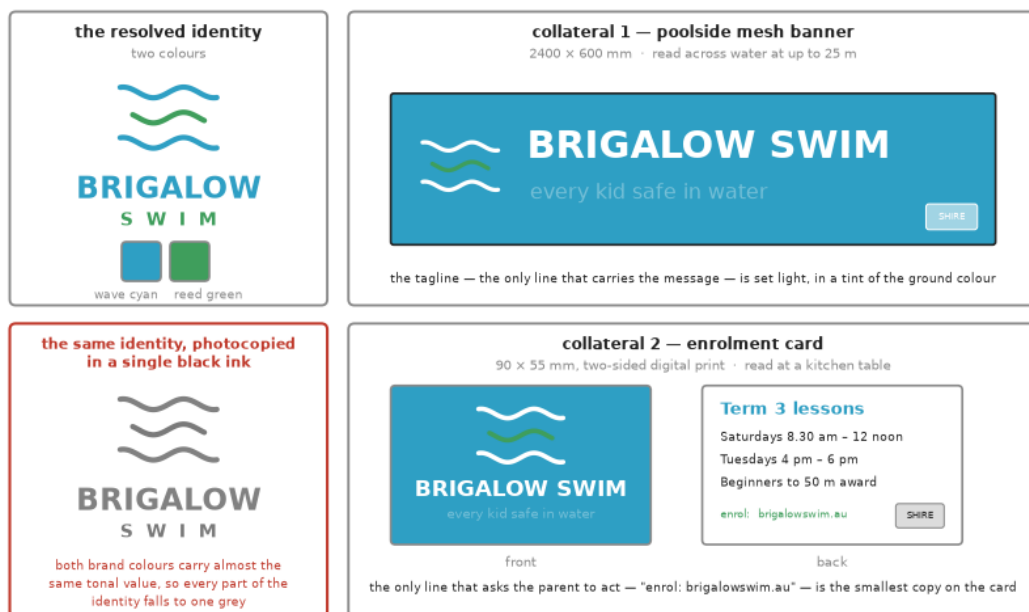
Communication need. A visual identity for Brigalow Swim applied to a poolside banner and an enrolment card sent home in school bags.

Purpose. To identify Brigalow Swim, and to persuade a parent to enrol a child.

Context. The banner is read across water in bright, reflective light and high humidity, from up to 25 m. The card is read at a kitchen table, often days after it is brought home.

Audience or users. Parents aged 28–45 in a district where one child in three finishes primary school unable to swim 50 m. Many are new to the district; most are time-poor; some are uneasy about water themselves.

Design constraints. The banner is 2400 × 600 mm printed on mesh, two colours maximum. The card is 90 × 55 mm, two-sided digital print. The identity must also work **in a single black ink**, because it is photocopied onto school notices. The shire logo must appear on both pieces. Total budget \$2,500.



Questions 7–18 refer to the BRIGALOW SWIM brief and resolved solution above.

Q7. Explain how the design constraints in the BRIGALOW SWIM brief should have directed the designer’s decisions about colour during the Develop stage. (4 marks)

Q8. Evaluate the extent to which the resolved solution meets the **design constraints** stated in the brief. (4 marks)

Q9. Describe **two** pieces of evidence in the resolved solution that a designer would point to when evaluating it against the brief, and state which criterion each one tests. (4 marks)

Q10. Discuss how the **context** criterion should have shaped the designer’s treatment of the banner tagline. (4 marks)

Q11. Analyse how the typographic hierarchy of the enrolment card serves, or fails to serve, the **audience or users** described in the brief. (4 marks)

Q12. The purpose criterion has two halves — to identify, and to persuade. Evaluate the extent to which the resolved solution achieves **each** half. (6 marks)

Q13. Evaluate the extent to which the resolved BRIGALOW SWIM solution meets the requirements of its brief, taking each criterion in turn and closing with an overall judgement. (6 marks)

Q14. Explain how a design solution can satisfy every design constraint in a brief and still fail to meet that brief. (3 marks)

Q15. Halfway through Deliver the client asks for a third colour to be added to the banner. Discuss how the designer should use the brief to decide. (4 marks)

Q16. Write **two** evaluative annotations for the resolved banner, each naming the criterion it tests and pointing to evidence in the work. (4 marks)

Q17. A student evaluates the solution by writing: “The identity is successful because it looks professional and modern.” Evaluate that statement **as an evaluation** of a design solution. (3 marks)

Q18. Compare MULGA and BRIGALOW SWIM: identify the criterion each solution meets least well, and explain what the two shortfalls have in common. (6 marks)

Q19. (Using the BOAB brief in Q3.) A draft of the BOAB brief included the criterion “the identity must look fresh and modern”. Explain why this criterion cannot be used as a test instrument, and rewrite it so that it can. (4 marks)

Q20. Discuss the role of the client’s **business strategy** when judging whether a resolved design solution meets the requirements of the brief. (4 marks)

Answers

Q1. (a) A visual identity for MULGA applied to the pot label and the van side panel. (b) To identify MULGA as a dry-country specialist and inform the buyer of a plant's water needs at the moment of choosing. (c) See solutions. **Q2.** (a) Purpose; context; audience or users; design constraints. (b) (i) context; (ii) audience or users. (c) See solutions. **Q3.** (a) Reposition a jumbled op shop as a curated secondhand store to attract 20–35s without losing the 70+ regulars. (b) e.g. characteristic = photographs finds for social media; constraint = two-colour cut vinyl on glass. (c) See solutions. **Q4.** (a) Met; partly met; not met. (b)/(c) See solutions — (c) what remains to be done, and how. **Q5.** (a) Develop = generative (sets the target, bounds the search, supplies the grounds, breaks the tie); Deliver = evaluative (the criteria become the test instrument). (b) See solutions. **Q6.** (a) **B.** (b)/(c) See solutions. **Q7.** Two colours max, single-black reproduction, mesh, two fixed sizes, shire logo — see solutions. **Q8. Not met** — the single-black requirement fails. See solutions. **Q9.** e.g. the two vinyl colours on the mesh banner (constraints); the light-weight tagline in a tint of its ground (context). See solutions. **Q10.** The tagline is set light in a tint of its own ground; context demanded high tonal contrast. See solutions. **Q11.** The call to action is the smallest line of copy on the card. See solutions. **Q12.** Identify = met; persuade = partly met. See solutions. **Q13.** Constraints not met; purpose, context and audience partly met; ∴ meets the brief only in part. See solutions. **Q14.** Constraints govern producibility, not achievement of purpose. See solutions. **Q15.** Test the request against the two-colour and single-black constraints and the purpose; amend the brief only with the client, in writing. See solutions. **Q16–Q20.** See fully-worked solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) A visual identity for MULGA — wordmark, graphic mark, signature colour palette and typography — applied to two pieces of collateral: the tubestock pot label and the delivery-van side panel. (b) To identify MULGA as a specialist in dry-country planting, and to inform a buyer how much water a plant will need at the moment they choose it. (c) The brief states that the label is read outdoors in full sun at arm's length, among forty other pots, and that the van is read from 20–30 m. Full sun flattens weak tonal differences and dust reduces contrast further, so the designer sets the wordmark as heavy sans-serif capitals in a dark olive on a pale ground rather than in a light weight or a mid tone — the heavy strokes and strong tonal contrast survive glare, dust and distance (*2 marks: the stated condition + the type decision it forces*).

Q2. (a) **Purpose, context, audience or users and design constraints** (*2 marks for all four*). (b) (i) **Context** — a viewing distance is a condition of use, not a limit on what may be made. (ii) **Audience or users** — a demographic description of who reads the label. (c) A **context** statement describes the circumstances in which the outcome is met — where it is seen, from how far, in what light, for how long. A **constraint** is a limit or expectation the designer must work within. “55 × 30 mm” is a fixed dimension of the thing being produced: the designer cannot choose otherwise, and it governs what will fit and how small the type may go. It therefore limits production, so it is a constraint (*2 marks: the distinction stated + applied*).

Q3. (a) To reposition the shop from a jumble of donated goods into a curated secondhand store, sorted and priced by category, in order to attract shoppers aged 20–35 who buy secondhand by choice, without losing the regulars aged 70+. (b) One audience characteristic: the 20–35 shoppers photograph their finds for social media (accept: they buy secondhand by choice; the 70+ regulars visit weekly and know the shop by its old hand-painted sign). One constraint: the decal is cut vinyl in two colours on glass (accept: 25 mm one-colour thermal stickers; the hospital's name must appear; volunteers apply stickers by hand; \$900). (c) (*Model, using type.*) The strategy is to read as *curated* rather than jumbled, so the identity must look deliberate and orderly. The designer would therefore set the category names on the price stickers in one clean sans-serif at a single consistent size and alignment across every category, instead of the varied hand-lettering the shop is known for. Because volunteers apply the stickers by hand, a repeated, evenly set typographic system is what makes the shelves look sorted even when the placement is not perfect — so the type choice delivers the repositioning the auxiliary is paying for, while remaining legible to the 70+ regular (*3 marks: strategy identified + a specific decision + the link between them*).

Q4. (a) **Met, partly met, not met.** (b) “Not met” tells the client only that a requirement has failed. “Partly met” tells them *which part* of the requirement has been achieved and which part has not, so it identifies where the remaining work is and how much of it there is. It also protects work that is already sound: a criterion with two halves — identify and inform, for example — should not be written off because one half is weak (*2 marks*). (c) **What remains to be done, and how the designer would do it.** It matters because an evaluation in Deliver is not a report card; it is the instruction for the next refinement. A verdict with no proposed remedy leaves the concept unresolved and gives the client nothing to approve (*2 marks*).

Q5. (a) In **Develop** the brief is **generative**: it sets the target, bounds the search with constraints, supplies the grounds for each annotation, and breaks the tie between competing concepts. In **Deliver** it is **evaluative**: the same criteria become a test instrument applied one at a time to the resolved solution to judge the extent to which the requirements are met (2 marks: one role each, correctly assigned to its stage). (b) Because the criteria are written as **requirements**, and a requirement can be read forwards or backwards. Read forwards it says what must be achieved, so it generates and limits decisions. Read backwards it says what must be demonstrated, so it becomes the test. Nothing has to be added to the brief for the second reading — which is why an unspecific criterion such as “must look modern” fails at both jobs at once (2 marks).

Q6. (a) B. (b) Annotation B names the requirement it serves — the mark must hold at 55 mm, which is the smallest size the brief demands — and then points to the specific change made to satisfy it (the fine veins were removed). It links a decision to a criterion by a mechanism, so a reader can check the claim against the brief. Annotation A reports a preference (“looks much better”) with no requirement and no evidence, so there is nothing to check (2 marks). (c) (Model.) “Simplified the phyllode shapes and increased their weight so the mark reads as a single silhouette at 55 mm in one ink, satisfying the constraint that it hold at both 55 mm and 900 mm.” (2 marks: a named criterion + a decision tied to it.)

Q7. The constraints are the tightest part of this brief and they govern colour directly. First, the banner allows **two colours maximum** on mesh, so the designer cannot separate elements with a third hue and must make two colours carry the whole identity. Second — and decisively — the identity **must also work in a single black ink** because it is photocopied onto school notices. That requirement means the two chosen colours must differ in **tonal value**, not merely in hue, so that when they are reduced to grey the parts of the identity stay distinguishable. The designer should therefore have chosen, say, a light cyan against a deep navy, and tested the pair in greyscale before committing. Third, the shire logo must appear on both pieces, so one of the two colours has to tolerate the logo sitting beside it (4 marks: at least two constraints, each linked to a colour decision, including the single-ink requirement).

Q8. Not met. Most of the constraints are satisfied: the banner is 2400 × 600 mm on mesh in two colours (wave cyan and reed green); the card is 90 × 55 mm and two-sided; the shire logo appears on both pieces. But the brief also requires that the identity work **in a single black ink**, and the resolved identity fails that requirement. The structure of the mark depends on the middle wave being a different colour from the outer two, and the two halves of the name depend on “BRIGALOW” being a different colour from “SWIM”. Wave cyan and reed green carry almost the same tonal value, so when the identity is photocopied both fall to the same mid grey: the three waves merge into one mass and the two-part name flattens. Because a stated constraint fails outright — not partly — the constraint criterion is not met (4 marks: the constraints that are met, the one that fails, the mechanism, the verdict).

Q9. (Any two, each described and correctly matched to a criterion.) Evidence must be something visible in the resolved work, not an intention.

1. **The banner uses exactly two colours — wave cyan and reed green — on a 2400 × 600 mm mesh sheet.** This tests the **design constraints**, which cap the banner at two colours on mesh at that size. It is checkable by counting the inks and measuring the proportion.
2. **The tagline “every kid safe in water” is set in a light weight in a tint of the cyan ground, while the wordmark is reversed in solid white.** This tests the **context** criterion, which states the banner is read across water in bright, reflective light at up to 25 m — the evidence is the tonal difference between the two lines, which can be judged directly from the artwork.

(Also accept: “enrol: brigalowswim.au” is the smallest line of copy on the card — tests the purpose, or the audience; the shire logo appears on both pieces — tests the constraints; the same wordmark and mark appear on banner and card — tests the purpose, identification.)

(4 marks: 2 marks each — a specific, visible piece of evidence + the criterion it tests. Award nothing for evidence stated as an intention, e.g. “the designer wanted it to feel welcoming”.)

Q10. The context criterion states that the banner is read **across water in bright, reflective light** from up to 25 m. Water reflects light upward, so a viewer is reading into glare; glare compresses tonal differences and washes out anything close in value to its background. The tagline “every kid safe in water” is the one line on the banner that carries the client’s message, yet it is set in a **light weight in a tint of the ground colour** — the lowest tonal contrast on the piece. At 25 m in glare it is the first thing to disappear, so the banner reduces to a name with no message. The

context criterion should have pushed the designer the other way: set the tagline in the same weight family as the wordmark, reversed in white or in the second brand colour at full strength, so its tonal contrast against the cyan ground is high. Because the mesh substrate also lets light through, maximising tonal contrast matters more here than it would on a printed sheet (4 marks: the stated condition, the mechanism, the decision it should have produced, tied to evidence).

Q11. The card's hierarchy is: the wordmark and mark (largest, reversed on the cyan front), then "Term 3 lessons" as the heading on the back, then the three lines of session detail, and last — the smallest line of copy on the card — "enrol: brigalowswim.au". Against the audience in the brief, that ranking is the wrong way round. The parents are **time-poor, often new to the district** and reading the card **days after it comes home**; some are **uneasy about water themselves**. A reader in that position has already been told the name on the front, so repeating identification as the top level of the back adds nothing; what they need next is the single action that resolves the matter. Ranking the enrolment step lowest means the one instruction that converts interest into an enrolment is the element most likely to be skimmed past. The session times are correctly placed as second-level information, and "Beginners to 50 m award" does useful work for an anxious parent by signalling that no experience is assumed — but it is set at the same size as the times, so it does not stand out. Promoting the enrolment line to the second level, and giving the beginners line its own weight, would align the hierarchy with the audience the brief describes (4 marks: the hierarchy described, the audience characteristics named, the mismatch analysed, with evidence).

Q12. Identify — met. The wordmark appears on both pieces at a scale suited to its distance: reversed in white at the largest size on a 2400 mm banner, and on the front of a 90 mm card. It is paired consistently with the three-wave mark and the same two colours, so a parent who sees the banner at the pool recognises the card in a school bag. On identification alone, the resolved solution does what the brief asks.

Persuade — partly met. Some of the persuading work is done: the tagline "every kid safe in water" frames lessons as safety rather than sport, which speaks to a district where one child in three cannot swim 50 m, and "Beginners to 50 m award" quietly reassures a parent that no experience is assumed. But the persuasive elements are the weakest in the solution. On the banner the tagline is set light, in a tint of its own ground, so in poolside glare the piece reduces to a name. On the card, the only line that asks the parent to **act** — "enrol: brigalowswim.au" — is the smallest line of copy on either side. A time-poor parent reading days later is given the school's name clearly and the next step barely.

∴ the purpose is met in its identifying half and only partly met in its persuading half; since persuasion is the half the client's strategy depends on — lifting enrolments among families who do not currently enrol — this is the more serious of the two verdicts (6 marks: both halves judged separately, evidence for each, a weighted conclusion).

Q13. Design constraints — not met. The banner is 2400 × 600 mm on mesh in two colours, the card is 90 × 55 mm and two-sided, and the shire logo appears on both, so most constraints hold. But the brief requires the identity to work in a single black ink for photocopied school notices, and it does not: wave cyan and reed green sit at almost the same tonal value, so in greyscale the three-stroke mark merges into one mass and "BRIGALOW" and "SWIM" become indistinguishable.

Context — partly met. The banner's proportions and the scale of the reversed wordmark suit reading at 25 m, and mesh is the right substrate for a humid poolside. But the tagline is set light in a tint of the ground colour, the lowest contrast on the piece, so in reflective glare the message drops out and only the name survives.

Audience or users — partly met. "Beginners to 50 m award" reassures a parent who is uneasy about water, and the session times give a time-poor reader what they need. But the enrolment line is the smallest line of copy on the card, so the audience most likely to skim is given the action step last.

Purpose — partly met. Identification succeeds on both pieces; persuasion is carried by the two weakest elements in the solution, the low-contrast tagline and the smallest line on the card.

What remains. Re-specify the second brand colour at a clearly different tonal value from the first and re-test the identity in greyscale; set the banner tagline in a heavy weight reversed in white; promote the enrolment line on the card to second-level type.

∴ the resolved solution meets its brief only in part. It is producible and it identifies the school, but a stated constraint fails outright and the persuading half of the purpose — the half the repositioning depends on — is weakly served. One further round of refinement, concentrated on tonal contrast, is required before the solution can be presented as

resolved against this brief (6 marks: all four criteria judged with evidence, what remains, a weighted overall judgement).

Q14. Constraints and purpose test different things. **Constraints** govern whether the solution can be **produced** — its size, materials, colour count, budget, timeline. **Purpose** governs whether the produced thing **does its job**. A solution can therefore be perfectly producible and still communicate nothing: an identity printed in the right two colours, at the right dimensions, within budget, that a parent at 25 m cannot read the message on has satisfied every constraint and failed the purpose. Constraints are necessary conditions, not sufficient ones — which is why an overall judgement weighs the purpose most heavily (3 marks: the distinction + an example + the consequence for the judgement).

Q15. The request is tested against the brief, not against whether the designer likes it. First, the brief states a hard constraint: the banner is **two colours maximum** on mesh. A third colour breaches it, so the designer cannot simply agree. Second, the designer asks what the third colour is *for* — if it exists to separate the tagline from the ground, the real problem is **tonal contrast**, not colour count, and that can be solved inside the constraint by reversing the tagline in white or setting the second colour at full strength. Solving it that way serves the same purpose without a breach, and is the answer the brief points to. Third, if the client’s reason is a genuine new requirement rather than a preference, the constraint itself has changed: the designer explains the cost and production consequence — a third vinyl or ink adds set-up cost against a \$2,500 budget, and a third colour still has to survive the single-black-ink requirement — and asks the client to **amend the brief in writing**. The amendment is then recorded, and the solution is re-evaluated against the amended criteria. What the designer does not do is quietly add the colour and leave the brief saying two (4 marks: the constraint identified, the purpose behind the request interrogated, the amendment process, no silent change).

Q16. (Model — any two, each naming a criterion and citing evidence.)

1. “The wordmark is reversed in white at the largest size on the banner, giving maximum tonal contrast against the cyan ground, so the school is identified at the 25 m viewing distance the **context** criterion specifies.”
2. “The tagline is set in a light weight in a tint of the ground colour. In the bright, reflective poolside light named in the **context** criterion this is the lowest-contrast element on the piece, so the persuading half of the **purpose** is carried by the line most likely to disappear — re-set it reversed in white at a heavier weight.”

(4 marks: 2 marks each — a named criterion + evidence in the work + an evaluative judgement. Award nothing for annotations that report preference or describe the work without naming a criterion.)

Q17. As an evaluation it fails, for three reasons. It names **no criterion**, so nothing in the brief is being tested — “professional” and “modern” appear nowhere in the requirements and cannot be checked. It cites **no evidence** in the resolved solution: no colour, type size, dimension or hierarchy is pointed to, so the claim cannot be verified or disputed. And it gives **no extent** — it is a yes, where the brief asks how far each requirement is met, and it therefore proposes no remaining work. It also reaches the wrong conclusion: this solution breaches a stated constraint, so a verdict of “successful” is not available. A usable version would read “the identity meets the two-colour constraint but not the single-black-ink constraint, because...” (3 marks: no criterion, no evidence, no graded judgement — any three points of substance).

Q18. In **MULGA** the criterion met least well is the **purpose**: the identifying half succeeds, but the informing half — telling the buyer a plant’s water needs as they choose it — is weak, because on a one-ink label a filled and an unfilled drop differ only by a hairline outline. In **BRIGALOW SWIM** the criterion met least well is the **design constraints**: the identity must work in a single black ink, and it does not, because the two brand colours sit at almost the same tonal value, so the mark and the two-part name collapse in greyscale.

The two shortfalls look different — one is a purpose failure, one a constraint failure — but they have the same cause. In both, meaning has been made to depend on a distinction that **survives on screen and disappears in production**: on **MULGA** a hairline outline in one ink, on **BRIGALOW** a hue difference at equal tonal value. Both designers evaluated their work in the medium they designed in rather than the medium the brief specified. Both are also fixed the same way: carry the distinction on something robust — a difference of **shape** in **MULGA**’s drops, a difference of **tonal value** in **BRIGALOW**’s colours — and then test the result under the conditions the brief actually names (6 marks: the criterion and evidence for each solution, a genuine congruent comparison, the shared cause drawn out).

Q19. “The identity must look fresh and modern” cannot be used as a test instrument because nothing in it can be checked. It names no observable property of the work, no condition under which the property must hold, and no threshold at which it is achieved, so two people can look at the same resolved identity and reach opposite verdicts with

equal justification — and the designer cannot tell, while developing, whether a decision moves toward the criterion or away from it. A criterion has to be capable of the verdicts met, partly met and not met, and this one is capable only of an opinion. It also invites the worst failure in evaluation: because it cannot be failed, it cannot be evaluated, and it quietly licenses the designer to judge by taste.

Rewritten so it can be tested: *“The identity must read as ordered and deliberate rather than improvised: category names on all price stickers set in one sans-serif typeface at a single size and alignment, and the window decal built on a visible alignment grid, so a passer-by at 3–15 m can see that goods are sorted by category.”* That version names what must be observable, where, and at what distance, so it can be checked against the resolved work (4 marks: at least two reasons the original fails + a rewrite that is observable and checkable).

Q20. The business strategy is the reason the brief exists, so it governs how the criteria are **weighted** when the overall judgement is made. Verdicts on individual criteria are reached against the criteria themselves — evidence, then extent. But those verdicts are rarely all the same, and the strategy decides which shortfall matters most: a partly met criterion that the repositioning depends on is a serious failure, while a partly met criterion peripheral to it is a refinement note. In BRIGALOW SWIM’s case the strategy is to lift enrolments among families who do not currently enrol, so the weakness in the **persuading** half of the purpose is far more damaging than it would be for a school that only needed to be recognised. The strategy also catches failures the four criteria can miss: a solution can satisfy purpose, context, audience and constraints and still work against the business — a cheap-looking MULGA identity would be legible, producible and on-audience while undermining the very repositioning it was commissioned to deliver. ∴ the criteria decide the individual verdicts; the strategy decides what those verdicts add up to (4 marks: the strategy’s role in weighting, an applied example, and the point that criteria alone can be satisfied while the strategy is not).

Chapter 2 Solving communication design problems — 2B Copyright & intellectual property

Theory

Intellectual property (IP) is the general term for property generated through intellectual or creative activity. You cannot pick IP up and hold it: what you own is a bundle of *rights* over something you have made — a drawing, a photograph, a business name, a logo, the shape of a product. Different forms of IP are protected in **different ways**, through separate pieces of federal legislation and through the codes of practice of the design industry itself.

Designers meet these rights constantly, because developing visual language for a brand or business means gathering inspiration, sourcing imagery and type, and then handing finished work to a client who intends to trade under it. In this study three forms of IP matter most: **copyright works, trade marks and designs**.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY property generated through intellectual or creative activity		
COPYRIGHT	TRADE MARK	DESIGN
ARISES AUTOMATICALLY	MUST BE REGISTERED	MUST BE REGISTERED
PROTECTS the original EXPRESSION of a work — the actual drawing, photograph, text, layout or font software	PROTECTS a SIGN used in trade to distinguish one trader's goods or services: a word, logo, shape or colour	PROTECTS the visual APPEARANCE of a manufactured product: its shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation
HOW IT ARISES the moment the work is made in material form. No registration, no fee, no © symbol needed. Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)	HOW IT ARISES by registration with IP Australia in named classes of goods and services; 10 years, renewable. Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth)	HOW IT ARISES by registration with IP Australia; must be new and distinctive; 5 years, renewable to 10 at most. Designs Act 2003 (Cth)
IN THE PANDANUS PROJECT the designer's leaf-and-wave drawings and their own coastal photographs	IN THE PANDANUS PROJECT the PANDANUS wordmark and leaf mark, once registered for swimming tuition	IN THE PANDANUS PROJECT the moulded shape of a PANDANUS drink bottle, if the school sells one

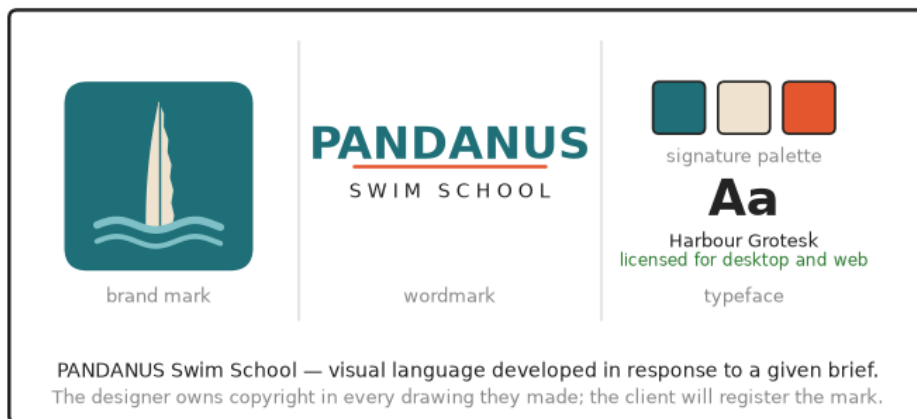
Different forms of intellectual property are protected in different ways — by federal legislation and by industry codes of practice.

The distinction that carries the most marks: automatic versus registered.

- **Copyright arises automatically.** The moment an original work is recorded in material form — a pencil sketch, a saved file, a photograph — copyright exists in it. There is no register in Australia, no application, no fee, and the © symbol is not required (though it is useful notice). Copyright protects the **expression**, not the idea: the *idea* of a leaf over a wave is free for anyone to use, but *that particular drawing* of it is not. Protection generally lasts for the creator's life plus 70 years. Governing law: the **Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)**.
- **A trade mark must be registered.** A trade mark is a **sign used in trade** to distinguish one trader's goods or services from another's — a word, a logo, a phrase, a shape, a colour, even a sound. Exclusive rights come from **registration with IP Australia**, and only within the **classes of goods and services** applied for. Registration runs for 10 years and can be renewed indefinitely. Only a registered mark may carry ®. Governing law: the **Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth)**.
- **A design must be registered.** A registered design protects the **visual appearance** of a manufactured product — its shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation. It must be new and distinctive, and it is registered with IP Australia; the initial term is five years, renewable to a maximum of ten. It protects how the product *looks*, never how it *works*. Governing law: the **Designs Act 2003 (Cth)**.

Watch-out — automatic or registered? Saying “the logo is copyrighted so nobody else can use the name” confuses two rights. Copyright is automatic and protects the *drawing*; a trade mark must be **registered** and protects the *sign in trade*. Name the form of IP, then say how it arises.

The running example. Throughout this subtopic we follow one project. PANDANUS Swim School, a new coastal learn-to-swim business, has issued a brief for visual language — a brand mark, a wordmark, a signature palette and a typeface — to be applied to pool-fence signage, swim caps and an online booking page.



In developing the identity the designer, a freelancer engaged on a fixed fee:

1. drew the leaf-and-wave mark and the wordmark from their own coastal photographs;
2. licensed the display typeface *Harbour Grotesk* for desktop and web use;
3. placed a coastal photograph found on a website in the mood board, recording the site title, the exact URL and the retrieval date beside it;
4. traced the swimmer illustration for the swim cap from a stock-library image downloaded under a “**free for personal use only**” licence, and recorded no source for it.

The client now wants to *own everything* and to *register the mark*.

Who owns the work? The general rule is that the **creator is the first owner of copyright**, with one important exception and one common trap:

Situation	Who owns copyright
A designer working as an employee , creating the work in the course of their employment	the employer , unless the employment agreement says otherwise
A freelance or commissioned designer paid to produce a solution	the designer , unless there is a written agreement transferring it
A student’s own folio work	the student

Paying an invoice buys the *deliverable files* and the agreed right to use them. It does not, by itself, buy the copyright. Two instruments change that:

- an **assignment** transfers ownership of the copyright. It must be **in writing and signed** to be effective, and it is permanent;
- a **licence** grants permission to use the work while ownership stays with the designer. A licence is defined by its **scope**: how long (term), where (territory), on what (media and applications), and whether anyone else may also use it (exclusivity).

Moral rights sit alongside copyright and behave differently. They belong personally to the individual creator, and they **cannot be sold, assigned or transferred** — a client who buys the copyright does not buy them. There are three:

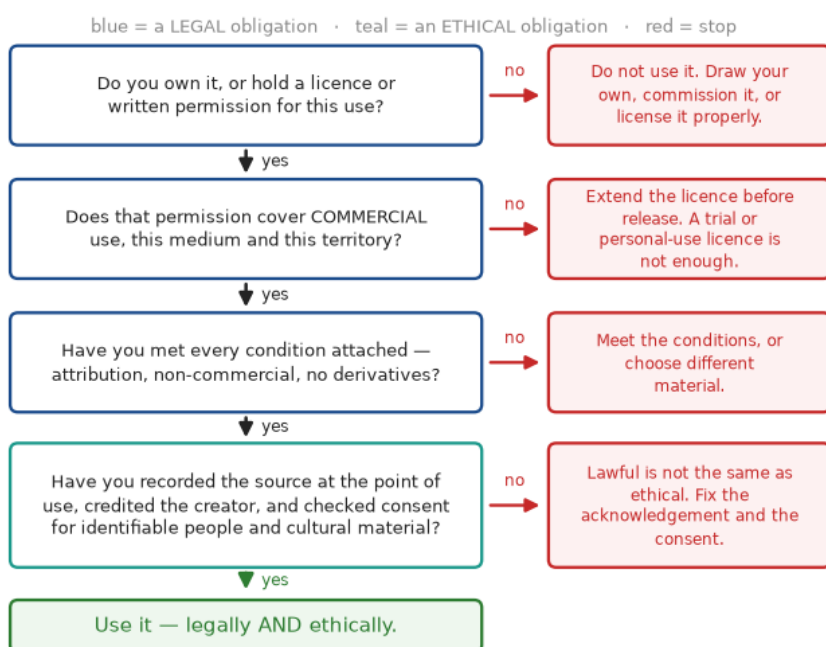
- the right of **attribution** — to be named as the creator of the work;
- the right **against false attribution** — not to have someone else named as its creator;
- the right of **integrity** — not to have the work treated in a way that is derogatory to the creator’s honour or reputation.

Legal obligations versus ethical obligations. The study design asks for both, and confusing them is the single most common way to lose marks on this topic.

	Legal obligation	Ethical obligation
Comes from	legislation (Copyright, Trade Marks,	professional practice, industry codes

	Legal obligation	Ethical obligation
	Designs Acts)	of practice, and the expectations of clients, audiences and communities
Enforced by	the rights holder and the courts — a take-down demand from the owner first, then an injunction, damages or an account of profits ordered by a court; separately, IP Australia refuses a conflicting trade mark application	reputation, client relationships, professional bodies, peer critique
Example	not reproducing a substantial part of a photograph you have no licence for	acknowledging every source of inspiration, and crediting the illustrator by name even when no law compels it

An act can be perfectly **lawful and still unethical**: reproducing an artwork whose copyright has expired is legal, but presenting it as your own original concept is dishonest. The reverse is also true — a designer with excellent intentions who used an unlicensed photograph has still infringed, because copyright infringement does not require an intention to copy.



Sourcing material safely. Every image, illustration, icon, mock-up, brush, template and typeface you did not make yourself arrives with a licence, and the licence — not the download button — decides what you may do:

- **“Free to download” is not “free to use commercially.”** A personal-use, editorial-use or student licence does not cover a paying client’s campaign.
- **Creative Commons licences carry conditions.** *BY* requires attribution; *NC* forbids commercial use; *ND* forbids adaptations; *SA* requires you to release your own work on the same terms. Read the letters before you place the file.
- **Typefaces are licensed, not bought.** A font licence is usually limited by use — desktop, web, app, number of users — and a **trial or student licence never covers a commercial release.**
- **Photographs of identifiable people** need consent, obtained in writing (a model release), before the image is used to promote a brand; how organisations handle personal information is also governed by the **Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)**.

- **Cultural material is never “generic”.** Imagery, symbols and stories connected to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or to any other cultural group require consultation and permission from the right people before they can be used. Those protocols are the subject of Chapter 8.

Fair dealing — not “fair use”. Australian law provides specific **fair dealing** exceptions: research or study, criticism or review, parody or satire, and reporting news. Copying a small amount of a work into your own folio may be a fair dealing for *research or study*; that same copying is **not** permitted once the work is published, sold or released for a client. There is no “10 per cent” rule for artwork.

“Substantial part”. Copyright is infringed by reproducing the whole **or a substantial part** of a work, and “substantial” is judged by the **importance and distinctiveness** of what was taken, not by how much was left unchanged. Copying the one feature that makes a photograph recognisable can be a substantial part even if the colours, crop and background are all different.

Clearing a name and a mark. Before an identity is presented to a client that intends to trade under it, a designer checks that it is available:

1. search **IP Australia’s trade marks register** in the relevant classes of goods and services;
2. search business name and company name registers, plus domains and social handles;
3. search visually for similar marks used by competitors in the same market.

A sign that is substantially identical with, or **deceptively similar** to, a registered trade mark for similar goods or services cannot be registered, and using it exposes the client to an infringement claim after they have paid for signage, packaging and a website.

Acknowledging sources of inspiration. This is the obligation you are personally accountable for in your own folio, and it has a required form. Record the following **at the point in the design process where the material is used** — beside the image, not in a list at the back:

Source	What must be recorded
Website	the title of the website, the exact URL, and the retrieval date
Text, book or magazine	the specific title of the text and its publication date (add the publication name and page)
Social media post	the username, the site name, the exact URL, and the date of the post

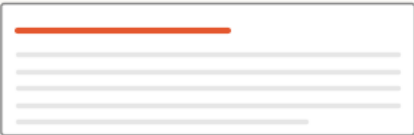
PANDANUS — inspiration page 3 · every source acknowledged beside the material it refers to



Website — Salt & Sand Journal,
<https://saltandsand.example.au/coast-forms>,
retrieved 3 March 2026.



Social media — @tide.marks, Instagram,
<https://instagram.example/p/8k2c9>,
posted 11 February 2026.



Text — ‘Reading the coastline’,
Coastal Design Quarterly, issue 42,
June 2025, p. 18.



NO SOURCE RECORDED — cannot be acknowledged, and cannot be shown to be licensed. Remove it or redraw it yourself.

Website: the title of the site, the exact URL and the retrieval date.
Social media: the username, the site name, the exact URL and the date of post.

Watch-out — acknowledgement is not permission. Naming a source shows honesty; it does not give you the right to reproduce the work. Commercial use needs a **licence or permission** as well as an acknowledgement.

Watch-out — “I changed it” is not a defence. There is no percentage of alteration that makes someone else’s work yours. If a substantial part is still recognisable, it is still infringement.

Watch-out — moral rights survive an assignment. Even after a client owns the copyright, the designer keeps the rights of attribution, against false attribution, and of integrity.

Watch-out — answer the command term. *Identify* a form of IP = one term. *Explain* an obligation = a cause-and-effect chain (the obligation, what breaching it does, to whom). *Evaluate* a designer’s practice = strengths **and** breaches **and** an overall judgement.

Units 3 & 4 preview — beyond the Units 1&2 study design. Two further areas complete the professional picture, and neither belongs here. First, **patents** (Patents Act 1990 (Cth)) protect *how an invention works* — a new mechanism or process — for up to 20 years, and must be applied for and granted; they are a fourth form of IP alongside copyright works, trade marks and designs, and they are taken up in Units 3 & 4. Second — as background from professional practice rather than from either course — even an **unregistered** mark can attract some protection, through the action for **passing off** and the misleading-or-deceptive-conduct provisions of the **Australian Consumer Law**, and professional designers draft formal assignment and licence clauses into their contracts rather than relying on an email. None of this material is assessed in the Units 1&2 questions, tests or examinations in this series — the three forms named in the study design (copyright works, trade marks and designs), the ownership rules, moral rights and the acknowledgement conventions are what you are accountable for.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain the difference between the copyright the designer already holds in the PANDANUS drawings and the protection the client would gain by registering the PANDANUS mark. (4 marks)

Working	Comment
Copyright in the leaf-and-wave drawings arose automatically the moment the designer drew them, with no registration and no fee, under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).	Name the form of IP first, then how it arises. “Automatic” is the marked word.
It protects the expression — those actual drawings and files — so it stops another party reproducing that artwork, but it does not stop a rival swim school using the <i>idea</i> of a leaf over a wave.	Show what the right does AND its limit. This is where the idea/expression line earns a mark.
A registered trade mark is different in kind: it protects the mark as a sign used in trade , and it must be applied for and registered with IP Australia in the relevant classes of goods and services — here, swimming tuition.	Name the second form and state that it must be REGISTERED. Mention classes — that is what limits the right.
Registration would give the client the exclusive right to use that sign for those services for a renewable 10-year period, and the standing to stop a competitor trading under a deceptively similar mark. ∴ copyright protects the artwork automatically; registration protects the brand’s identity in the marketplace, but only once granted.	Close by contrasting the two, which is what “explain the difference” demands.

Example 2 — scaffolded

The designer placed a coastal photograph found on a website in the PANDANUS mood board. Discuss the legal and ethical obligations that apply to that photograph, first in the mood board and then if it were used on the finished booking page. (4 marks)

In the mood board: the photographer owns copyright automatically, so the designer has no right to reproduce the image beyond what a licence or a **fair dealing for research or study** allows. Keeping it inside their own process work is defensible; publishing it is not.

“Discuss” needs the obligation identified AND applied to this use. Note the exception by its correct name — fair dealing, not “fair use”.

The **ethical** obligation is met by the acknowledgement recorded beside the image: the website title, the exact URL and the retrieval date, placed at the point of use.

Ethical obligation named and shown to be satisfied, with the exact convention.

On the booking page: the use changes from private study to a **commercial publication** for a paying client. The designer now needs a licence that covers commercial use in that medium and territory, or the photographer’s written permission.

The key move: the obligation shifts with the use, not with the file.

An acknowledgement alone is not enough here — crediting the photographer does not license the image. ∴ the designer must license it, obtain permission, or replace it with one of their own photographs.

Dodges the classic error that citing a source makes the use lawful.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

The PANDANUS client says, “We’re paying for this, so we want to own everything.” Explain what must happen for the client to own the copyright, and explain one right the designer keeps regardless. (4 marks)

Because the designer is a freelancer rather than an employee, they are the **first owner of copyright** in every drawing and file they created, and paying the fee does not transfer that ownership by itself. For the client to own the copyright, the designer must **assign** it — a transfer of ownership that must be **in writing and signed** by the designer, and which should state exactly which works are covered. If the client only needs to *use* the identity, a **licence** is the better instrument, because it can be limited by term, territory, media and exclusivity while ownership stays with the designer. Regardless of which is chosen, the designer keeps their **moral rights**, which cannot be assigned: in particular the right of **attribution**, so they must still be identified as the creator of the identity. ∴ ownership can be bought with a written assignment, but authorship cannot.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Evaluate the designer’s practice in the PANDANUS project against their legal and ethical obligations, referring to at least three obligations. (6 marks)

Much of the practice is sound. The mark, the wordmark and the source photographs are the designer’s **own original work**, so copyright in them is theirs automatically and the client’s identity rests on material the studio actually controls — the strongest possible position. The typeface is properly **licensed for desktop and web**, which are exactly the applications the brief calls for, so the signage and the booking page are both covered. The website photograph in the mood board carries a correctly formed acknowledgement — site title, exact URL and retrieval date — recorded beside the image at the point of use, meeting the ethical obligation to acknowledge sources of inspiration.

Two failures are serious, however. The swim-cap illustration was traced from a stock image downloaded under a **“free for personal use only”** licence, and a client’s swim caps are plainly a commercial use; tracing also reproduces a **substantial part** of the original, so this is copyright infringement whether or not the outline was redrawn. Compounding it, **no source was recorded** for that image, so the designer cannot now identify the copyright owner to seek a licence, cannot demonstrate to the client what is cleared, and has breached the obligation to acknowledge sources.

∴ the project meets its obligations on ownership, type licensing and acknowledgement of the mood board, but the swim-cap illustration is both a legal breach and an ethical one. The practice cannot be judged compliant until that illustration is licensed or, better, redrawn from the designer’s own reference and its source list completed.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Intellectual property: (a) Define **intellectual property**. (1 mark) (b) Name the three forms of intellectual property that designers in this study most commonly engage with. (3 marks) (c) State which one of the three arises without any application or fee. (1 mark)

Q2. Using the PANDANUS project: (a) Identify two items in the project that are protected by copyright. (2 marks) (b) State the moment at which copyright in the leaf-and-wave mark began. (1 mark) (c) Explain why a rival swim school could legally use the *idea* of a leaf above water. (2 marks)

Q3. Ownership of a logo: (a) State who owns the copyright when the logo is drawn by a designer employed by a studio, in the course of that employment. (1 mark) (b) State who owns the copyright when a freelance designer is commissioned to draw it. (1 mark) (c) Explain what the client must obtain in order to own that copyright. (2 marks)

Q4. Moral rights: (a) Name the three moral rights held by a creator. (3 marks) (b) Explain why assigning copyright to a client does not transfer these rights, and state what a client should do if it wants to alter the work substantially. (3 marks)

Q5. Acknowledging sources of inspiration: (a) State the three details that must be recorded for material taken from a website. (3 marks) (b) State the four details that must be recorded for a social media post. (2 marks) (c) State where in the folio the acknowledgement should be placed. (1 mark)

Q6. Obligations: (a) Distinguish between a **legal** obligation and an **ethical** obligation. (2 marks) (b) Give one example of each from communication design practice. (2 marks) (c) Explain, with an example, how a designer's action can be entirely **lawful** and still **unethical**. (2 marks)

Un scaffolded

Design examples for Questions 7–19



Questions 7–19 refer to the two marks above and to the CASUARINA case notes below, unless otherwise stated.

CASUARINA Cold Brew is a new coffee-roasting business. A designer has presented a proposed identity to the client:

- the circular badge shown above, built around three vertical needle forms;
- a wordmark set in a display typeface installed from a **30-day free trial**;
- a needle pattern for the coffee bag, **traced from an illustration** downloaded from another designer's public social media post;
- **no list of sources** was kept during the project.

GREVILLEA® is an established coffee roaster whose circular badge has been a **registered trade mark in class 30 (coffee) since 2019**.

- Q7.** Identify the form of intellectual property that protects the GREVILLEA badge as a sign used in trade, and state how that protection was obtained. *(2 marks)*
- Q8.** Explain why the proposed CASUARINA mark creates a legal risk for the client. *(3 marks)*
- Q9.** Describe two checks the designer should have completed before presenting the CASUARINA mark, and explain what each would have revealed. *(4 marks)*
- Q10.** The CASUARINA bag pattern was traced from an illustration found in a social media post. Explain the obligation that has been breached and describe two consequences that could follow for the designer and for the client. *(4 marks)*
- Q11.** Discuss the designer's obligations in relation to the display typeface installed from a 30-day free trial. *(3 marks)*
- Q12.** Explain why keeping no list of sources is both a legal risk and an ethical failure. *(4 marks)*
- Q13.** Compare copyright protection with registered design protection, referring to what each protects and to how each arises. *(4 marks)*
- Q14.** The designer argues, "I changed it enough for it to be mine." Explain why this is not a defence to copyright infringement. *(3 marks)*
- Q15.** The client wants a photograph of a real customer holding a CASUARINA cup on the packaging. Discuss the obligations that apply before that photograph could be used. *(3 marks)*
- Q16.** The client asks the designer to base the CASUARINA bag pattern on imagery drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge. Outline the designer's obligations before any such imagery could be used. *(3 marks)*
- Q17.** Discuss how the codes of practice of professional design bodies extend a designer's obligations beyond what the law requires. *(4 marks)*
- Q18.** Distinguish between an **assignment** of copyright and a **licence**, and justify which of the two better suits a client that wants to use a commissioned illustration on packaging in Australia for three years only. *(4 marks)*
- Q19.** Evaluate whether the designer of the CASUARINA identity has met their legal and ethical obligations. Refer to at least three obligations and recommend what must change. *(6 marks)*

Answers

Q1. (a) Property generated through intellectual or creative activity. (b) Copyright works; trade marks; designs. (c) Copyright. **Q2.** (a) Any two of: the leaf-and-wave mark, the wordmark drawings, the designer's coastal photographs, the layout files. (b) When it was first recorded in material form. (c) See solutions. **Q3.** (a) The employer (the studio). (b) The freelance designer. (c) A written, signed assignment of copyright. **Q4.** (a) Attribution; against false attribution; integrity. (b) See solutions — they are personal and cannot be assigned; obtain the creator's written consent. **Q5.** (a) Title of the website, the exact URL, the retrieval date. (b) Username, site name, exact URL, date of post. (c) Beside the material, at the point of use. **Q6.** (a) Legal = required by legislation; ethical = expected by professional practice and industry codes. (b)–(c) See solutions — e.g. copying an out-of-copyright artwork is lawful, but presenting it as your own concept is not honest. **Q7.** A registered trade mark, obtained by registration with IP Australia (class 30). **Q8.** Deceptively similar mark in the same class — the application would likely fail and use risks infringement. See solutions. **Q9.** Any two of: IP Australia trade marks search in the relevant classes; business/company name and domain search; visual search of competitors. See solutions. **Q10.** Copyright infringement (reproducing a substantial part without a licence) + no acknowledgement. See solutions. **Q11.** A trial licence does not cover commercial release — buy the correct licence or choose another typeface. **Q12.** See solutions — cannot prove clearance, cannot seek permission, breaches the acknowledgement obligation. **Q13.** Copyright = expression, automatic; registered design = a product's visual appearance, registered. See solutions. **Q14.** No percentage rule; infringement is reproducing a substantial part, judged qualitatively. **Q15.** Written consent (model release) from the person; the photographer's licence; privacy obligations. **Q16.** Consult and obtain permission from the right custodians; informed written consent; attribution and benefit sharing; follow published protocols; otherwise do not proceed. **Q17.** See solutions — codes add attribution, honesty, fair dealings with other designers, consent, cultural respect, beyond the law. **Q18.** Assignment transfers ownership permanently and in writing; a licence grants limited use. A licence suits the client. See solutions. **Q19.** See fully-worked solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) Intellectual property is property generated through intellectual or creative activity — a set of rights over something a person has created (*1 mark*). (b) **Copyright works, trade marks and designs** (*1 mark each; only the first three answers are marked*). (c) **Copyright** — it arises automatically as soon as the work is put into material form, with no registration and no fee.

Q2. (a) Any two of: the leaf-and-wave brand mark, the wordmark artwork, the designer's own coastal photographs, the signage and booking-page layouts (*1 mark each*). (b) The instant the drawing was first recorded in material form — sketched or saved — not when it was published or paid for. (c) Copyright protects the **expression** of an idea, not the idea itself. A leaf above water is a concept, and concepts are free for anyone to use; what is protected is the designer's particular drawing of it. A rival could therefore lawfully design their own leaf-and-water mark, provided they did not reproduce a substantial part of the PANDANUS artwork (*2 marks: idea/expression distinction + the limit on the rival*).

Q3. (a) The **employer** — the studio — because the work was made by an employee in the course of their employment (unless the employment agreement says otherwise). (b) The **freelance designer** remains the first owner; commissioning and paying for the work does not transfer copyright. (c) The client must obtain a **written assignment** of copyright, signed by the designer and identifying the works covered. Without that signed document the client has, at most, a licence to use the material (*2 marks: assignment named + the writing/signature requirement*).

Q4. (a) The right of **attribution** (to be named as creator); the right **against false attribution** (not to have another person named as creator); the right of **integrity** (not to have the work treated in a way derogatory to the creator's honour or reputation) (*1 mark each*). (b) Moral rights belong to the individual creator personally rather than to whoever owns the copyright, and the Copyright Act does not allow them to be assigned or sold; so a transfer of ownership moves the economic rights only and leaves the moral rights with the designer (*2 marks*). A client that wants to crop, recolour or otherwise substantially alter the work should obtain the designer's **written consent** to the specified acts, and should still credit them (*1 mark*).

Q5. (a) The **title of the website**, the **exact URL**, and the **retrieval date** (*1 mark each*). (b) The **username**, the **site name**, the **exact URL** and the **date of the post** (*2 marks; 1 mark if partially complete*). (c) At the **point of use** — beside the sourced material on the page where it is used, not gathered into a list at the back of the folio.

Q6. (a) A **legal** obligation is imposed by legislation and is enforceable in the courts — breaching it can bring a take-down demand from the rights holder and, if the matter goes further, an injunction or damages ordered by a court. An **ethical** obligation comes from professional practice, industry codes of practice and the expectations of clients, audiences and communities; it is enforced by reputation rather than by law (2 marks: source + consequence for each).

(b) *Legal*: obtaining a licence before reproducing a photographer's image in a client campaign. *Ethical*:

acknowledging every source of inspiration and crediting the illustrator by name (1 mark each; accept any correct pairing).

(c) The law sets a minimum, so conduct the law permits can still fall short of what the profession expects. For example, copyright in a nineteenth-century botanical illustration has expired, so reproducing it in a client's packaging is entirely lawful — but presenting it to the client as the designer's own original concept, without naming where it came from, misrepresents the designer's contribution and breaches the ethical obligation to acknowledge sources of inspiration (2 marks: the principle that the law is a floor + a worked example; accept any defensible example, such as using a competitor's discontinued colour palette).

Q7. A **registered trade mark** (1 mark), obtained by **applying for and being granted registration with IP Australia** in class 30 (coffee) in 2019 (1 mark). Copyright in the badge artwork exists as well, but it is registration that protects the badge as a sign used in trade.

Q8. The CASUARINA badge and the GREVILLEA mark share the same essential visual idea — a circular badge enclosing three vertical strokes — and both are for **coffee**, the same class of goods. A sign that is substantially identical with, or **deceptively similar** to, a registered trade mark for similar goods cannot itself be registered, so IP Australia would very likely refuse the client's application. Worse, using the mark in trade before that is discovered exposes the client to an **infringement claim** by the registered owner, after they have already paid for bags, cups, signage and a website. ∴ the mark is a commercial risk as well as a legal one (3 marks: similarity + same class + consequence for the client).

Q9. (Any two, 2 marks each — the check described plus what it reveals.) **1. A trade marks search of the IP Australia register**, filtered to the relevant classes of goods and services. This would have revealed the GREVILLEA registration in class 30 and the fact that a circular three-stroke badge is already on the register for coffee, before any concept was shown to the client. **2. A business name, company name and domain/social-handle search**, which reveals whether the name CASUARINA is already trading in the same market and whether the matching domain and handles are available — a name is of little use to a roaster if a competitor already owns it online. **3. A visual search of competitors' packaging and marks** in the same category, which reveals similarities that a text search cannot, because trade mark conflicts turn on how a mark *looks* to a consumer, not only on the words in it.

Q10. Tracing the illustration reproduces a **substantial part** of another designer's copyright work, and the designer has no licence or permission to do so — the fact that the post was public does not make its contents free to use. This is **copyright infringement**, and the missing acknowledgement also breaches the obligation to record sources of inspiration (2 marks). Consequences: the copyright owner may issue a **take-down demand** and apply to a court for an **injunction**, damages or an account of profits, which would force the printed bags to be destroyed and the pattern redrawn at the client's expense; and the designer's professional **reputation** suffers, with the client left unable to trust that anything in the identity is properly cleared (1 mark each for two consequences).

Q11. A typeface is **licensed rather than bought**, and a 30-day free trial is a licence to evaluate the font, not to publish with it. The obligation is therefore to check the licence's scope before the type goes into any client-facing artwork: a commercial release on bags, cups and a website needs a paid licence covering **desktop and web use** for the number of users involved. Because the wordmark is intended to be the permanent identity of the business, the correct action is to purchase the appropriate licence — or to select a typeface whose licence already permits the use — before the concept is presented as final; continuing past the trial period without a licence is an infringement of the foundry's rights (3 marks: licence not purchase + scope needed for this use + the action required).

Q12. **Legally**, the source list is the designer's evidence. Without it, the designer cannot show which material is licensed and which is not, cannot identify a copyright owner in order to seek permission, and cannot answer a claim if one arrives; the client is asked to release an identity of unknown legal status. Any infringing material that has to be replaced late is replaced at maximum cost (2 marks). **Ethically**, the study requires that all sources of inspiration be acknowledged at the point of use, and a designer who keeps no record cannot credit the creators whose work informed the project — which misrepresents the extent of the designer's own contribution (2 marks). ∴ the omission fails both obligations at once.

Q13. Both protect the outcomes of creative work, and both can apply to the same project. They differ in **what** they protect and in **how they arise**. **Copyright** protects the original expression of a work — the actual drawing, photograph, text or file — and it arises **automatically**, the moment the work is recorded in material form, with no registration, no fee and a term of the creator’s life plus 70 years. A **registered design** protects the **visual appearance of a manufactured product** — its shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation — and it exists only if it is **registered** with IP Australia, must be new and distinctive, and lasts five years, renewable to ten at most. So the drawings of the CASUARINA bag are protected by copyright the instant they are made, whereas the distinctive moulded shape of a CASUARINA bottle would be protected only after a design registration was applied for and granted (4 marks: congruent two-sided treatment — what each protects and how each arises, with a similarity noted).

Q14. There is **no percentage rule** in Australian copyright law for artwork. The test is whether the whole or a **substantial part** of the original has been reproduced, and “substantial” is judged **qualitatively** — by the importance and distinctiveness of what was taken, not by how much was altered or how much of the new design is original. Changing the colour, crop and background while keeping the feature that makes the original recognisable still reproduces a substantial part. Nor does intention matter: infringement does not require an intention to copy, so believing the change was sufficient is no defence (3 marks: no percentage rule + substantial part judged qualitatively + intention irrelevant).

Q15. Two consents are needed, and they are separate. First, the **photographer** owns copyright in the image, so the designer needs a licence or permission covering commercial use on packaging in the relevant territory. Second, the customer is an **identifiable person**, so written consent — a model release — must be obtained before their image is used to promote the brand, and the organisation’s handling of that personal information is governed by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Ethically, the person should be told plainly how and where the photograph will appear and for how long, so their consent is genuinely informed; consent given for a social media post does not extend to national packaging (3 marks: photographer’s licence + the subject’s written consent + informed, scope-limited consent).

Q16. The designer must **not proceed on their own initiative**. Imagery, symbols, patterns and stories connected to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples belong to the communities and custodians who hold them, and cannot be treated as decoration or as a free visual resource. The obligations are to **consult the right people** — the relevant community, Traditional Owners or custodians — and to obtain **informed consent in writing** for the specific commercial use proposed; to agree in advance on **attribution and a fair share of the benefit**; to follow published protocols for the creation and commercial use of Indigenous knowledge; and, wherever the work is based on cultural knowledge, to engage an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander designer rather than representing that culture on their behalf. If consultation and consent are not obtained, the designer’s obligation is to decline the request and propose an alternative direction. (3 marks; these protocols are developed in Chapter 8.)

Q17. The law sets a floor; industry codes of practice set the standard a professional is expected to work to. Codes published by professional design bodies — for example the Design Institute of Australia’s code of ethics — add duties the legislation does not compel: **crediting** collaborators, illustrators and photographers by name; **honesty with clients** about what has been licensed, what is original and what has been generated or purchased; **fair dealing with other designers**, including not entering speculative work that undercuts colleagues and not passing off another studio’s approach as one’s own; obtaining **consent** from people who appear in a project; and working **respectfully with cultural material**. These matter because a designer’s work is trusted before it is verified: a client cannot audit a folio, so the profession’s credibility rests on conduct rather than enforcement. Breaching a code carries no court penalty, but it costs the designer their reputation, their referrals and their standing among peers, which in practice is the more expensive loss (4 marks: law-as-floor + at least two specific extensions + why codes matter + the consequence of breach).

Q18. An **assignment** transfers **ownership** of the copyright from the designer to the client. It must be in writing and signed, it is permanent, and afterwards the designer needs the client’s permission to reuse the work at all. A **licence** leaves ownership with the designer and grants **permission to use** the work within a defined scope — term, territory, media and exclusivity — so it can be written to match exactly what the client needs and no more. For a client that wants an illustration on packaging in Australia for three years, a **licence** is the appropriate instrument: it can be granted for three years, for Australia, for packaging, on an exclusive basis if the client requires it, and it should cost less than an assignment because the designer retains the asset. An assignment would hand over a permanent, worldwide, all-media right the client has no use for, and would remove the designer’s ability to license the illustration again once the three years end (4 marks: congruent distinction + a reasoned choice tied to the client’s stated needs).

Q19. The identity as presented does **not** meet the designer's obligations, and three separate failures compound one another.

First, the **trade mark** obligation. The badge is deceptively similar to the GREVILLEA mark, which has been registered in class 30 for coffee since 2019, and no clearance search appears to have been run. IP Australia would likely refuse the client's own application, and trading under the mark risks an infringement claim after the packaging is printed.

Second, the **copyright** obligation. The bag pattern was traced from another designer's illustration, reproducing a substantial part of a work the designer has no licence for. That the post was public is irrelevant, and redrawing the outline does not cure it.

Third, the **licensing and acknowledgement** obligations. The wordmark relies on a typeface held under a 30-day trial, which does not permit commercial release; and because no source list was kept, the designer cannot demonstrate what is cleared, cannot seek permission from the illustrator, and has failed the ethical requirement to acknowledge sources of inspiration at the point of use.

The one point in the designer's favour is that the concept was presented to the client **before** any application, printing or launch, so every problem is still fixable at low cost — which is exactly why these checks belong early in the process rather than at delivery.

∴ the practice is not compliant. To proceed, the designer must: run an IP Australia trade marks search in the relevant classes and redesign the badge so that it is not deceptively similar; redraw the bag pattern from their own reference, or license the original illustration and credit the illustrator; purchase a typeface licence that covers desktop, web and packaging use, or substitute a typeface that is already licensed; and rebuild the source list, recording the username, site name, exact URL and date of post beside every item taken from social media, and the site title, exact URL and retrieval date beside every item taken from a website *(6 marks: at least three obligations assessed against evidence, a strength acknowledged, an overall judgement, and specific corrective recommendations)*.

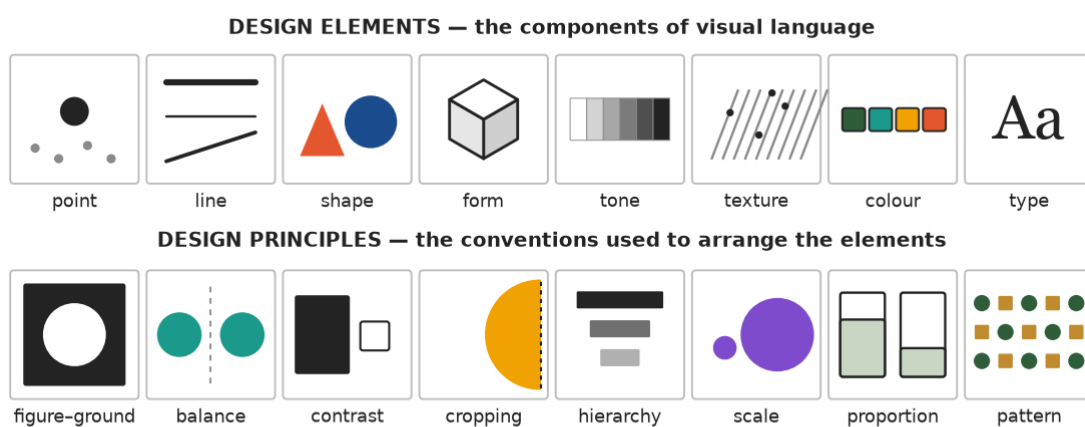
Chapter 2 Solving communication design problems — 2C Design elements, principles, type & Gestalt

Theory

When you develop visual language for a brand or a business you are not decorating — you are choosing **components** and then **arranging** them so that an audience reads, feels and does something. The Study Design gives you three separate toolkits for that work, plus the typographic conventions that govern how type is set:

- the **design elements** — the components of visual language;
- the **design principles** — the conventions used to arrange and organise those elements;
- the **Gestalt principles of visual perception** — how the mind groups and makes sense of what it sees.

Keep the three lists apart. An element is a *thing you use*; a principle is a *way of arranging things*; a Gestalt principle is a *tendency of the viewer's perception*. Naming the wrong kind of term is the single easiest way to lose marks in this Area of Study.



An ELEMENT is a component; a PRINCIPLE is a way of arranging components.

Features and functions — the move this subtopic is built on. The key knowledge asks for the *features and functions* of the elements and principles, so a full answer always has two halves:

- **Features** — what the element or principle *is*, and its describable properties. A line has weight, direction and quality; a colour has hue, tone and intensity; hierarchy has primary, secondary and tertiary layers.
- **Functions** — the *job it does* in the communication. Line separates and leads the eye; colour signals mood and identity; hierarchy ranks information so the audience reads it in the intended order.

A response that stops at “the designer used the element of colour” has given a feature and no function, and has not explained anything.

The eight design elements. The elements are **point, line, shape, form, tone, texture, colour** and **type**.

- **Point** — a single mark or position. Its features are position and size; a lone point functions as a focal point, while massed points build texture, tone or pattern.
- **Line** — the path of a moving point, with length, direction, weight and quality (straight or curved, hard or sketchy). It outlines, divides, connects and leads the eye. Horizontals feel calm, verticals formal, diagonals dynamic.
- **Shape** — a **two-dimensional** enclosed area (height and width only), either geometric (precise, ordered, technological) or organic (soft, natural, friendly). Shapes carry meaning quickly, which is why symbols and icons are built from them.

- **Form** — the **three-dimensional** counterpart, with depth as well as height and width. A form can be a real object or the illusion of one, drawn and rendered on a flat surface. Form communicates solidity, weight and physical presence.
- **Tone** — the lightness or darkness of an area. Tone models form, creates depth, builds contrast and ranks information. Wide tonal contrast is bold and legible; close tones are quiet and subtle.
- **Texture** — the surface quality of an element. **Tactile (actual)** texture is a real surface you can feel, such as an embossed or uncoated card; **visual (implied)** texture is the illusion of a surface made with marks or pattern on a flat page. Texture signals material and craft.
- **Colour** — described by **hue** (its name), **tone/value** (a **tint** is a hue plus white, a **shade** is a hue plus black) and **intensity/saturation** (bright or dull). Warm hues advance and energise; cool hues recede and calm. Colour is the fastest-acting element and does most of the work of brand recognition.
- **Type** — letterforms treated as a design element. Type both carries the words and, through its classification, weight, case and spacing, carries a tone of voice.

The eight design principles. The principles are **figure–ground, balance, contrast, cropping, hierarchy, scale, proportion and pattern (repetition and alternation).**

- **Figure–ground** — organising a composition into a *figure* (the subject) and a *ground* (the field behind it), usually through contrast of tone or colour, so the audience knows instantly what to look at. Where figure and ground are made equally readable, the relationship becomes **reversible**.
- **Balance** — the distribution of visual weight. **Symmetrical** balance mirrors elements about an axis and feels stable, formal and calm; **asymmetrical** balance offsets elements of different weight and feels dynamic and informal; **radial** balance arranges elements around a centre.
- **Contrast** — the juxtaposition of opposing qualities (light/dark, large/small, warm/cool, angular/rounded). It creates emphasis, separates information and makes the important thing findable.
- **Cropping** — trimming an element by the edge of the frame so part of it sits outside the composition. It focuses and enlarges the subject, adds energy, and implies that the subject continues beyond the frame.
- **Hierarchy** — ranking information as **primary, secondary and tertiary** using scale, tonal contrast, position, weight and space, so the eye travels a deliberate **visual path**.
- **Scale** — the size of an element *relative to something else* (the other elements, the format, the viewer). Increasing scale gives dominance.
- **Proportion** — the size relationship *between the parts of one thing* (part-to-part and part-to-whole). Harmonious proportion feels resolved; distorted proportion signals play or alarm.
- **Pattern** — the ordered repetition of an element (**repetition**: the same motif repeated; **alternation**: two or more motifs taking turns). Pattern creates rhythm, surface and a sense of system.

Typographic conventions. Type is an element, but *setting* type has its own established practices, and the Study Design names them separately.

TYPE ANATOMY

TYPE CLASSIFICATION — and what each connotes

Hakea	serif — traditional, established, trusted
Hakea	sans-serif — modern, clean, neutral
<i>Hakea</i>	script — personal, elegant, hand-made
HAKEA	display — expressive, attention-grabbing

Body text is set in serif or sans-serif only — never in display or script.

SPACING CONVENTIONS

kerning — one specific PAIR

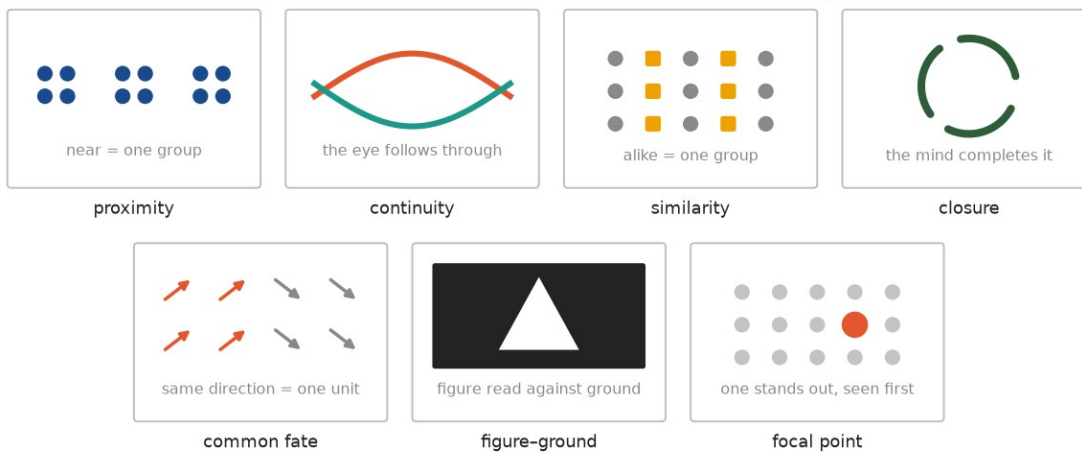
tracking — uniform across a RUN

leading — between LINES

- **Anatomy.** The horizontal reference lines are the **baseline** (the line letters sit on), the **x-height** (the height of the body of a lowercase letter), the **cap height** (the height of a capital), the **ascender line** (reached by *b, d, h, k, l*) and the **descender line** (reached by *g, j, p, q, y*). Within a letter, the **stem** is the main stroke, the **serif** is the small finishing foot, and the **counter** is the enclosed space inside *o, e* or *a*.
- **Classification.** **Serif** faces read as traditional, established and trusted; **sans-serif** as modern, clean and neutral; **script** as personal, elegant and hand-made; **display/decorative** as expressive and attention-grabbing. Body text is set in serif or sans-serif only.
- **Spacing.** Three different controls, three different names: **kerning** adjusts the space between one specific **pair** of letters (such as *A* and *V*); **tracking** applies uniform letter-spacing across a whole **run** (loose reads airy and premium, tight reads dense and urgent); **leading** is the vertical space between **lines** of type.
- **Alignment.** Left-aligned (ragged right) is the most readable for long text; centred is symmetrical and formal; right-aligned suits short captions; justified gives a neat block but can open uneven gaps.
- **Legibility and readability are different.** **Legibility** is how easily one character can be told from another — a property of the *typeface*. **Readability** is how easily a *block* of text can be read — a property of how the type is *set* (size, leading, line length, tracking, case, alignment, contrast). A very legible typeface set in tight-leaded capitals still reads poorly.
- **Typographic hierarchy.** Within the type alone, a designer ranks information using five tools: **size, weight, case, colour** and **space/position**.

Gestalt principles of visual perception. These describe how the mind organises visual information as it tries to unify and make sense of it. The Study Design lists seven: **proximity, continuity, similarity, closure, common fate, figure–ground** and **focal point**.

GESTALT PRINCIPLES OF VISUAL PERCEPTION — how the mind groups what it sees



- **Proximity** — elements placed close together are read as one group. Spacing alone can gather scattered marks into clusters, so designers use nearness to show what belongs with what.
- **Continuity** — the eye follows a continuous line, edge or curve and reads elements along it as related; where two paths cross we see them passing through one another.
- **Similarity** — elements sharing a quality (colour, shape, size, orientation) are grouped as alike, even when they are no closer together than anything else.
- **Closure** — when a familiar shape is incomplete the mind supplies the missing edges, so a designer can imply a whole shape with only a few marks.
- **Common fate** — elements that move, point or change *together* are perceived as a single unit.
- **Figure-ground** — perception separates a scene into a solid figure and the ground behind it.
- **Focal point** — one element that stands out from its surroundings is seen first and organises the order in which the design is read.

Figure-ground appears in two lists. As a design **principle** it is the designer's *compositional device* of separating a subject from its background. As a **Gestalt** principle it is the viewer's *automatic perceptual tendency* to read one region as figure and the rest as ground. Same term, two lenses — answer in the vocabulary the question asks for.

Techniques for engaging and influencing audiences using visual language. Visual language is part of a larger strategy: it exists to increase engagement, evoke an emotional response, influence behaviour and position a brand or business among its audience. The techniques a designer uses are the elements, principles, type and Gestalt principles put to deliberate work:

1. **Build a visual identity and apply it consistently.** A mark, a **signature colour palette**, a family of **graphic icons** and a defined **typography** are repeated across every outcome and piece of collateral. Repetition builds recognition, and recognition builds trust.
2. **Give the brand a voice.** Typographic classification, weight, case and tracking, together with the palette, set a tone — warm and community-minded, or urgent and energetic, or quiet and premium.
3. **Direct attention.** Contrast, scale and a clear **focal point** decide what is seen first; **hierarchy** then sets the order in which the rest is read.
4. **Group and simplify.** **Proximity** and **similarity** bundle related information so the audience processes less; **closure** lets a mark work with fewer marks, so it survives being printed small.
5. **Use colour association.** Greens and earth tones connote nature and growth; saturated warm hues connote energy and urgency; muted, close-toned palettes connote calm and quality.
6. **Match the decision to the audience and the setting.** The same message can be given opposite characters, and the right one is the one that suits the people who will see it, where they will see it.



The original identity above is for **HAKEA Seed Library**, a free community seed-swap service run from a country library. Its **mark** is built from three deep-green arcs with a single ochre point at the centre: the arcs never close, but **closure** makes the viewer read a complete circle, and the ochre point becomes the **focal point** — a seed at the centre of a pod. The **signature palette** is deep green, ochre, stone and ink; the **icon family** (leaf, seed packet, sprout, sun) shares one stroke weight, one scale and one geometry, so **similarity** makes four separate drawings read as one set. Two typefaces do all the work: a **serif** for the name and headlines (traditional, trusted, established — right for a library) and a letter-spaced **sans-serif** in ochre for secondary lines.

Applied to the event poster, the same components build a **hierarchy**: *SEED SWAP* is **primary** (largest scale, and a deep green that separates strongly from the pale stone ground, so it carries far more tonal weight than anything else — the principle of **contrast** at work); *HAKEA SEED LIBRARY* is **secondary** (much smaller, ochre, loose tracking); and the date, venue and cost lines are **tertiary** (smallest, set tightly together). The eye therefore travels top-to-bottom along a clear visual path, 1 → 2 → 3. The whole poster is **symmetrically balanced** on a central axis, which feels ordered, public and calm — appropriate for a council-run community event. Note that the three tertiary lines are pushed close together and set well away from everything above: **proximity** makes the audience read *when, where* and *how much* as one block of practical detail.

Same product, same size — two entirely different visual voices



CORREA — bold, energetic voice
saturated hue · heavy sans, tight tracking
asymmetrical · cropped circle · dense, high contrast



KUNZEA — calm, premium voice
muted hues · light serif, loose tracking
symmetrical · generous space · close tonal contrast

Because character comes from *choices*, the same product can be given opposite visual language. Both original labels above are for a 75 g botanical hand balm. **CORREA** is loud: a saturated coral disc **cropped** by the top-right corner of the label, a smaller amber disc inside it, a heavy sans-serif wordmark in capitals set with **tight tracking**, an **asymmetrical** layout, reversed white type in a solid black box, and a dense, high-contrast field. It reads as bold,

energetic and fast, and speaks to a younger buyer who wants an obvious, effective product. **KUNZEA** is quiet: muted sage on a stone ground, a small leaf mark, a light **serif** wordmark set with **loose tracking**, a thin rule, **symmetrical** balance, generous space and close tonal contrast. It reads as calm, natural and premium, and speaks to a buyer who is paying for restraint and quality. Neither is better in the abstract — each is judged by how well it suits the people it is meant to reach.

Units 3 & 4 preview — beyond the Units 1&2 study design. In Units 3 & 4 you use this same vocabulary for a different task: you *analyse supplied design examples* in the examination, naming the **aesthetic** a designer has created and explaining the **relationship between those aesthetic decisions and the purpose, context and audience or users** of the example (Unit 3, Area of Study 2). That analytical method is not part of the Units 1&2 study design and no question in this subtopic requires it. Here you use the elements, principles, typographic conventions and Gestalt principles to develop, explain and evaluate visual language of your own for a brand or business.

Watch-out — features are not functions. “Features and functions” is a two-part demand. Give the property (*a deep, cool green*) **and** the job it does (*connotes growth and signals the brand across every piece of collateral*). Half an answer earns half the marks.

Watch-out — keep the three vocabularies apart. A design **element** (point, line, shape, form, tone, texture, colour, type), a design **principle** (figure–ground, balance, contrast, cropping, hierarchy, scale, proportion, pattern) and a **Gestalt** principle (proximity, continuity, similarity, closure, common fate, figure–ground, focal point) are three different lists. Decide which list the question is asking about before you write.

Watch-out — figure–ground sits in two lists. As a design principle it is a compositional device the designer applies; as a Gestalt principle it is a perceptual tendency of the viewer. Say which one you mean.

Watch-out — shape is 2D, form is 3D. A flat printed label uses **shape**; a moulded tin has **form**. Do not use “shape” for a physical object.

Watch-out — kerning, tracking and leading are three different things. Kerning = one pair; tracking = a whole run; leading = between lines. Examiners mark the exact term.

Watch-out — name it, then say what it does. Naming “a Gestalt principle” or “good typography” earns nothing. Name the specific principle or convention, then explain its effect on the viewer with evidence from the design.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain the features and functions of two design elements used in the HAKEA Seed Library identity. (4 marks)

Working	Comment
Element 1 — colour. <i>Features:</i> a deep, cool green of low intensity, paired with a warm ochre accent and a soft stone neutral. <i>Function:</i> the green connotes plants, growth and the natural world, so the audience reads the service correctly before reading a word; the warm ochre point contrasts with it and becomes the focal point of the mark.	Start with the FEATURE half — describe the element’s actual properties (hue, tone, intensity), not just its name. The FUNCTION half — the job it does for the audience. Two elements × (feature + function) = the four marks.
Element 2 — type. <i>Features:</i> a deep-green serif face in capitals for the name, and an ochre sans-serif in loose tracking for the secondary line — two classifications, two colours, two spacings. <i>Function:</i> the serif carries the settled, trusted character of a public library, while the loose-tracked sans-serif separates the sub-line from the name and slows the eye, so the two lines are read as name-then-descriptor rather than one phrase.	Describe the typographic features precisely; “nice font” is not a feature. Tie the function to what the viewer actually does. Note that this answer never says “it looks good” — every claim is a cause and an effect.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Discuss how **one typographic convention** and **one Gestalt principle** have been used in the HAKEA seed-swap poster to engage its audience. (5 marks)

Working	Comment
Typographic convention — tracking. The secondary line <i>HAKEA SEED LIBRARY</i> is set in capitals with generous, uniform letter-spacing. Loose tracking opens the line, gives it an airy, unhurried feel and clearly distinguishes it from the much larger serif headline above, which is set at normal spacing, so the audience reads the event name first and the organisation second.	“Discuss” needs the convention IDENTIFIED first, using the exact term. Tracking (not kerning, not leading) is uniform spacing across a run. Then discuss HOW it is used and what it achieves — the discussion marks live here.
Gestalt principle — proximity. The date and time, the venue and the “bring seed · take seed · free” line are set close together and separated from everything above by a wide gap and a rule. Because the mind reads near things as one group, the three lines are perceived as a single block of practical detail, so a passer-by can absorb <i>when, where</i> and <i>how much</i> in one glance. Together, the tracked secondary line and the proximity-grouped detail let the audience take the whole poster in as three quick steps rather than six separate lines, which is what makes it engaging at a distance.	Name the specific Gestalt principle. Proximity groups by NEARNESS — do not call this similarity. Explain the perceptual mechanism, then the benefit to the viewer. Close by linking both choices back to ENGAGING the audience — the actual question.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Analyse how the design principles of **contrast** and **balance** have been used on the HAKEA seed-swap poster to communicate with a community audience. (4 marks)

The poster uses strong tonal **contrast**: the deep-green headline *SEED SWAP* is by far the largest area of dark on a pale stone ground, so it separates from that ground more forcefully than anything else on the page. The ochre secondary line is deliberately closer to the ground in tone, and the tertiary lines, although dark, are set so small that they carry very little tonal weight. This ranked use of contrast makes the headline the first thing seen from across a foyer and puts everything else in order after it, so the audience learns what the event is before it learns anything else. **Balance** is **symmetrical**: the mark, both headline lines, the rule and all three detail lines are centred on a single vertical axis. Symmetry distributes the visual weight evenly, which reads as ordered, formal and public rather than edgy or commercial — the right register for a free council-run service aimed at a general community audience. **Overall**, contrast does the *ranking* and balance does the *positioning*: together they let a mixed community audience read the poster quickly and trust who is behind it.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Compare how the CORREA and KUNZEA labels use **colour** and **balance** to influence two different audiences. (6 marks)

Both labels are for the same 75 g botanical hand balm, and both use colour and balance deliberately — but toward opposite ends. **Colour**: CORREA uses a highly saturated coral disc with an amber core against plain white, so a warm, intense hue advances hard off a neutral field; the effect is energetic and urgent, and it makes the label findable at a glance in a crowded display. KUNZEA uses muted sage on a warm stone ground, hues of low intensity and close tonal value, so nothing advances and the eye rests; the effect is quiet, natural and expensive-feeling. **Balance**: CORREA is **asymmetrical** — the disc sits high-right, the wordmark low-left, and the weights offset each other without mirroring, which feels informal, dynamic and contemporary. KUNZEA is **symmetrical** — mark, wordmark, rule and descriptor are all centred on one axis, which feels stable, composed and traditional.

The similarity is that in each case the colour choice and the balance choice pull in the *same* direction, so the label reads as one coherent voice rather than a set of unrelated decisions. The difference is who that voice is for: CORREA's saturated hue and asymmetry target a younger buyer who responds to energy and wants an obvious fix, whereas KUNZEA's muted palette and symmetry target a buyer who is paying for restraint and reads generous space as a sign of quality. **Overall**, neither treatment is better in the abstract — each is effective because its visual language matches the audience it is trying to influence.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

- Q1.** Using the HAKEA Seed Library mark: (a) Name the design element formed by the three deep-green arcs. (1 mark) (b) Name the design element used for the single ochre dot at the centre. (1 mark) (c) State one feature and one function of the element named in part (a), as it is used in the mark. (2 marks)
- Q2.** Using the HAKEA seed-swap poster: (a) Identify the primary, secondary and tertiary information. (3 marks) (b) Name the design principle you have just described. (1 mark) (c) Describe the visual path the designer has created and state one feature that creates it. (2 marks)
- Q3.** Using the type-anatomy diagram: (a) State what the **baseline**, the **x-height** and the **descender line** are. (3 marks) (b) Name the classification of the typeface used for the word *HAKEA* in the wordmark and give one connotation it carries. (2 marks)
- Q4.** Gestalt principles in the HAKEA identity: (a) Name the Gestalt principle that makes the four graphic icons read as one family, even when they appear on separate pieces of collateral rather than side by side. (1 mark) (b) Explain how that principle works and what the designer did to trigger it. (2 marks) (c) Name and explain the Gestalt principle the designer has relied on in drawing the pod as three separate, unjoined arcs. (2 marks)
- Q5.** Spacing conventions: (a) Define **Kerning**, **tracking** and **leading**. (3 marks) (b) A paragraph on a HAKEA flyer is tiring to read. The typeface itself is clear and the letters within each word are evenly and comfortably spaced, but the lines sit so close together that the descenders of one line almost touch the capitals of the next. Name the convention you would change and describe the change. (2 marks)
- Q6.** Visual identity and engagement: (a) List three components of the HAKEA visual identity shown in the figure. (3 marks) (b) Explain how applying the same palette, icon family and typefaces across every piece of HAKEA collateral influences the audience. (2 marks)

Unscaffolded

Questions 7–21 refer to the CORREA and KUNZEA hand-balm labels and to the HAKEA Seed Library identity shown in this subtopic, as indicated in each question.

- Q7.** Analyse how the KUNZEA label uses the element of **tone**, the element of **type** and the principle of **scale** to create its calm, premium character. (5 marks)
- Q8.** Explain the features and functions of the design element of **shape** on the CORREA label. (3 marks)
- Q9.** Discuss how **typographic conventions** have been used on the CORREA label to give the brand its voice. (4 marks)
- Q10.** Identify **one Gestalt principle** used on the KUNZEA label and explain how it helps a shopper read the label. (3 marks)
- Q11.** Explain the difference between a design **element**, a design **principle** and a **Gestalt** principle, giving one example of each from the CORREA label. (3 marks)
- Q12.** Distinguish between **scale** and **proportion**, referring to both labels. (3 marks)
- Q13.** Explain how **figure–ground** operates as a design principle *and* as a Gestalt principle, using the CORREA label as your example. (4 marks)

Q14. Explain the Gestalt principles of **continuity** and **common fate**, and describe one way the designer of the HAKEA website could use each. (4 marks)

Q15. Compare the **typographic conventions** used on the CORREA and KUNZEA labels and explain how each set of choices supports a different brand voice. (6 marks)

Q16. Evaluate how effectively the KUNZEA label engages a shopper who is choosing between the two balms on the same shelf. (6 marks)

Q17. Explain how the design principle of **pattern (repetition and alternation)** differs from the Gestalt principle of **similarity**. Use the HAKEA icon family as your example of one of them, and describe how the designer could create the other on HAKEA's seed-packet wrapping. (4 marks)

Q18. Distinguish between the design elements of **shape** and **form**, stating which is present on the printed KUNZEA label and which would be present in the moulded balm tin. (3 marks)

Q19. Explain how **cropping** and **scale** could be used to adapt the HAKEA seed-pod mark for a 32-pixel social-media profile image. (4 marks)

Q20. Explain how the element of **texture** could be used on the KUNZEA carton to influence a buyer's perception of quality, distinguishing between **tactile** and **visual** texture. (4 marks)

Q21. HAKEA is adding a tote bag and a social-media tile to its collateral. Explain how you would use the signature palette, the icon family and the typographic conventions so that an audience recognises both as HAKEA, and name **one Gestalt principle** you would rely on. (6 marks)

Answers

Q1. (a) Line. (b) Point. (c) See solutions. **Q2.** (a) Primary = *SEED SWAP*; secondary = *HAKEA SEED LIBRARY*; tertiary = date/time, venue, cost. (b) Hierarchy. (c) Top-to-bottom, created by decreasing scale (accept: position on the page, or the rule and gap that set the tertiary block apart). **Q3.** (a) Baseline = the line letters sit on; x-height = the height of the body of a lowercase letter; descender line = the depth reached by *g, j, p, q, y*. (b) Serif — traditional/established/trusted. **Q4.** (a) Similarity. (b) See solutions. (c) Closure. **Q5.** (a) Kerning = space between one specific pair; tracking = uniform spacing across a run; leading = space between lines. (b) Leading — increase it. **Q6.** (a) Any three of: the seed-pod mark, the wordmark, the signature colour palette, the graphic icon family, the two typefaces. (b) See solutions. **Q7–Q21.** See fully-worked solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) **Line.** (b) **Point** — a single mark whose properties are position and size. (c) **Feature:** the arcs are curved lines of heavy, even weight, each running about a quarter-turn. **Function:** the line **outlines** — the three curved strokes describe the edge of a seed pod, so the viewer identifies the subject from its contour alone, and the sweep of each arc carries the eye around the mark and in to the ochre point at its centre (2 marks: one property + one job it does; accept any other function of line — dividing, connecting or leading the eye — supported by the mark).

Q2. (a) **Primary** = the headline *SEED SWAP*; **secondary** = *HAKEA SEED LIBRARY*; **tertiary** = the date and time, the venue, and the “bring seed · take seed · free” line. (b) **Hierarchy.** (c) The eye enters at the large deep-green headline, steps down to the smaller ochre secondary line and finishes at the tightly grouped detail lines — a straight top-to-bottom path created by steadily decreasing **scale** (accept: position on the page, or the ochre rule and the wide gap that set the tertiary block apart).

Q3. (a) The **baseline** is the horizontal line the letters sit on. The **x-height** is the height of the main body of a lowercase letter (the top of a lowercase *x*). The **descender line** is the level reached by the falling strokes of letters such as *g, j, p, q* and *y*. (b) The name *HAKEA* is set in a **serif** typeface; serifs connote tradition, permanence and trustworthiness — appropriate for a public library service.

Q4. (a) **Similarity.** (b) Similarity means the mind groups elements that share a quality, even when they are no closer together than anything else. The designer drew all four icons at the same scale, with the same stroke weight and the same simple geometry, so the leaf, seed packet, sprout and sun are perceived as one family belonging to one organisation rather than four unrelated drawings (2 marks: mechanism + the specific shared quality). (c) **Closure.** The three arcs never join, but because the mind completes familiar shapes the viewer reads a whole circle. This lets the mark work with very few marks, so it stays recognisable when printed small (2 marks).

Q5. (a) **Kerning** is the adjustment of the space between one specific pair of letters, such as *A* and *V*, so the gaps look even. **Tracking** is uniform letter-spacing applied across a whole word or run. **Leading** is the vertical space between lines of type. (b) The problem is between the lines, not within them, so the convention to change is **leading**: increase it so there is more vertical space between successive lines. This is a readability fix — the typeface was already legible; it was the *setting* that was crowded (2 marks: correct term + the change, with the legibility/readability distinction earning full credit).

Q6. (a) Any three of: the seed-pod **mark**; the **wordmark** (*HAKEA* plus the tracked *SEED LIBRARY* line); the **signature colour palette** (deep green, ochre, stone, ink); the **graphic icon family**; the **two typefaces** (a serif and a sans-serif). (b) Repeating the same components on every poster, sign, packet and post means each new item is recognised as *HAKEA* before it is read. Repetition builds recognition, recognition builds familiarity and trust, and the audience then transfers what it already thinks about *HAKEA* onto the new item — which is precisely how visual language influences an audience over time (2 marks).

Q7. The *KUNZEA* label has a calm, premium character. **Tone:** the whole label sits inside a narrow, light-to-mid tonal band — a warm stone ground with sage and slate type — and contains no black and no white. Because no area separates sharply from any other, nothing jumps forward and the eye rests instead of being pulled, which is what makes the label feel quiet. **Type:** a light serif set in capitals with loose tracking, plus a small serif italic descriptor; the light weight and open letter-spacing feel unhurried, and the serif classification carries an established, traditional connotation that reads as heritage rather than novelty. **Scale:** every printed element is small relative to the label — the mark, the wordmark and especially the “75 g” — so the dominant thing on the label is the empty space around them. Restraint at that scale signals a brand confident enough not to shout, which buyers read as a marker of quality.

Overall, the narrow tonal band, the light loosely tracked serif and the small scale all pull in one direction, which is what makes the calm, premium character convincing rather than accidental (5 marks: each of the three named choices described accurately + its effect on the named character).

Q8. Features: the CORREA label uses simple **geometric shapes** — two concentric circles, the larger a saturated coral and the smaller an amber, plus a solid black rectangle behind the weight statement. All are flat, hard-edged two-dimensional areas. **Functions:** the circles give the label a single bold motif that can be recognised at a distance and act as the focal point that draws the eye first; because they are cropped by the corner of the label they also imply that the shape continues beyond the edge, which adds energy. The black rectangle functions differently again — it isolates “75 g” from the white ground so that a legal/practical detail stays findable without competing with the brand name (3 marks: shape properties named + at least two distinct jobs the shapes perform).

Q9. The CORREA wordmark is set in a **heavy sans-serif in capitals with tight tracking**. The sans-serif classification connotes the modern, clean and direct; the heavy weight gives the word maximum visual force at the same size; the capitals remove ascenders and descenders so the word forms a solid rectangular block; and the tight tracking pushes the letters close so the block reads as dense and urgent rather than airy. Beneath it, the descriptor is set in the same sans-serif but much smaller and still bold, and the claim line is set in coral capitals — a **typographic hierarchy** built from size and colour rather than from any change of typeface or weight. **Overall**, every typographic decision is pushing the same way, and the resulting voice is loud, plain-speaking and fast — a brand telling the buyer it will fix the problem (4 marks: at least three conventions named with the exact terms + the voice they create).

Q10. Proximity. The mark, the wordmark, the thin rule and the italic descriptor are set close together as one tight cluster, while the “75 g” is placed well below with a large gap between. Because the mind groups near elements and separates distant ones, the shopper reads the top cluster as a single “who this is” unit and the isolated weight as separate practical information — so the label is processed as two pieces rather than five (3 marks: principle named + mechanism + benefit to the shopper. Accept **focal point**: the leaf mark sits alone at the top of the axis and is seen first, organising the reading order.)

Q11. A design **element** is a component of visual language — on the CORREA label, the **colour** coral. A design **principle** is a convention used to arrange the elements — on the label, **cropping**, because the coral disc is trimmed by the top-right corner of the frame. A **Gestalt** principle describes how the mind perceives the result — here **focal point**, because the saturated coral disc with its amber core is the one area that stands out from the plain field, so the eye goes to it first and it sets the order in which the rest of the label is read (3 marks: one correct example from each of the three lists.)

Q12. Scale is the size of an element *relative to something else*; **proportion** is the size relationship *between the parts of one thing*. On CORREA, the wordmark is set at a large scale relative to the label and to every other element, which gives it dominance; on KUNZEA the wordmark is small relative to the same label size, so the space dominates instead. Proportion is a different comparison: within the KUNZEA label the mark-and-name group occupies a little over half the height, sits above centre and is held clear of all four edges by wide margins — a part-to-whole relationship that reads as generous. Within the CORREA label the wordmark runs across roughly three-fifths of the width and the type block is pushed hard into the lower-left corner, so the parts crowd the whole — a proportion that reads as insistent. In short, scale compares one thing to another thing; proportion compares the parts of the same thing (3 marks: definitions distinguished + evidence from both labels).

Q13. As a **design principle**, figure–ground is a compositional device the designer applies: on CORREA the saturated coral disc is placed against a plain white field so that tonal and chromatic contrast separates subject from background, making the disc read instantly as the figure and keeping the wordmark legible on the clear ground below. As a **Gestalt principle**, figure–ground is the viewer’s automatic perceptual tendency to divide any scene into a solid figure and a receding ground — the shopper does not decide to read the disc as an object on a white field; perception does it for them, and the designer has simply worked with that tendency. In short, the same term names a *device* in one list and a *perceptual tendency* in the other; the question decides which meaning is required (4 marks: both senses defined + the CORREA evidence applied to each).

Q14. Continuity is the tendency of the eye to follow a continuous line, edge or curve and to read elements along it as related. On the HAKEA website the designer could align the seed-packet cards along a single strong horizontal edge, so the eye runs along the row and reads the cards as one connected set, and could carry that same alignment down to the “join the library” button so the path leads there. **Common fate** is the tendency to perceive elements that move,

point or change together as a single unit. On the site, the four icons and their captions could all slide up together on scroll, so each icon-and-caption is read as one item and the four are read as one group; alternatively a row of arrows all pointing to the sign-up form would be read as one directive (4 marks: each principle defined + a plausible, specific application).

Q15. The two labels use the same set of typographic conventions to opposite effect. **Classification:** CORREA uses a heavy **sans-serif**, which connotes the modern, direct and functional; KUNZEA uses a light **serif**, which connotes tradition, craft and permanence. **Weight and case:** CORREA is bold capitals, giving a dense rectangular block of maximum force; KUNZEA is light capitals for the name with a lower-case italic descriptor, giving a thin, quiet line. **Tracking:** CORREA is set tight, so the letters crowd together and the word feels urgent; KUNZEA is set loose, so the letters breathe and the word feels unhurried and expensive. **Alignment and space:** CORREA's type is left-aligned and pushed toward the edges of a dense field; KUNZEA's is centred with wide margins.

The similarity is that both brands build hierarchy the same way — with size and colour rather than by changing typeface or weight — and both keep to a single family, which is why each label looks coherent. The difference is the voice that results: CORREA's heavy, tight, left-aligned sans-serif speaks quickly and plainly to a buyer who wants an obvious fix, while KUNZEA's light, loose, centred serif speaks slowly to a buyer who reads restraint as quality (6 marks: at least three conventions treated on BOTH labels, a similarity and a difference, and the voice each creates).

Q16. The KUNZEA label engages a shelf shopper *selectively* rather than *loudly*, and on balance it is effective for the buyer it is aimed at. **Strengths:** the symmetrical centred layout and the wide margins create an immediate impression of calm and quality, which differentiates it sharply from the saturated CORREA label beside it — in a display of loud packaging, restraint itself becomes the point of difference. Proximity groups the mark, name, rule and descriptor into one cluster, so the shopper can take in who the brand is and what the product is in a single fixation, and the leaf mark works as a focal point at the top of the axis. **Limitations:** the sage-on-stone palette gives close tonal contrast, so from more than a metre away the label may not be *found* at all — a shopper scanning quickly will see CORREA first. The light serif at that size and the small sage “75 g” also reduce legibility for an older shopper or in poor shelf lighting. **Judgement:** for a shopper who has already slowed down and is comparing two products up close, the label is highly effective, because every choice supports the premium positioning that justifies its price. For a shopper scanning at speed it is less effective than its competitor. **Overall,** it engages the right audience well, but it trades findability for character, and the designer should be sure the product is displayed where shoppers stop (6 marks: strengths with evidence, limitations with evidence, and a judgement tied to the audience and setting).

Q17. **Pattern** is a **design principle** — a composition the designer lays down, in which an element is repeated at regular intervals (**repetition:** one motif repeated; **alternation:** two or more motifs taking turns) to create rhythm and surface. **Similarity** is a **Gestalt principle** — a fact about the viewer's *perception*, in which elements that share a quality such as colour, shape, size or orientation are grouped as belonging together, whether or not they are arranged in any order. The HAKEA icon family demonstrates **similarity:** the leaf, seed packet, sprout and sun are not repeated or laid out in a rhythm, but because they share one stroke weight, one scale and one geometry, the mind reads them as one set. To create **pattern** on HAKEA's seed-packet wrapping the designer could tile the sheet with those same icons — for example alternating a green leaf and an ochre sprout across the surface — producing a repeating rhythm that decorates the packet and identifies the brand (4 marks: both terms correctly located in their own list, the distinction made, and one worked example of each).

Q18. A **shape** is a two-dimensional enclosed area with height and width only; a **form** is three-dimensional, with height, width **and** depth, so it has volume and mass. The printed KUNZEA label is a flat, two-dimensional surface, so its circle, leaf and rule are **shapes**. The moulded balm tin is a physical object that can be picked up and turned around, so it has **form** — and a designer working on the tin would also be making decisions about its proportions, material and surface that do not arise on the flat label (3 marks: both defined + correctly assigned to the label and the tin).

Q19. At 32 pixels the whole lock-up cannot survive, so the designer uses **cropping** and **scale** together. **Cropping** trims the mark with the frame: rather than shrinking the entire pod, the designer crops away the surrounding ground and lets the arcs run off the circular edge of the profile frame, so only the central portion — the ochre point and part of each arc — remains inside. **Scale** then does the second job: because less of the mark is being shown, it can be set much larger relative to the frame, so the stroke weight of the arcs stays thick enough to hold at 32 pixels instead of breaking up. The mark still reads because **closure** completes the implied circle from the fragments, and the ochre point keeps the focal point at the centre. In short, cropping decides *what is shown* and scale decides *how big it is*

shown, and used together they preserve recognition at a size where the full lock-up would be illegible (4 marks: each principle correctly defined and applied, plus the legibility/recognition outcome).

Q20. Texture is the surface quality of an element — how a surface looks or feels — and it comes in two kinds.

Tactile (actual) texture is a real physical surface the buyer can feel: an uncoated, lightly ribbed board with the leaf mark blind-embossed into it. At the moment the carton is picked up the hand registers an unlaminated, fibrous material and a raised mark, and buyers associate that resistance with small-batch craft rather than mass production — so perceived value rises before the pack is even read. **Visual (implied) texture** is the illusion of a surface created with marks, pattern or photography on a flat page: a fine printed grain suggesting paper fibre, or a faint botanical line pattern behind the wordmark. It costs nothing in materials and survives being reproduced on a website or a shelf-edge card, where the buyer cannot touch anything, so it carries the same “natural, made by hand” connotation through vision alone. **Overall**, the tactile texture influences the buyer *in the hand* and the visual texture influences them *at a distance and on screen*; used together they make one consistent claim about quality (4 marks: texture defined, both kinds distinguished with a specific KUNZEA application, and each linked to perceived quality).

Q21. The aim is that a person who has seen a HAKEA poster recognises the tote bag and the tile as HAKEA within a second, so every decision is about **consistency**. **Signature palette:** use only deep green, ochre, stone and ink on both items — deep green on a stone tote, and the same green as the tile background with ochre for one accent. Holding the palette fixed means the colour alone identifies the brand at a distance, before the mark is legible. **Icon family:** draw any new icon at the same scale, in the same stroke weight and with the same simple geometry as the leaf, seed packet, sprout and sun, and use one icon large on the tote and one small on the tile — a new drawing then joins the existing set instead of looking borrowed. **Typographic conventions:** keep the two-typeface system exactly as it is — the serif for the name and any headline, the sans-serif in capitals with loose tracking for secondary lines — and keep the same relative size, colour and letter-spacing relationships, so the typographic hierarchy of the tile matches the poster even though the format is different. The **Gestalt principle** I would rely on is **similarity**: because the viewer groups elements that share colour, stroke weight and letterform, the tote and the tile will be perceived as belonging to the same family as everything else HAKEA produces, even though neither item repeats the poster’s layout. **Overall**, consistent visual language across collateral is what converts a set of separate objects into one recognisable brand, and recognition is what makes the audience trust and act on the next thing HAKEA puts in front of them (6 marks: palette, icons and typography each treated specifically, one Gestalt principle named and justified, and the link to audience recognition made explicit).

Topic Test 1 — Reframing problems, visual language and the brief

Reading time: 5 minutes • Writing time: 45 minutes • Total 40 marks

Materials: pens, pencils, coloured pencils, fineliners (0.6 mm or less), eraser, ruler, set squares, protractor, compasses, circle and ellipse templates. No technology and no notes.

Section A — 5 questions — **24 marks**. **Section B** — 3 questions — **16 marks**.

Refer to the **Resource Sheet** on the following page. All questions must be answered.

This topic test mirrors the structure, timing and materials of the VCAA examination. It is an original ClassBasics paper; no VCAA question is reproduced.

Topic Test 1 — Resource Sheet

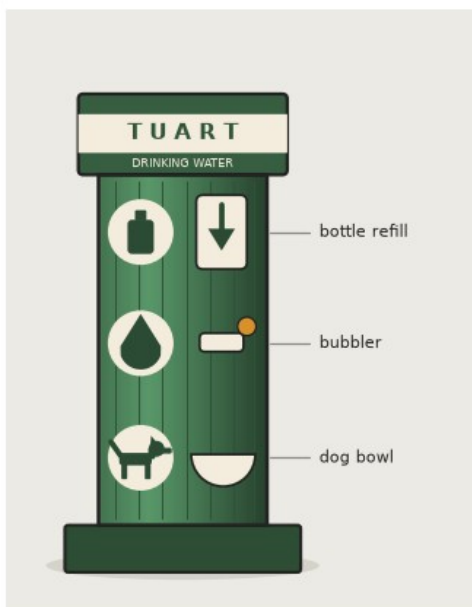
Use these two design examples to answer Section A. Each example is an original ClassBasics artifact created for this paper.

Design example 1 — Messages



WANDOO LANE BIKE KITCHEN — street panel for a free, volunteer-run bicycle workshop, fixed to the wall beside the workshop door in a narrow city lane, 2026.

Design example 2 — Objects



TUART — free-standing drinking fountain and bottle-refill post, installed beside the walking track at a suburban sports reserve, 2026. The three labels beside the post name its parts for you; they are not part of the design.

Section A

Instructions for Section A: Answer all questions in the spaces provided. In Questions 1, 2 and 5, tick the box of the ONE design example you have chosen and refer to it throughout your response. Questions 3 and 4 tell you what to refer to and carry no tick line.

Question 1 (4 marks)

Tick the design example you have chosen:

☐ WANDOO (Messages) ☐ TUART (Objects)

- a. Identify one Gestalt principle of visual perception used in the design example you selected. 1 mark
- b. Discuss how the designer has used this Gestalt principle to help the audience make sense of the design example. 3 marks

Question 2 (4 marks)

Tick the design example you have chosen:

☐ WANDOO (Messages) ☐ TUART (Objects)

- a. Identify one design **element** and one design **principle** the designer has used in the design example you selected. 2 marks
- b. For the design **element** you identified, state one **feature** of it and explain its **function** in that design example. 2 marks

Question 3 (4 marks)

Question 3 refers to **WANDOO** only. There is no choice of design example in this question.

- a. Identify the **primary**, **secondary** and **tertiary** levels of information in the typographic hierarchy of the WANDOO panel. 2 marks
- b. Name **two** typographic conventions the designer has used to rank those three levels, and explain how each one contributes to the ranking. 2 marks

Question 4 (6 marks)

Question 4 refers to the studio file note below, written by the designer of the WANDOO panel. It does not refer to the imagery on the Resource Sheet.

Studio file note — WANDOO LANE BIKE KITCHEN, week 3

- Bicycle drawing — mine, drawn from photographs I took in the lane.
- The three icons — redrawn by hand from an icon set I downloaded under a “free for personal use only” licence. I changed the stroke weight, so they are different enough now. No source recorded.
- Typeface — *Corella Sans*; desktop and web licence purchased.
- The group now wants to stop any other bicycle workshop trading under the name WANDOO LANE and using the bicycle drawing as its own logo.

- a. Explain one **legal** obligation the designer has not met in this project, and describe what must be done to correct it. 2 marks
- b. Explain one **ethical** obligation the designer has not met in this project, and describe what must be done to correct it. 2 marks
- c. Name the form of intellectual property that would give the group what it asks for in the last point of the file note, and state how that protection is obtained. 2 marks

Question 5 (6 marks)

Tick the design example you have chosen:

[] WANDOO (Messages) [] TUART (Objects)

a. Identify one **pictorial** component and one **symbolic** component of visual language in the design example you selected. 2 marks

b. Name one **conception of good design** and evaluate the extent to which the design example you selected meets it, referring to the design's **purpose** and to the **context** in which it is used. 4 marks

Section B

Instructions for Section B: Answer all questions in the spaces provided. The communication need is not given to you in this test — Questions 6 and 7 ask you to reframe the problem and define it yourself.

The design problem

WILGA STREET LAUNDRY is a free community laundry — six washing machines and four dryers in a shopfront beside a church hall — run by volunteers on two mornings a week. It opened eight months ago.

The client, the volunteer group's coordinator, has told the design team:

“We need a Facebook page. Nobody's using the machines.”

The team's Discover findings

1. **Doorway interviews, 9 people walking past the lane.** Seven assumed the laundry was only for residents of the units next door. Four asked whether it cost anything. Three asked whether they had to bring their own washing powder.
2. **Four opening sessions, watched by two team members from the folding table inside the door; nobody was approached or asked anything.** Of the 14 people who came in, 11 stopped just inside the doorway and looked around for about 20 seconds before approaching a machine. Five of the 14 left again without using one.
3. **Interviews with the 4 volunteers.** Every volunteer said that most of a session is spent answering the same three questions: is it free, do I need a referral, do I need to bring powder.
4. **The laundry's own intake log, kept by the volunteer group since it opened.** An average of three of the six machines are used in a session, and that average has not changed since the group began posting on social media in March.
5. **Site notes.** The laundry is entered through a door off the lane beside the church hall. The only sign is a printed A4 sheet taped inside the glass of that door, read at about one metre, in shade, by someone who is already standing at the door.
6. **Survey of 21 people at the neighbouring community meal.** Twelve said they do not use social media at all. Fifteen said they would be more likely to come in if they could see, from outside, who the laundry is for.

Question 6 (4 marks)

Discover

a. Name the human-centred research method that produced **Finding 2**, and state whether it is **primary** or **secondary** research. 2 marks

b. Explain why the client's statement is an **ill-defined** design problem. 2 marks

Question 7 (6 marks)

Define

a. Using the Discover findings, write one **insight statement** for WILGA STREET LAUNDRY. 2 marks

b. Write the **communication need**, the **purpose** and the **context** entries of a brief for WILGA STREET LAUNDRY. 3 marks

c. State one **design constraint** that follows from a characteristic of the audience described in the findings. 1 mark

Question 8 (6 marks)

Develop

Working from a reframed brief, the WILGA team generated a range of ideas and developed one of them into **Design concept A**, shown below.



Design concept A — WILGA STREET LAUNDRY doorway panel

Write **three** annotations on Design concept A in the numbered boxes provided. Each annotation must:

- name **one design element** or **one design principle** the designer has used;
- state **where** it is used in the concept; and
- explain the **effect** it has on the audience.

Across your three annotations you must name at least **one** design element and at least **one** design principle. Each numbered box points to a part of the concept as a starting point; you may write about any part of the concept in any box.

Three annotations, 2 marks each.

6 marks

Topic Test 1 — Answers and marking guide

Marking guide

Question	Marks	What is being assessed
1a	1	Names one Gestalt principle from the study-design list; only the first principle named is marked
1b	3	Evidence from the chosen example + the perceptual mechanism + the effect on what the audience reads
2a	2	One design element (1) and one design principle (1), each genuinely present and correctly classified
2b	2	A describable property of the element (1) + the job it does in the communication (1)
3a	2	All three hierarchy levels correctly assigned (2); two correct (1)
3b	2	Two typographic conventions named with the exact terms, each with its contribution to the ranking
4a	2	A legal obligation, correctly identified as legal, with the mechanism (1) + a correct remedy (1)
4b	2	An ethical obligation, correctly identified as ethical (1) + the required form of the remedy (1)
4c	2	Registered trade mark (1) + obtained by registration with IP Australia in the relevant classes (1)
5a	2	One pictorial component (1) and one symbolic component (1), correctly distinguished
5b	4	Conception named and attributed + purpose and context stated + evidence + a limitation + a judgement
6a	2	Observation (1) + primary research (1)
6b	2	Symptom and pre-chosen solution identified, and why that cannot yet be designed for
7a	2	An interpretation that explains <i>why</i> , supported by more than one finding — not a restatement
7b	3	Communication need stated as a need (1); purpose as a job the design does (1); context as circumstances of use (1)
7c	1	A genuine limit on the designer,

Question	Marks	What is being assessed
		traceable to a stated audience characteristic
8	6	Three annotations × 2 marks (element or principle named and located, 1; effect on the audience, 1)
	40	Section A 24 + Section B 16

Question 1

a. (WANDOO) Similarity. Accept **proximity, continuity, figure–ground** or **focal point**, provided the response then discusses the principle it has named. **(TUART) Proximity.** Accept **similarity, figure–ground** or **focal point**. (1 mark — only the first principle named is marked. “A Gestalt principle” without naming one earns nothing.)

b. (Model, using WANDOO and similarity.) Three icons sit in a row across the lower third of the panel. Each shows something different — a spanner, a price, a ramp — but every one is drawn inside a bone circle of the same diameter, at the same stroke weight and in the same colour, with its caption set in the same small type beneath it. Because the mind groups elements that share a quality, the reader does not take these as three unrelated marks but as one set of three facts about the same service, and reads them together in a single glance instead of working through them one at a time. The same grouping also separates the icons from the type block above, so a person in the lane reads the panel as two parts — first who this is and when it is open, then what to expect when they come in.

(Model, using TUART and proximity.) The bottle refill, the bubbler and the dog bowl are set one above the other on a single face of the post, one directly below the next with nothing else set between them, while the rest of the post is left as plain fluted surface. Because the mind groups elements by nearness and separates what is set apart, a person arriving at the post reads the three openings as one set of things this object does, rather than as three separate fittings that happen to share a pole. They therefore understand at a glance that the post serves bottles, people and dogs, and only then look for the one they need — which is what allows the object to be used without any instruction being read.

(3 marks: the principle applied to specific evidence in the chosen example; the perceptual mechanism — what the mind does; the effect on what the audience reads or where the eye goes. Do NOT accept a design element or a design principle discussed in place of the Gestalt principle named — Gestalt, elements and principles are three separate lists.)

Question 2

a. (WANDOO) Element: type. Accept **colour, line, shape** or **point**. **Principle:** hierarchy. Accept **contrast, cropping, balance, figure–ground, scale** or **pattern**. **(TUART) Element:** form. Accept **tone, texture, colour** or **shape**. **Principle:** proportion. Accept **balance, pattern, contrast, figure–ground** or **scale**. (1 mark each; only the first term named in each list is marked. A Gestalt principle offered as a design principle earns nothing.)

b. (Model, using WANDOO and type.) Feature: the panel uses a single sans-serif family in three sizes — the largest line set in heavy capitals in bone, the middle line much smaller and letter-spaced in ochre, and the smallest lines set at a regular weight in a muted grey. **Function:** the type does two jobs at once. It carries the words, and, because the three settings differ so plainly, it also ranks them, so a person passing in the lane reads the name first, what the place is second, and when and where third without having to search. The sans-serif classification also gives the workshop a plain, modern, practical voice, which suits a free hands-on service rather than a shop.

(Model, using TUART and form.) Feature: the post is a genuine three-dimensional cylinder — tone is graded from a light band down the left round to darker edges on both sides — standing about twice as tall as it is wide, on a wider plinth and finished with a wider head. **Function:** the form communicates that the object is solid, permanent and built to stand outdoors unattended, so a reserve user trusts it rather than treating it as temporary equipment; and because it is broad at the base and at the head and narrower in between, it reads as stable and settled into the ground.

(2 marks: 1 for a describable property of the element — hue, tone, weight, size, dimension, surface — and 1 for the job it does in the communication. A response that names the element again in place of a feature, or that says only “it looks good”, earns nothing for that half.)

Question 3

a. Primary — WANDOO LANE. **Secondary** — BIKE KITCHEN. **Tertiary** — the three detail lines (*Thursdays 4 – 7 pm; rear of 12 Wandoo Lane; bring your bike · fix it yourself*). (2 marks for all three correct; 1 mark for two correct. Accept the icon captions as a fourth, lowest level, but do not require it.)

b. (Any two, each with its contribution.) **Size** — WANDOO LANE is set far larger than anything else, BIKE KITCHEN is much smaller and the detail lines smaller again, so the reader steps down the panel in the order the designer intends. **Weight** — the primary line is set bold while the secondary and tertiary lines are set at a regular weight, so the name carries far more visual weight against the dark ground than anything beneath it. **Colour** — bone for the primary line, a warm ochre for the secondary and a muted grey for the tertiary set the three levels at three different degrees of prominence against the ink ground: the bone name carries the strongest tonal contrast, the ochre is the only warm accent on the panel and so takes the eye next, and the grey sits back. **Case** — the top two lines are capitals and the detail lines are mixed case, so the ranking survives even where the sizes are close. **Tracking** — BIKE KITCHEN is set with loose, uniform letter-spacing across the whole line, which separates it from the tightly set name above it and slows the eye, so it is read as a second, distinct line rather than as part of the name. **Space and position** — the three detail lines are set close together and held well below the ochre rule, so they are read as one block of practical detail after everything above it.

(2 marks: 1 mark each for a convention named with the exact term AND its contribution to the ranking. Do NOT accept “kerning” or “leading” for the letter-spacing of BIKE KITCHEN — kerning adjusts one pair of letters and leading is the space between lines; the uniform spacing of a whole run is **tracking**. “Good typography” or “nice font” earns nothing.)

Question 4

a. (Model.) The designer has breached **copyright**, which is a legal obligation under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). The icon set was downloaded under a licence permitting **personal use only**, and a street panel produced for a community organisation is a public, non-personal use that the licence does not cover. Redrawing the icons by hand does not cure this: there is no percentage of alteration that makes another person’s work yours, and infringement occurs where a **substantial part** is reproduced, judged by the importance and distinctiveness of what was taken rather than by how much was changed. Nor does it matter that the designer believed the change was enough — infringement does not require an intention to copy. **To correct it:** obtain a licence from the copyright owner that covers this use, or redraw the icons from the designer’s own reference so that nothing distinctive of the original remains. (2 marks: the obligation correctly identified as legal, with the mechanism (1); a remedy that licenses or replaces the material (1). A response that offers “credit the creator” as the fix has confused the ethical duty with the legal one and cannot earn the second mark.)

b. (Model.) The designer has breached the **ethical obligation to acknowledge sources of inspiration**. This obligation comes from professional practice and industry codes rather than from legislation, and it is enforced by reputation rather than by a court. No source was recorded for the icon set, so the designer cannot credit the creator, cannot demonstrate to the client what in the project is cleared, and cannot now even identify the owner in order to ask for a licence. **To correct it:** record the acknowledgement **at the point of use** — beside the icons on the page where they appear in the folio, not in a list at the back — giving the **title of the website**, the **exact URL** and the **retrieval date**. Note that this satisfies the ethical duty only: acknowledgement is not permission, so the licensing problem in part a still has to be fixed separately. (2 marks: the obligation correctly identified as ethical (1); the required form of the acknowledgement (1). Also accept honesty with the client about what has and has not been cleared.)

c. A **registered trade mark** (1 mark), obtained by **applying for and being granted registration with IP Australia**, in the relevant **classes of goods and services** — here, bicycle repair services — for a renewable ten-year term (1 mark). Copyright in the bicycle drawing already exists automatically and protects that artwork, but it does not stop another business using the **name** or a similar sign in trade; only registration does that, and only within the classes applied for. (Do not award “copyright” for this part — the automatic-versus-registered distinction is the point of the question: copyright arises automatically and protects the artwork, while a trade mark must be registered.)

Question 5

a. (WANDOO) **Pictorial** — the bicycle drawing (accept the chain motif along the base). **Symbolic** — any one of the three icons: the spanner, the “\$0” mark, or the ramp. (TUART) **Pictorial** — the drawn bottle in the top icon, or the dog

in the lowest icon. **Symbolic** — the droplet inside a circle, or the downward arrow beside the refill alcove. (1 mark each; only the first component named in each category is marked. The type is the **typographic** component and cannot be offered for either mark.)

b. (Model, using WANDOO and Dieter Rams' principle that good design is understandable.)

The **purpose** of the WANDOO panel is to tell a person passing along the lane what the bike kitchen is, when it is open and what they will find there, and to persuade them that they are allowed to use it. Its **context** is a narrow city lane, read outdoors on foot, in shade, in a few seconds, by people who have mostly never been before.

Judged against the conception, the panel is largely successful, because it states the same message in more than one channel. The bicycle silhouette says what the place is before a word is read and works for someone who reads little English. The three icons then state three separate facts — tools are provided, it costs nothing, the entry is step-free — and each is captioned, so the meaning does not depend on decoding a picture. The typographic hierarchy delivers the name, then the service, then the times and address, so a reader who takes in only three words still leaves with the essentials.

There are two genuine limitations. “BIKE KITCHEN” is the line that is supposed to say what the place does, and it is a term a first-time reader is unlikely to know — the panel explains everything except its own name. And the three detail lines are the smallest type on the panel and are set in a muted grey, well below the bone of the name in contrast against the ink ground; in a shaded lane the opening times, which are the fact a passer-by most needs, are the first thing to drop out.

Overall, the panel meets the conception to a substantial degree for the context it is in, because its redundancy means no single channel has to succeed on its own; the shortfall is concentrated in the smallest and least prominent information rather than in the design's structure.

(Model, using TUART and the conception that good design is understandable — or useful, or accessible to as many people as possible.) The **purpose** of TUART is to let a person on the reserve drink, fill a bottle or water a dog without asking anyone how. Its **context** is outdoors beside a walking track, in sun and rain, approached quickly and often one-handed by people who are exercising. The post is strongly understandable, because the **form itself** carries the instruction: three openings are set at three heights, and the height alone tells a user which is which — the refill alcove where a bottle is held, the bubbler at standing height, the bowl low at the foot of the post for a dog. Beside each opening a matching picture repeats the message, so a user who cannot read the small etched type still receives it, and the “drinking water” line confirms what the water is for. The limitations are real but narrow: only one small ochre button indicates how the water is turned on, so a first-time user must look for it; and the name band — the largest type on the object — tells the user the post's name rather than anything they need to act on. **Overall** the design meets the conception well for its purpose and context, because the essential message is carried by the form and repeated pictorially, and only the operating control is left under-explained.

(4 marks: the conception named and attributed to a source, not merely asserted (1); the purpose and the context both stated specifically — a description of the presentation format is not a context (1); evidence drawn from the design example (1); a genuine limitation and an overall judgement (1). Accept any conception correctly named and applied — Rams' ten, Good Design Australia's award criteria, the Victorian Government Architect's Good Design series, a culturally specific conception, or the student's own stated criterion. Claims that cannot be supported by what is visible in the example — for example that TUART is environmentally friendly, or long-lasting — are assumptions, not evaluation.)

Question 6

a. Observation (1 mark) — the team watched what people actually did across four sessions rather than asking them. It is **primary** research (1 mark), because the team gathered the data first-hand for this project. (Accept “structured observation” or “ethnographic research”. Do not accept “survey” or “interview” — Finding 2 records behaviour, not what people said.)

b. The client's statement is ill-defined on both counts. First, it states a **symptom** — “nobody's using the machines” — rather than a human need: it says that something is wrong without saying what any particular person cannot do, or why. Second, it arrives with a **pre-chosen solution** already inside it: “we need a Facebook page” names the artefact before anyone has established what has to be communicated, to whom or where, so the whole Develop stage would be

spent building the one answer the client happened to think of first. The team's own findings show why that matters — the intake log records no change in machine use since the group began posting on social media, and 12 of the 21 people surveyed do not use social media at all, so the pre-chosen solution addresses neither the barrier nor the audience. Until the problem is reframed as a need, there is nothing that can be designed for or judged against. (2 marks: the symptom-versus-need point and the pre-chosen-solution point, or either one developed with evidence from the findings. A response that simply says "it is vague" earns 1 at most.)

Question 7

a. (Model — accept any insight that explains **why**, is grounded in more than one finding, and names no design solution.) **People are not staying away because they have not heard of the laundry; they stay away because nothing they can see before they commit tells them that the laundry is for them, that it costs nothing and that nothing has to be brought or arranged — so they hesitate at the door, and some leave rather than ask.**

This is supported across the findings rather than by one of them: seven of the nine people interviewed assumed the laundry was for the units next door and four asked whether it cost money (Finding 1); 11 of 14 people hesitated in the doorway and five left without washing anything (Finding 2); the volunteers spend most of a session answering the same three questions (Finding 3); and 15 of 21 people said they would be more likely to come in if they could see from outside who the laundry is for (Finding 6). Finding 4 rules out the awareness explanation, because use has not moved since the social-media posting began. (2 marks: an interpretation that gives a **why** (1); grounded in the evidence and free of any named artefact (1). A response that restates a finding — "people think it is only for the units" — is a finding, not an insight, and earns 1.)

b. (Model — accept any brief entries that are specific, grounded in the findings and free of a pre-chosen solution.)

Communication need. Information at the point where people decide — on the lane frontage and at the entry door — that tells a person, before they come in, who the laundry is for, that it is free, and what they do and do not need to bring.

Purpose. To inform a passer-by who the laundry is for, what it costs and what they need to bring, and to persuade a person hesitating at the door that they may come in without asking anyone or being referred.

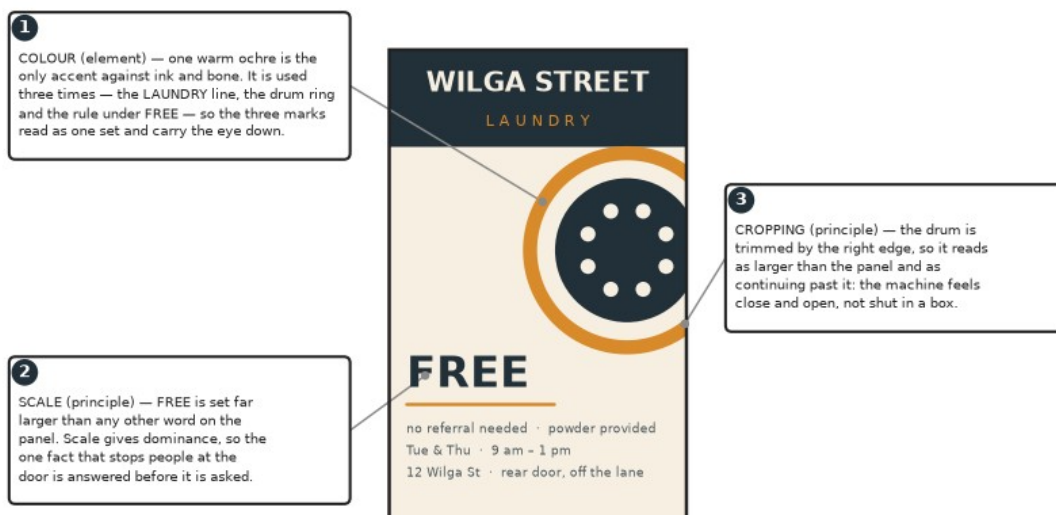
Context. Encountered outdoors in a narrow side lane beside the church hall, in shade, from about one to three metres, in the few seconds a person gives it while walking past or standing at the door; read on the two mornings a week the laundry is open, by people who have not been in before.

(3 marks: 1 mark each. The **communication need** must state what has to be communicated rather than name an artefact — "a poster", "a Facebook page", "a new sign" is a solution and scores nothing. The **purpose** must state a job the design performs — inform, persuade, guide, identify; an appearance ("a friendly, welcoming look") scores nothing. The **context** must describe where, when and in what circumstances the design is met; a presentation format such as "an A2 poster" or "a laminated sheet" is not a context.)

c. (Model.) Twelve of the 21 people surveyed do not use social media at all — an **audience characteristic**. The **constraint** that follows is that the information must be delivered as printed material that stays at the site, and must not require a phone, a data connection or a social-media account in order to be received. (Accept any constraint genuinely translated from a stated characteristic — for example, that many readers are meeting the service for the first time, so no prior knowledge of the words "referral" or "community laundry" may be assumed; or that the volunteers, not a designer, will maintain it, so it must be updatable without design software. 1 mark. Do **not** award a restatement of the characteristic itself — "many users do not use social media" is a description of the audience, not a limit on the designer — and do not award a repeat of the purpose or the context.)

Question 8

Model annotations for Design concept A are shown below; the wording expected is given in full after the figure.



Design concept A — WILGA STREET LAUNDRY doorway panel

1. **Colour (element)** — one warm ochre is the only hue on the panel besides ink and bone, and it is used three times: the letter-spaced LAUNDRY line in the header band, the ring around the drum and the short rule beneath FREE. Because that single warm hue is the panel's only accent, the three ochre marks are picked up as one set and carry the eye down the format — name band, then drum, then the word FREE — rather than leaving a person glancing in from the lane to hunt across the panel.
2. **Scale (principle)** — FREE is set far larger than any other word on the panel. Scale gives dominance, so the one fact that decides whether a person walks in — whether it will cost them anything — is answered before it has to be asked, and answered from further away than any other line can be read.
3. **Cropping (principle)** — the drum circle is trimmed by the right-hand edge of the format. Cropping makes the drum read as larger than the panel and as continuing past it, so the machine feels close and open to the viewer rather than shut inside a box — which is the opposite of the “members only” impression the research found people were forming.

Other creditworthy annotations include: **type (element)** — the name is reversed in bone out of the solid ink band, the highest tonal contrast on the panel, so the reader knows whose door this is first; **hierarchy (principle)** — the information is ranked in four steps (name, service, FREE, then the detail lines), so a passer-by takes in who → what → cost → when in one pass; **contrast (principle)** — the near-black band against the pale bone field gives the eye an entry point at the top of the format; **figure-ground (principle)** — the dark drum reads as the figure on the pale ground; **shape (element)** — the drum is reduced to a flat circle with eight small holes, so a laundry is recognised at once and without a word; **point (element)** — the eight small bone dots ringing the drum; **balance (principle)** — the layout is asymmetrical, with the drum high and right and the type block low and left; **line (element)** — the short ochre rule separates FREE from the practical detail beneath it.

(6 marks: 2 marks per annotation — 1 mark for naming a design element or a design principle that is genuinely present and saying where it is used, and 1 mark for a specific effect on the audience. Award the second mark only for an effect: “it stands out”, “it looks good” or “it draws the eye” without saying to what or why earns nothing. If no design element, or no design principle, is named across the three annotations, the annotations that break the rule can earn the first mark only. A Gestalt principle named in place of an element or a design principle does not satisfy the requirement, although a correct Gestalt observation added on top of a valid annotation should not be penalised.)