

VCE Visual Communication Design Units 1 & 2

Chapter 3 — Generating, refining & resolving

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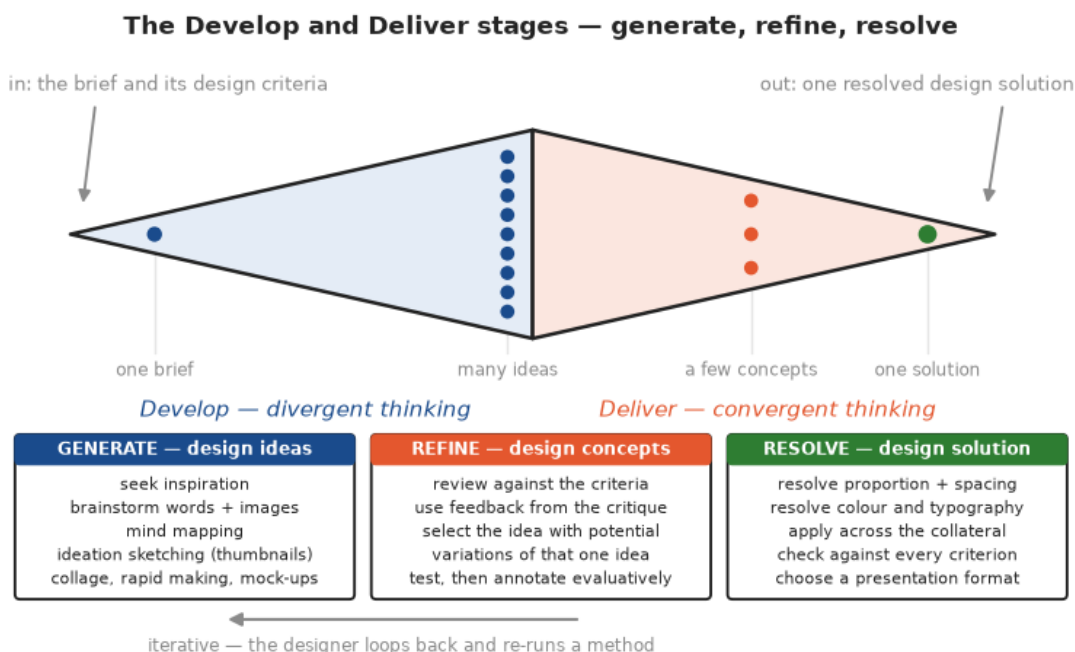
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Chapter 3 Generating, refining & resolving — 3A Methods to generate, refine & resolve

Theory

In Unit 1 Outcome 2 the brief is **given** to you. The problem has already been found, reframed and written down — that was the work of Chapter 1 and the first diamond. Your work starts at the pinch point in the middle of the VCD design process: you take a brief for a business or brand and produce **visual language** that meets it. That happens in the second half of the process, in the **Develop** and **Deliver** stages.



Three verbs describe the whole of that work:

- **generate** — produce a broad range of design **ideas** (Develop, driven by divergent thinking);
- **refine** — select the strongest and develop it into design **concepts** (Deliver, convergent);
- **resolve** — settle the final details of one **design solution** and present it (Deliver, convergent).

What a “method” is. A **method** is a *manual or digital process* used to evolve design ideas, concepts and solutions: drawing, collage, printing, photography, model-making, prototyping. Keep it apart from the two words that always travel with it. **Media** are the applications you make marks with — pencil, ink, markers, paint; software, apps and online platforms. **Materials** are the surfaces or substrates you make on or from — paper, card, textile, metal, a touchscreen. So *ideation sketching* is a method, *a fineliner* is a medium and *layout paper* is a material. Chapter 3B deals with the manual and digital methods, media and materials themselves; this subtopic is about the methods as **process** — what you do, in what order, and why.

Watch-out — a method is a process, not a program. “Adobe Illustrator” is a **medium**. The **method** is digital drawing (or digital collage, or vector tracing). Naming software when a question asks for a method loses the mark.

Three levels of resolution. The study design names three, and they describe *how far the work has been taken* — not how neat it is and not how good it is.

Level	What it is	Thinking	Typical methods
Design ideas	Experimental, imaginative and rapidly generated work that captures the essence of emerging ideas;	Divergent	Inspiration seeking, brainstorming, mind mapping, ideation sketching, collage, rapid

Level	What it is	Thinking	Typical methods
	the designer aims for a broad range of options.		making
Design concepts	Ideas <i>selected</i> for their potential and refined; considered, purposeful decisions about elements, principles, methods, media and materials; tested and evaluated.	Convergent	Selection against criteria, variations, testing, low-fidelity prototypes, evaluative annotation
Design solution	The resolved proposal, presented in an appropriate format for approval.	Convergent	Resolving details, applying across collateral, concept board, mock-up, style guide, an accompanying written rationale

Watch-out — idea ≠ concept ≠ solution. These are levels of *resolution*, not of quality. A tidy thumbnail is still a design **idea**; a rough-looking but selected, tested and refined mark is a design **concept**. Do not promote work just because it looks finished.

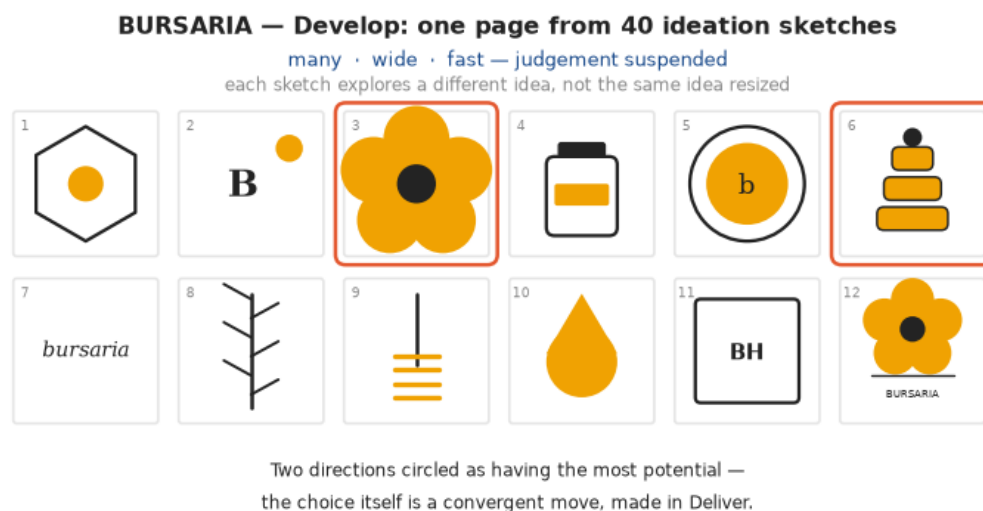
The brief you will work to in this subtopic. Everything below is worked against one original project, **BURSARIA**.

Entry	What the brief says
Client	BURSARIA, a two-person bush-honey business selling at a weekend farmers' market and through three local shops.
Communication need	A visual identity — a mark and a wordmark — applied to the jar label, the lid seal and a market card.
Purpose	To identify the business, and to inform buyers that the honey is cold-extracted from bush flowering rather than blended.
Context	Seen at arm's length on a crowded trestle table under a marquee, and from about 3 m by shoppers walking past.
Audience or users	Market shoppers aged roughly 25–70 who visit several stalls in a few minutes and buy on what they can read quickly.
Design criteria	1. the mark must stay legible at 20 mm wide on the lid seal; 2. the jar must be identifiable from 3 m as a shopper walks past; 3. no more than two ink colours, because the labels are hand screen-printed; 4. the identity must work on unbleached kraft label stock.

Methods to generate — the Develop stage. Divergent thinking here is not “being creative”. It is a set of methods you run deliberately, in order, with judgement switched off.

- Seeking inspiration.** Search widely and collect visual references — other food and produce brands, hand-printed market signage, botanical illustration, and packaging from categories nothing like honey. Build an inspiration board and write beside each reference the *quality* you are after (its warmth, its hand-made mark-making), never the shape you intend to copy. Acknowledge the source of every reference at the point you use it. *Produces:* a board of references and a written note of what you are drawing on.
- Brainstorming with words and images.** List every word the brief attaches to the product — bush, seasonal, cold-extracted, small-batch, flower, thorn, hive, comb, trestle table, kraft — then draw each word instead of only writing it. *Produces:* a vocabulary of subjects, so the page is not twelve versions of a bee.

3. **Mind mapping and word association.** Branch outward from one central word, and keep branching past the obvious. *Produces:* the far-flung associations that a straight list never reaches.
4. **Ideation sketching (thumbnails).** Draw small, fast and often. Work at about 30 mm so a sketch costs seconds; fill the page; do not erase; do not letter neatly; number every sketch so you can refer to it later. *Produces:* a wide field of design ideas on one page — the material the convergent stage will select from.
5. **Rapid making.** Tear paper and collage a silhouette; cut and stamp a shape; photograph a real object; fold a **low-fidelity mock-up** of the jar from card and hold it at arm's length. *Produces:* ideas the pencil would not have found, plus a first honest check of real size.
6. **Iterating inside Develop.** Take a promising direction and re-run it with **one variable changed** — the same idea reversed out, at a heavier weight, cropped, rotated, or built from type alone. *Produces:* depth as well as breadth. (This is different from making concept variations later: here you are still widening the field, not resolving a chosen direction.)



Six of the twelve sketches above are pictures of different *things* (a hexagon, a bee-and-letter, a flower, a jar, a badge, a hive); the other six change the whole approach rather than the subject — one is type only, two are line drawings, one is a solid silhouette, one is a monogram and one is a full lock-up. That is what a divergent page looks like. Two directions are circled as promising, but circling is already a convergent act, so it belongs to the next stage.

Watch-out — range, not repetition. Twelve versions of the same leaf at different sizes is **one** idea drawn twelve times. Test your page like this: cover any single sketch — if the page still says exactly the same thing, you have repeated, not diverged.

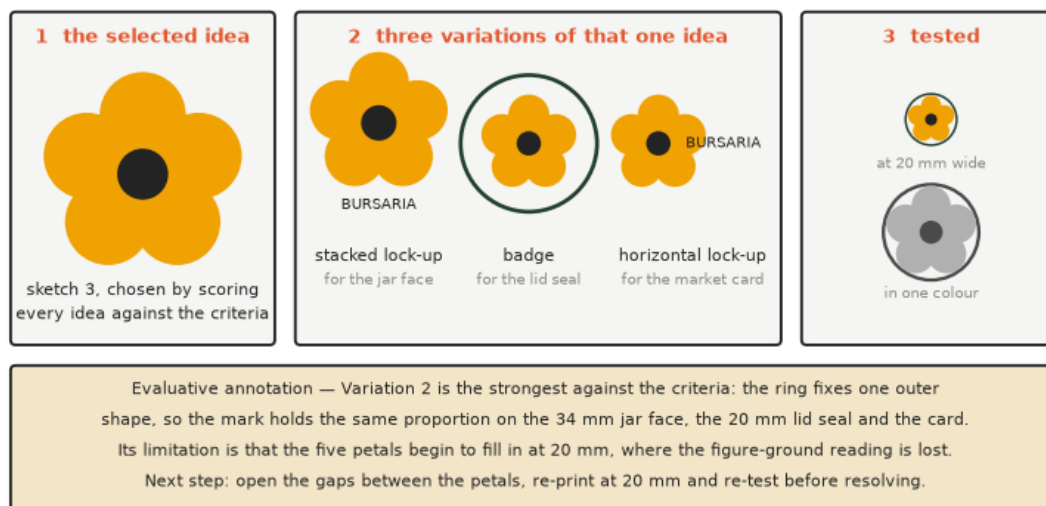
Watch-out — do not judge while you generate. Evaluating each sketch as you draw it shuts the page down after three or four ideas. Generate first, judge second: the two modes are separated in time, not run together.

Methods to refine — the first half of Deliver. Now judgement is switched back on. Convergent thinking is analytical, critical, reflective and comparative, and it works by comparing what you have against something agreed — the **design criteria** in the brief.

1. **Review every idea against the design criteria.** Put the brief beside the page and go through the sketches one at a time, asking of each criterion whether the idea can meet it.
2. **Use feedback.** Present the ideas for critique and take what is specific and actionable. (3C covers presenting, critiquing and responding to feedback.)
3. **Select, using a named technique.** A **selection matrix** rules the criteria across the top and the sketches down the side and scores each cell; **elimination in rounds** halves the field repeatedly; **dot voting** collects a group's judgement quickly. Whichever you use, the output is a *decision plus a written reason*, not a favourite.
4. **Make variations of the one selected idea.** Change one thing at a time — the lock-up, the ratio of mark to wordmark, the colourway, the typeface pairing, the level of detail, the outer shape. They must stay versions of the **same** idea; three unrelated marks are three ideas, not three concepts.

5. **Test.** Print at the real size, on the real stock, in the real number of colours; view it at the stated distance; reduce it until it fails and note where; build a low-fidelity mock-up and look at it in the context the brief describes.
6. **Annotate evaluatively.** Every annotation carries three things: a **strength**, a **limitation**, and the **next action** — each written in design terminology and each tied to a numbered criterion.

BURSARIA — Deliver: refining ONE idea into a design concept



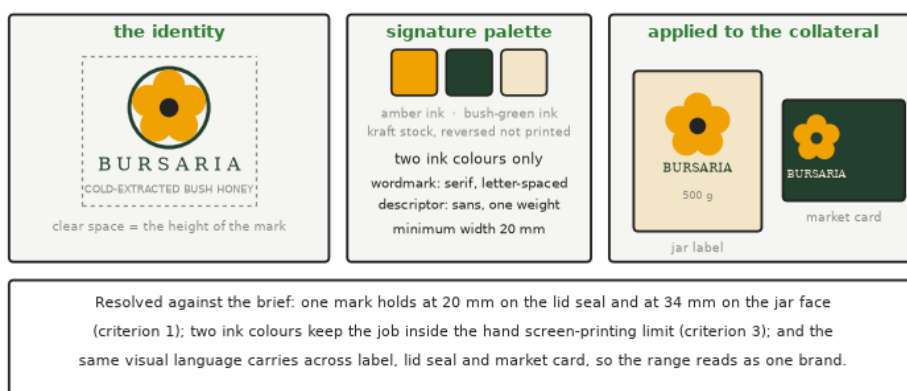
Watch-out — refining is not tidying up. Redrawing the same mark more neatly is not refinement. Refinement is decision-making: something is chosen, something is changed, and both are justified against the criteria.

Watch-out — annotate against the criteria, not against your taste. “I like this one, it looks good” earns nothing. “The ring holds one outer shape, so the mark keeps its proportion at 20 mm on the lid seal (criterion 1)” earns the marks, because it names an element or principle, states an effect, and points at a criterion.

Methods to resolve — the end of Deliver. To **resolve** is to settle every remaining decision so the solution can be produced and used.

1. **Resolve the details.** Fix the proportion of the parts and the internal spacing; set the **clear space** around the mark and its **minimum reproduction size**; fix the exact colours; fix the typeface, the weights and the letter-spacing; align everything to a common structure.
2. **Apply the visual language across the collateral.** The identity must hold on every outcome named in the brief — here the jar label, the lid seal and the market card — so the range reads as one business rather than three unrelated pieces.
3. **Choose a presentation format.** A resolved solution may be presented through **documentation drawings, models, concept boards, mock-ups or high-fidelity prototypes**, any of them accompanied by a **written rationale**; for a visual identity a **style guide** is also appropriate, because it carries the rules as well as the artwork. You *present* a solution — the manufacture of functional prototypes is not a requirement of this study.
4. **Check it against every criterion, and record the check.** Go through the criteria in order and state, with evidence, how the solution meets each — and be honest where it only partly does.

BURSARIA — the resolved design solution



Watch-out — “resolved” means resolved to the brief. A neat, attractive, finished-looking outcome that has never been checked against the criteria is not a resolved solution. Resolution is measured against the brief, not against appearance.

The role of divergent and convergent thinking. The study design defines the two modes precisely. **Divergent thinking** is open-minded, curious and imaginative; it suspends judgement and focuses on the many ways a problem might be solved, including unusual or unexpected ones. **Convergent thinking** is analytical, critical, reflective and comparative; it summarises, categorises and synthesises in order to clarify, reframe or resolve a problem.

The same pair drives the whole VCD design process, twice. In the first diamond, **Discover** diverges and **Define** converges, and the output is the brief (1C). In the second diamond, **Develop** diverges and **Deliver** converges, and the output is the resolved design solution. Each mode buys you something the other cannot:

- **divergence buys range.** Without it you design the first thing you thought of, which is usually the most obvious thing anyone would think of — so the solution is predictable and the audience has seen it before.
- **convergence buys a decision.** Without it you accumulate ideas forever and nothing is ever tested against the brief, so no solution is delivered at all.

The modes also recur at smaller scale *inside* a stage: making three variations of a chosen idea is a brief burst of divergence inside Deliver, and choosing between them converges again. And the process is **iterative** — testing at 20 mm may show that the whole direction fails, sending you back to the ideation page to generate again. Looping back is the process working, not the process failing.

Watch-out — do not converge too early. Choosing a favourite in the first five minutes and spending the rest of the time rendering it means the criteria never selected anything; taste did.

Watch-out — but do converge. Generating right up to the deadline leaves ideas that were never refined, never tested and never resolved. An unrefined idea cannot meet a brief.

Units 3 & 4 preview — beyond the Units 1&2 study design. In Units 3 and 4 the brief is not given to you — you prepare it yourself: a *single* brief for one client defining **two communication needs** that are distinct from one another in purpose and presentation format, with design criteria for each. The method changes with it. You run **Develop twice**, once per need, generating a **range** of design ideas against the criteria each time; you then refine and resolve **distinct design concepts** for each need, and devise and deliver a formal **design pitch** of **one design concept per need**, in which you justify your selection of methods, media and materials, of design elements and principles, and of presentation formats, to an audience or users. The unit ends with **one design solution for each need**, presented in **two separate presentation formats**. In Units 1 and 2 a brief always defines **one** communication need, you resolve **one** solution, and there is no pitch. What varies is who writes it: the brief is **given** to you in this outcome and again in Unit 1 Outcome 3, while in Unit 1 Outcome 1 (1C) and in Unit 2 Outcomes 1 and 3 (6A, 9B) you write the brief yourself — always for a single need. Do not use the two-need brief or the pitch methods in the questions below.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Using the BURSARIA brief, describe **two** divergent methods you would use to generate design ideas for the identity, and state what each produces. (4 marks)

Working	Comment
Method 1 — brainstorming with words and images. Working from the brief, list the words attached to the product — bush, seasonal, cold-extracted, small-batch, flower, thorn, hive, comb, trestle table, kraft — then make a quick drawing of each word rather than only writing it. <i>What it produces:</i> a vocabulary of subjects to draw from, so that the ideation page explores several different things rather than twelve versions of a bee.	“Describe” needs the method NAMED and its procedure stated — what you actually do. “I would brainstorm” with no procedure earns almost nothing.
Method 2 — ideation sketching (thumbnails). Sketch each of those subjects small and fast, at about 30 mm, filling the page, numbering every sketch, never erasing and never stopping to letter neatly. <i>What it produces:</i> a wide field of design ideas on one page — the material that the convergent stage will later select from. Both methods belong to the Develop stage and to divergent thinking.	The question asks what each method <i>produces</i>. Naming the output is the second half of the mark. The second method must be different in kind, and its procedure should show the divergent rules working: small, fast, many, judgement suspended. Close by naming the stage and the mode. That is what anchors the answer to the study design rather than to general advice.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Using the BURSARIA ideation page, set out the convergent steps you would take to refine sketch 3 into a design concept, and write the evaluative annotation for the version you would carry forward. (6 marks)

Working	Comment
Step 1 — score every idea against the design criteria. Rule a selection matrix with the four criteria across the top and the twelve sketches down the side, and score each cell. Sketch 3, the five-petal flower, scores highest: one compact silhouette, no thin lines to fill in, and printable in a single ink.	The selection must be made against the BRIEF. Naming the technique (a selection matrix) and the winning reason is what makes the step markable — “I picked my favourite” is not a method.
Step 2 — make three variations of that ONE idea. Keep the flower and change one thing at a time: (i) stacked above the wordmark, (ii) held inside a ring as a badge, (iii) set horizontally beside the wordmark.	The examinable point: one idea developed into variations, not three new ideas. Say what stays fixed as well as what changes.
Step 3 — test at the real size, in the real conditions. Print all three at 20 mm wide on unbleached kraft stock, in one ink, and look at them at arm’s length and again from 3 m.	Tie the test to the actual criteria — 20 mm lid seal (1), 3 m recognition (2), two inks (3), kraft stock (4). A test with no criterion behind it proves nothing.
Step 4 — decide, and record the reason. Variation 2 is carried forward: the ring gives the mark a single fixed outer shape, so it holds the same proportion on the 34 mm jar face, the 20 mm lid seal and the market card.	A convergent step has to <i>finish</i> in a decision plus a reason. This is also where the iteration would be recorded if the test had failed.
The annotation. “Variation 2 is the strongest against the criteria: the ring fixes one outer shape, so the mark keeps its proportion at 20 mm on the lid seal (criterion 1) and stays recognisable at 3 m (criterion 2). Its limitation is that the five petals begin to fill in at 20 mm, where the figure–ground reading is lost. Next step: open	Evaluative annotation = a strength, a limitation and a next action, each in design terminology and each pointed at a numbered criterion.

the gaps between the petals, re-print at 20 mm on kraft and re-test before resolving.”

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain the role of divergent and convergent thinking in the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process. (4 marks)

The two stages are driven by opposite modes, and each does a job the other cannot. **Develop** is driven by **divergent thinking**: the designer suspends judgement and uses rapid drawing and making methods to generate a broad range of imaginative design ideas aligned with the communication need. Its role is to buy **range** — because the first idea anyone has is usually the most obvious one, a designer who does not diverge delivers something the audience has already seen. **Deliver** is driven by **convergent thinking**: the designer reflects critically on those ideas, uses the design criteria in the brief together with feedback to select the ones with the most potential, refines them into concepts, tests them, and resolves the final details. Its role is to buy a **decision** — without it the designer accumulates ideas but never produces anything that has been measured against the brief. ∴ the two modes are complementary and are separated in time: divergence produces the material, convergence turns that material into one resolved design solution.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Write the evaluative annotation that would accompany the resolved BURSARIA design solution shown, referring to at least two of the design criteria. (6 marks)

Resolved solution — BURSARIA visual identity. The mark is a five-petal bush flower held inside a ring, locked to a letter-spaced serif wordmark with a single-weight sans descriptor. **Against criterion 1**, the ring gives the identity one fixed outer shape and one fixed proportion, so the mark reads at 20 mm on the lid seal and at 34 mm on the jar face without redrawing; the petal gaps were opened after the first 20 mm test, which is why the figure–ground reading now holds at size. **Against criterion 3**, the whole identity is built from two inks — amber and bush green — with the unprinted kraft stock doing the work of a third colour: where the wordmark is reversed out of a solid green it reads as kraft, not as a third ink, so the job stays inside the hand screen-printing limit. **Against criterion 2**, the mark is used at its largest on the jar face, as a saturated amber shape against the unbleached kraft ground with a dark centre punched out of it; that hue contrast, that internal tonal contrast and the simple five-lobed silhouette are what carry at a distance, and testing at 3 m showed the flower still reads as one shape — although the descriptor line disappears at that distance, a limitation the design accepts, since the descriptor is written for arm’s length, not for the walk-past. **Against criterion 4**, the two inks were chosen for their tonal separation on an unbleached stock rather than on white. ∴ the solution meets all four criteria, with the descriptor’s 3 m legibility the one deliberate compromise, and the same visual language now carries across the label, the lid seal and the market card so the range reads as one business.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (a) Name the two stages of the VCD design process worked in Unit 1 Outcome 2, and the mode of thinking that drives each. (2 marks) (b) Name, in order, the three levels of resolution produced across those two stages. (1 mark) (c) State which mode of thinking produces design ideas. (1 mark)

Q2. Using the BURSARIA ideation page: (a) Identify two divergent methods that could have produced a page like this. (2 marks) (b) Describe one feature of the page that shows the designer was thinking divergently. (2 marks) (c) Explain why the two circled sketches are not yet design concepts. (2 marks)

Q3. (a) Distinguish between a design **idea** and a design **concept**. (2 marks) (b) State two things a designer compares each design idea against when selecting one to refine. (2 marks) (c) Explain why a designer refines one selected idea rather than starting a new idea. (2 marks)

Q4. (a) State the three things an evaluative annotation should contain. (3 marks) (b) Explain why annotations use design terminology rather than everyday description. (2 marks)

Q5. (a) Explain what it means to say a design solution is **resolved**. (2 marks) (b) Name two presentation formats a resolved communication design solution could take. (2 marks) (c) Explain why the solution is checked against every criterion in the brief rather than against the designer's own preference. (2 marks)

Q6. (a) Define a design **method**. (1 mark) (b) Classify each of the following as a method, a medium or a material: model-making; a marker pen; kraft card. (3 marks) (c) Explain why a designer annotates work as they go rather than at the end. (2 marks)

Un scaffolded

LOMANDRA COMMUNITY NURSERY — the brief extract and a student's folio pages

Extract from the given brief	The student's folio pages
Communication need A visual identity for the nursery — a mark and a wordmark — applied to plant tags and a banner. Purpose To identify the nursery and to inform buyers that every plant is grown from locally collected seed. Context Read on a 60 mm plant tag pushed into a pot in full sun, and on a 2 m banner at the Saturday market. Audience or users Local gardeners and Landcare volunteers, many over 60, choosing plants at arm's length. Design criteria (extract) 1 legible printed at 15 mm wide on a plant tag 2 readable from 5 m on the market banner 3 no more than two colours (screen-print budget) 4 handed over as files a volunteer can re-use	Develop — the whole ideation page (6 sketches) 1 2 3 4 5 6 Deliver — the concept the student chose "I like this one best — it looks good." "My friend said the green one was nice." (no other annotation appears on either page)

Questions 7–21 refer to the LOMANDRA COMMUNITY NURSERY brief extract and student folio pages shown above, unless otherwise stated.

Q7. Explain why the student's ideation page does not demonstrate divergent thinking, and describe what a divergent page would contain instead. (4 marks)

Q8. Generate a written list of **eight** genuinely different design ideas for the LOMANDRA identity. For each, state in a few words what the mark would be built from. (4 marks)

Q9. Describe **two** divergent methods, other than ideation sketching, that the student could use to widen the range of ideas, and state what each would produce. (4 marks)

Q10. The student's annotation reads "I like this one best — it looks good." Rewrite it as an evaluative annotation for the chosen leaf concept, referring to at least two of the design criteria. (4 marks)

Q11. Describe a convergent method, **other than a scoring matrix**, that the student could use to select one idea from a page of thirty, and explain why the method is convergent. (4 marks)

Q12. Explain how the student would develop the selected idea into three refined variations, stating what would change between them and what would stay the same. (4 marks)

Q13. Criterion 1 requires the mark to be legible printed at 15 mm wide on a plant tag. Describe **two** tests the student could run to check a refined mark against this criterion, and state what each test would reveal. (4 marks)

Q14. Outline the details the student must still resolve before the leaf mark could be called a design **solution**. (4 marks)

Q15. Select an appropriate presentation format for the resolved LOMANDRA solution and justify the choice against the brief. (3 marks)

Q16. A classmate says, "I'll keep sketching new ideas right up to the deadline." Explain the risk this creates for the LOMANDRA project. (3 marks)

Q17. The student chose a favourite after six sketches and spent the remaining time rendering it. Explain the risk of converging this early, using the LOMANDRA design criteria. (3 marks)

Q18. Explain why the VCD design process is described as **iterative**, and describe one situation in the LOMANDRA project that would send the designer back to an earlier method. (4 marks)

Q19. Compare what the designer holds at the end of **Develop** with what they hold at the end of **Deliver**, referring to quantity, level of resolution and the mode of thinking that produced each. (4 marks)

Q20. (*New scenario.*) DIANELLA REFILL is a small business selling refillable laundry and cleaning liquids from a stall inside a shopping centre. Its brief asks for a visual identity applied to a bottle label and a shelf card; the design criteria are that the identity must work in one colour on a recycled label, must be recognised by returning customers from 4 m, and must not look like a supermarket cleaning product. You are at the start of **Develop**. Produce a written plan of the methods you will use to generate, refine and resolve the identity, naming at least **six** methods and, for each, the mode of thinking it belongs to and what it will produce. (8 marks)

Q21. Evaluate the student's LOMANDRA process against the requirements of the **Develop** and **Deliver** stages of the VCD design process. (6 marks)

Questions 22–24 are drawing tasks. They refer to the CORREA REPAIR CAFÉ brief and to the two documented reference marks below. Your answer to each is the sheet of sketches itself, together with what you write on it. Work on layout or copy paper, not in this book, and keep the sheets — Q24 uses them.

Entry	What the brief says
Client	CORREA REPAIR CAFÉ, a volunteer-run repair session held one Saturday a month in a community hall, where people bring a broken lamp, kettle, jumper or bike to be mended at no charge.
Communication need	A visual identity — a mark and a wordmark — applied to a hand-stamped repair tag tied to each item and to an A3 door sign.
Purpose	To identify the session, and to inform people that items are mended and returned rather than sold or replaced.
Context	The tag is read at arm's length as an item is handed back; the door sign is read from about 10 m across a car park by people who have not been before.
Audience or users	Local residents of all ages, most of whom have never been to a repair session and are unsure whether it costs anything.
Design criteria	1. the mark must stay legible stamped at 25 mm on the repair tag; 2. the identity must read as one shape from 10 m on the A3 door sign; 3. the mark must be drawn in a single line weight, with no fine detail and no tonal rendering, so a volunteer can redraw it by hand; 4. one ink on unbleached card; 5. the identity must read as <i>mending</i> , not as <i>retail</i> .

Two documented reference marks — for the inspiration-seeking step only. Neither is a repair café, and neither is there to be copied. Each is a real, dated piece of work that shows a divergent move you can use.

Reference A — a country-of-origin mark, 1986. In 1986 the Australian Government commissioned a mark that would let shoppers identify products made in Australia. It was designed by Melbourne graphic designer Ken Cato and launched that year by the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke. The mark places a stylised kangaroo inside a triangle and is printed in green and gold; Museums Victoria holds a swing tag carrying an early version of it. Ken Cato was commissioned again in 2007 to update the mark. Two features are useful here: the mark **combines** a subject (an animal) with a container (a geometric outer shape), and it is built to be read small, in flat colour, on a product — which is the same problem criterion 1 sets you.

Reference B — a city identity, 2009. In 2009 the City of Melbourne adopted a visual identity designed by the brand consultancy Landor, replacing the separate logos that had accumulated across the council’s services. The published account of the work describes it beginning with an audit of those existing identities and with interviews of council, business and community representatives. The identity is built on one bold letter **M** held in a geometric framework: the letterform stays fixed while its surface carries many different treatments, so each service or campaign can take a different execution without breaking the system. The work received a Wood Pencil in the D&AD awards in 2010. The useful feature here is the **separation of a fixed structure from a varying surface** — one decision held constant so everything else can move.

*Source: Australian Made Campaign, “About the logo”,
<https://australianmade.com.au/why-buy-australian-made/about-the-logo>; Museums Victoria Collections, item 253413,
“Swing Tag — Australian Made Logo, Green & Gold, circa 1986–1998”,
<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/253413>*

*Source: D&AD Awards Archive, “City of Melbourne” (Wood Pencil, Graphic Design, 2010),
<https://www.dandad.org/work/d-ad-awards-archive/city-of-melbourne>; Jason Little (Landor design team), “City of Melbourne” project page, <https://jasonlittle.xyz/project/city-of-melbourne>*

Q22. (*Drawing task — timed.*) First, seek inspiration: write beside each of the two reference marks above the one **quality** you are drawing on — never the shape you would copy. Then apply the divergent strategy **attribute listing** to the CORREA brief. Write a list of at least **six** attributes of *mending* — the action, the tool, the join, the material, the evidence it leaves, the person, the time it takes — and from that list generate **twelve** ideation sketches at about 30 mm each, in **fifteen minutes**, with at least one sketch from every attribute. Number every sketch, do not erase, do not letter neatly, and write beside each sketch the attribute it came from. (8 marks)

Q23. (*Drawing task — timed.*) Same brief, different strategy. Apply **forced association**: choose **four** objects or categories that have nothing to do with repair — for example a road sign, a postage stamp, a constellation, a fingerprint, a weather map, a playing card — and for each one generate **two** ideation sketches of the CORREA mark drawn as though it belonged to that category, giving **eight** sketches in **ten minutes**. Number them on from your Q22 sheet and write the forced pairing beside each. Then state in one sentence what forced association put on the page that attribute listing did not. (6 marks)

Q24. (*Drawing task.*) From your Q22 and Q23 sheets, select **two** sketches and develop each one step further: redraw it at about 60 mm and change exactly **one** thing — the outer shape, the line weight, the crop, positive to negative, or the level of detail. Beside each developed drawing, annotate what you **kept**, what you **changed** and what you **rejected**, giving a reason for each and tying each reason to a numbered CORREA criterion. (6 marks)

Answers

Q1. (a) Develop — divergent; Deliver — convergent. (b) Design ideas → design concepts → design solution. (c) Divergent. **Q2.** (a) Any two of: brainstorming with words and images; mind mapping; ideation sketching; rapid making/collage; seeking inspiration. (b) Twelve sketches of different subjects and approaches, each small, rapid and numbered rather than finished. (c) Nothing has yet been selected against the criteria, refined or tested — see solutions. **Q3.** (a) Idea = one of many rapid divergent options; concept = a selected idea, refined and tested. (b) The design criteria in the brief, and feedback from the critique. (c) See solutions. **Q4.** (a) A strength, a limitation, and the next action — in design terminology, tied to a criterion. (b) See solutions. **Q5.** (a) Every remaining decision settled AND checked against the brief. (b) Any two of: documentation drawings, models, concept boards, mock-ups, high-fidelity prototypes (also accept a style guide). A written rationale is NOT a format — it accompanies one. (c) See solutions. **Q6.** (a) A manual or digital process used to evolve design ideas, concepts and solutions. (b) Model-making = method; marker pen = medium; kraft card = material. (c) See solutions. **Q7.** All six sketches are one leaf idea resized and rotated — repetition, not range. See solutions. **Q8.** Eight ideas built from genuinely different subjects/approaches — see solutions for a model list. **Q9.** Any two of: seeking inspiration; brainstorming with words and images; mind mapping; rapid making/collage; low-fidelity mock-up. See solutions. **Q10.** Strength + limitation + next action, tied to criteria 1–4 — see solutions. **Q11.** Elimination in rounds (or dot voting, or a criteria checklist). Convergent because it evaluates and narrows against agreed criteria. **Q12.** Keep the one idea; change lock-up, proportion, colourway, weight or outer shape one at a time. **Q13.** Any two of: print at 15 mm and read it at arm's length; reduce until it fails and note the size; print in one colour; view on the tag in full sun; squint/blur test. See solutions. **Q14.** Proportion and spacing, clear space, minimum size, the two colours, typeface and weights, the applications, and the hand-over files. **Q15.** e.g. a style guide (accept concept board or mock-up) — justified against criterion 4. See solutions. **Q16.** Nothing is ever refined, tested or resolved; no solution is delivered. **Q17.** Taste selected, not the criteria; the chosen mark may fail criteria 1–3 and there is no fallback. **Q18.** Testing and feedback can send the designer back to generate again; e.g. the leaf fails at 15 mm. **Q19.** Develop: many, unresolved, divergent. Deliver: one, resolved, convergent. See solutions. **Q20.** See fully-worked solutions for a model plan. **Q21.** Not yet meeting either stage: no range in Develop, no selection, refinement, testing or resolution in Deliver. See solutions. **Q22.** (*Drawing task — no single correct sheet.*) A complete response is: a quality, not a shape, written beside each reference mark; a written list of at least six attributes of *mending*; twelve numbered sketches at about 30 mm made inside fifteen minutes, none erased or lettered neatly; every sketch labelled with the attribute it came from; and genuine range rather than one subject redrawn. See solutions for the marking guide and a model sheet. **Q23.** (*Drawing task.*) Four forced pairings named on the page; eight numbered sketches inside ten minutes, two per pairing, each showing the pairing's visual language rather than a picture of the paired object; plus one sentence identifying what changed — the visual system the mark is drawn in, not the subject matter. See solutions. **Q24.** (*Drawing task.*) Two sketches redrawn at about 60 mm with exactly one variable changed in each and the original still identifiable; annotation stating what was kept, changed and rejected, each with a reason in design terminology tied to a numbered criterion. See solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) **Develop**, driven by **divergent** thinking, and **Deliver**, driven by **convergent** thinking. (b) **Design ideas**, then **design concepts**, then the **design solution**. (c) **Divergent** thinking (*only the first mode named is marked*).

Q2. (a) Any two of: **brainstorming with words and images**, **mind mapping**, **ideation sketching (thumbnails)**, **rapid making or collage**, **seeking inspiration** (*1 mark each*). (b) The page carries twelve sketches that are pictures of different things and use different approaches — a hexagon, a bee-and-letter, a flower, a jar, a badge, a hive, a type-only mark, two line drawings, a solid silhouette, a monogram and a full lock-up. Each is small, rapid and numbered rather than finished, which shows the designer was aiming for quantity and range with judgement suspended, not for a resolved mark (*2 marks: the range + the rapid, unjudged manner*). (c) A design **concept** is an idea that has been *selected against the design criteria*, refined through considered decisions and tested. The two circled sketches have only been noticed as promising; no criterion has been applied, no variation has been made and nothing has been printed at 20 mm or checked on kraft stock. They are therefore still design **ideas** — circling marks the point at which the convergent work is about to begin (*2 marks*).

Q3. (a) A design **idea** is one of many experimental, imaginative and rapidly generated options produced by divergent thinking early in Develop, where the designer aims for a broad range rather than a right answer. A design **concept** is an idea that convergent thinking has *selected* for its potential and then *refined* — with considered, purposeful decisions about the elements and principles and about methods, media and materials — and that is being tested and

evaluated against the brief (2 marks: a congruent two-sided distinction). (b) The **design criteria** stated in the brief, and the **feedback** received when the ideas were presented for critique (1 mark each). (c) Refining one selected idea concentrates the remaining time on the direction that the criteria already showed to be the strongest, and each variation then tests one decision at a time — the lock-up, the proportion, the colourway — so the designer learns why one version works. Starting a new idea throws that evidence away and returns the project to the divergent stage with less time left, so the new idea reaches the deadline untested and unresolved. ∴ refinement builds resolution, whereas restarting resets it (2 marks).

Q4. (a) A **strength**, a **limitation**, and the **next action** — each expressed in design terminology and each tied to a numbered design criterion (1 mark each). (b) Design terminology names the *cause* of an effect, which everyday description cannot. “It stands out” states an impression; “the saturated amber shape against the unbleached ground gives strong hue contrast, so the mark still reads at 3 m (criterion 2)” names the element and the principle, states the mechanism and points at the criterion it satisfies. Terminology therefore makes the annotation an argument that can be checked by someone else, rather than an opinion (2 marks).

Q5. (a) A solution is **resolved** when every remaining decision has been settled — proportion and spacing, clear space and minimum size, colour, typeface and weights, and how the identity behaves on each application — *and* when the outcome has been checked against every criterion in the brief. Resolution is measured against the brief, not against how finished the work looks (2 marks: details settled + measured against the criteria). (b) Any two of:

documentation drawings, models, concept boards, mock-ups or high-fidelity prototypes; a **style guide** is also accepted for a visual identity, because it presents the resolved artwork together with the rules for using it (1 mark each). A **written rationale** is **not** a presentation format: the study design has the presentation *accompanied by* a written rationale, so “a mock-up and a written rationale” names one format plus its accompaniment and earns 1 mark, not 2. (c) The criteria were agreed in the brief before any design existed, so they are the only shared standard the client, the designer and the audience’s needs are all represented in. Checking against preference tests nothing, because the designer’s preference moved with the work; checking against the criteria can show a solution *fails* — for example a mark the designer likes that closes up at 20 mm — which is exactly the information the check exists to produce (2 marks).

Q6. (a) A **method** is a manual or digital **process** used to evolve design ideas, concepts and solutions — for example drawing, collage, printing, photography, model-making or prototyping (1 mark). (b) Model-making = a **method**; a marker pen = a **medium**; kraft card = a **material** (1 mark each). (c) Annotation written at the moment a decision is made records *why* the decision was taken, while the alternatives and the test result are still in front of the designer. Written afterwards it becomes a description of what the work looks like, because the reasoning has been forgotten — and it is the reasoning, not the appearance, that the annotation exists to carry (2 marks).

Q7. The page is **repetition, not range**. All six sketches are the same idea — a single pointed leaf — drawn at different sizes and rotations. Cover any one of them and the page still says exactly the same thing, which is the test that a divergent page must pass. Changing scale and angle is a refinement move, made later on a selected idea; it does not widen the field of ideas, so the student reaches the convergent stage with only one option and therefore nothing to select between. A divergent page would instead explore genuinely different subjects and approaches for the same communication need: a seed, a seed-pod or a root system rather than a leaf; a hand or a pot to signal the growing; the tussock silhouette of the plant rather than one blade; a monogram or a type-only mark; a solid silhouette in place of a line drawing; a mark built from an outer container shape. It would also be larger — twenty to forty small, rapid, numbered sketches, unerased, made with judgement suspended (4 marks: the fault named as repetition with evidence from the page + a described alternative showing genuine range and divergent working).

Q8. (Model — accept any eight that are genuinely different in subject or approach.) (i) a **seed** — a single seed shape, signalling “grown from local seed”; (ii) a **seed-pod** opening, built from three curved shapes; (iii) the **tussock silhouette** of the whole plant rather than one blade; (iv) a **root system** below a ground line, signalling establishment; (v) a pair of **hands** holding a tube-stock pot; (vi) a **pot** in outline with a growing shoot inside it; (vii) a **type-only** wordmark in which one letter is cut to suggest a blade; (viii) an **L monogram** built from two straight blades crossing. Also accept: a contour or map shape for “local”; a water droplet; a volunteer’s trowel; a repeating pattern block of tussocks (4 marks: eight ideas, each a distinct subject or approach rather than a variation of one; half marks lost if two or more are the same idea restated). The **BURSARIA ideation page** earlier in this subtopic is the model for the kind of range being asked for here — different subjects and different approaches on one page, not one subject redrawn.

Q9. (Any two, described, with the output stated.) **Brainstorming with words and images** — the student lists every word the brief attaches to the nursery (local, seed, tube stock, volunteer, tussock, indigenous, dry, propagate, Saturday) and then draws each word rather than only writing it. *Produces:* a vocabulary of different subjects, which is exactly what the leaf page lacked. **Seeking inspiration** — the student collects visual references widely (other nursery and Landcare identities, seed-packet printing, botanical illustration, and marks from unrelated categories), noting beside each reference the quality being drawn on and acknowledging its source at the point of use. *Produces:* an inspiration board plus a written note of the qualities being pursued. Also accept **mind mapping** (branching outward from one central word to reach associations a list never reaches), **rapid making or collage** (tearing and cutting shapes, which produces bolder silhouettes than a pencil finds and suits a two-colour screen print), or building a **low-fidelity mock-up** of the 60 mm tag (4 marks: two named methods, each with a procedure and a stated output).

Q10. *Model rewrite:* “The leaf mark is a single solid silhouette with no thin internal lines, so it prints cleanly in one colour and holds at 15 mm on the plant tag (criterion 1); the pale midrib is reversed out of the green rather than printed in a second ink, so the whole mark is one colour and sits inside the screen-print limit (criterion 3). Its limitation is that the outline is a generic pointed leaf that does not say *local seed* or *indigenous*, which is the purpose the brief states, and at 5 m on the banner the silhouette flattens into an undifferentiated blade (criterion 2). Next step: test the mark beside two alternative subjects — a seed-pod and the tussock silhouette — at 5 m before committing to the leaf.” (4 marks: a strength and a limitation, both in design terminology, both tied to numbered criteria, plus a next action; the original annotation’s fault — an unsupported preference and a second-hand opinion — replaced by evidence.)

Q11. A suitable method is **elimination in rounds against a criteria checklist**. The student writes the four criteria on a card and passes over the thirty sketches once, striking out every sketch that clearly cannot meet one of them — anything with thin internal lines or fine detail fails criterion 1 at 15 mm, anything needing three or more colours fails criterion 3. That leaves perhaps ten. A second pass keeps only those that also say something about *locally grown seed*, the purpose in the brief, leaving three or four; a final pass, with the surviving sketches redrawn at 15 mm side by side, selects one. (Also accept **dot voting** in a critique, or clustering the sketches into directions and choosing the strongest direction first.) The method is **convergent** because it is analytical, critical and comparative: it does not add anything new, it evaluates what exists against an agreed standard and narrows many options to one, ending in a decision that can be justified (4 marks: the method described as a procedure + why it is convergent, tied to comparison against the criteria).

Q12. The student keeps the **selected idea itself fixed** — the same subject, drawn in the same way — and changes **one variable at a time** across the three versions. For example: variation A places the mark above a centred wordmark as a stacked lock-up for the plant tag; variation B holds the same mark inside a circular badge, giving it one fixed outer shape for the banner; variation C sets it horizontally beside the wordmark for a wide format. Across the three, the one element that changes is the **lock-up and composition** — how the mark, the wordmark and any containing shape are arranged. The **proportion of mark to wordmark**, the **colourway** (the mark printed in green, or reversed out of a solid green panel so it reads as the tag stock) and the **line weight** are all held constant, so each stays available as the next single variable to test once a lock-up has been chosen. What must stay the same is the underlying idea, so all three remain versions of one concept rather than three separate ideas — that is what makes the comparison meaningful, because any difference in performance at 15 mm can be attributed to the variable that was changed (4 marks: what changes, what stays fixed, and why one-variable variation is the point). Panel 2 of the **BURSARIA refinement** figure is the model drawing for this answer: one flower, three lock-ups.

Q13. (Any two, with what each reveals.) **Test 1 — print at the real size on the real stock.** Output the mark at exactly 15 mm wide, in one colour, on the tag stock, and read it at arm’s length in daylight. *Reveals:* whether the internal gaps, the midrib and the wordmark survive at size, or whether they fill in and the mark becomes an undifferentiated blob. **Test 2 — reduce until it fails.** Print the mark at 25, 20, 15 and 10 mm in a row and mark the size at which the detail disappears. *Reveals:* the mark’s true **minimum reproduction size**, which is a detail the solution must specify, and how much margin the design has above the 15 mm requirement. Also accept: printing in a single colour to check the figure-ground reading; pushing a printed tag into a pot outdoors in full sun to test tonal contrast in glare; a blur or squint test to check the silhouette still reads (4 marks: two tests described as procedures + what each would reveal).

Q14. Before it is a **design solution** the student must resolve: the **proportion and internal spacing** of the mark and the ratio of mark to wordmark; the **clear space** around the mark and its **minimum reproduction size** (which criterion 1 sets at no more than 15 mm); the **two colours** exactly, chosen for tonal separation on the tag stock and within the screen-printing limit (criterion 3); the **typeface, weights and letter-spacing** of the wordmark; how the identity is

applied to both named outcomes — the 60 mm plant tag and the 2 m banner — so that it reads at both arm's length and 5 m (criterion 2); and the **hand-over files** in a form a volunteer can re-use without a designer (criterion 4). Each of these must then be checked back against the criterion it serves *(4 marks: a spread of resolved details covering the mark itself, the applications and the hand-over, tied to the criteria)*.

Q15. A **style guide** is the appropriate presentation format. It presents the resolved identity together with the rules that make it re-usable — the lock-ups, the clear space, the minimum size of 15 mm, the two colours and the type — and criterion 4 requires the solution to be handed over as something a volunteer can re-use without a designer. A concept board or a mock-up would present the identity persuasively but would not carry those rules, so the nursery would have no way of applying the mark correctly to next season's tags. *(Accept a mock-up or concept board if justified against a different criterion — for example a mock-up of the tag in a pot and the banner in place, justified as the only way to test criteria 1 and 2 in context — provided the justification is tied to the brief.) (3 marks: a named format + a justification tied to a stated criterion.)*

Q16. Generating new ideas until the deadline leaves the whole convergent half of the process undone. Nothing would be selected against the four criteria, nothing refined into variations, nothing printed at 15 mm or viewed at 5 m, and nothing resolved — so the student would hand up a page of untested ideas rather than a design solution, and would have no evidence that any of them can meet the brief. Divergence has to stop for the work to become designable: the ideas are the *material*, not the outcome *(3 marks: the consequence for the outcome + the reason divergence must end)*.

Q17. Choosing after six sketches means the selection was made by taste, not by the criteria — there was no field wide enough for the criteria to discriminate between. The risk is that the chosen mark fails a criterion only discovered later: a finely drawn leaf may close up at 15 mm on the tag (criterion 1), flatten into an unreadable blade at 5 m on the banner (criterion 2), or need a third colour to keep the midrib visible (criterion 3). Because the rest of the time went into rendering rather than generating, there is no second direction to fall back on, so the failure cannot be recovered before the deadline *(3 marks: taste replacing the criteria + a specific criterion at risk + no fallback)*.

Q18. The process is **iterative** because the phases are revisited rather than completed once: what a designer learns while refining or testing can change what they know about the problem, so they return to an earlier phase and re-run a method with that new knowledge. In the LOMANDRA project, the clearest trigger is a **failed size test**: if the refined leaf mark is printed at 15 mm and the midrib and internal gaps fill in, the mark cannot meet criterion 1, and no amount of further refinement of that drawing will fix a subject that has too much internal detail. The designer therefore goes back to the **ideation** method and generates a new field of simpler, bolder subjects — a seed, a pod, a tussock silhouette — before converging again. Looping back like this is the process working as intended, not evidence that the earlier work was wasted, because the failed test is what identified the constraint *(4 marks: iteration defined as revisiting phases + a specific LOMANDRA trigger + the method returned to)*.

Q19. Both stages act on the same brief and both use methods drawn from the same list, but what the designer holds at the end of each is different in three ways. At the end of **Develop** the designer holds **many** pieces of work — twenty to forty ideation sketches, collages and rapid mock-ups — at a **low level of resolution**: they are experimental, rapidly generated design **ideas** that capture the essence of a direction and have not been measured against anything. They were produced by **divergent** thinking, with judgement suspended. At the end of **Deliver** the designer holds **one** piece of work at the **highest level of resolution**: a design **solution** whose proportion, spacing, colour and type are settled, which has been applied across every outcome named in the brief and checked against every criterion. It was produced by **convergent** thinking — selecting, refining, testing and resolving. ∴ Develop ends with more material than it started with and Deliver ends with far less, but with the one thing that can actually be given to the client *(4 marks: quantity, resolution and mode for each side, drawn as a congruent comparison)*.

Q20. *(Model plan — accept any plan that names at least six methods, correctly attributes the mode, and states an output for each.)*

Generate — Develop, divergent.

1. **Seek inspiration.** Collect references from refill and bulk-goods stalls, apothecary and hardware labelling, and single-colour print such as stamps and stencils — deliberately avoiding supermarket cleaning packaging, since the brief rules that look out. Acknowledge the source of each reference at the point it is used. *Produces:* an inspiration board and a written note of the qualities being pursued (plain, utilitarian, hand-printed).

2. **Brainstorm with words and images.** List the words the brief attaches to DIANELLA — refill, return, decant, measure, bring-your-own, bottle, tap, litre, again — and draw each rather than only writing it. *Produces:* a vocabulary of subjects, so the page is not eight versions of a bottle.
3. **Ideation sketching (thumbnails).** Sketch at about 30 mm, numbered, uneraser, filling the page, aiming for at least thirty ideas across genuinely different subjects and approaches — a tap, a measuring line, a return arrow, a berry, a monogram, a type-only mark, a solid silhouette. *Produces:* a wide field of design ideas to select from.

Refine — Deliver, convergent.

4. **Select against the design criteria.** Rule a selection matrix with the three criteria across the top and score every sketch, then present the shortlist for critique and use the feedback. *Produces:* one selected idea and a written reason for the selection.
5. **Make variations of that one idea.** Change one variable at a time — the lock-up, the ratio of mark to wordmark, the weight, the outer shape — keeping the idea itself fixed. *Produces:* three comparable concepts.
6. **Test in the real conditions.** Print each concept in one colour on recycled label stock, put it on a bottle and view it from 4 m on a shelf, and check it beside a supermarket product to confirm it does not read as one. *Produces:* evidence against criteria 1, 2 and 3 — and, if a concept fails, a return to method 3.

Resolve — Deliver, convergent.

7. **Resolve the details and apply the identity.** Fix proportion, clear space, minimum reproduction size, the single ink colour and the type; apply the identity to both the bottle label and the shelf card so they read as one business. *Produces:* the resolved design solution.
8. **Present and check.** Present as a mock-up of the labelled bottle and shelf card on a concept board with a short written rationale, and record a check against each of the three criteria in turn. *Produces:* the presented solution plus the evidence that it meets the brief.

(8 marks: at least six methods named; each correctly attributed to generate, refine or resolve and to divergent or convergent thinking; each with a stated output; the plan running in a defensible order and referring to the DIANELLA criteria rather than to methods in general.)

Q21. The student's process **does not yet meet the requirements of either stage**. There is one genuine strength: the six sketches are rapid and informal rather than over-finished, which is the right *manner* for Develop. Everything else falls short. In **Develop**, the stage requires a broad range of imaginative ideas generated with judgement suspended; instead the page carries a single leaf idea resized and rotated six times, so no range exists, no other subject was explored, and no other method — inspiration seeking, word-and-image brainstorming, mind mapping, collage — appears to have been used at all. In **Deliver**, the stage requires the designer to reflect critically, use the design criteria together with feedback to select ideas with the most potential, refine them into concepts and test them. Nothing here does that: the concept was chosen because the student liked it, no variation of the selected idea was made, and there is no evidence of the mark being printed at 15 mm for criterion 1, viewed at 5 m for criterion 2, checked against the two-colour limit for criterion 3, or prepared as re-usable files for criterion 4. The annotation compounds the problem — “it looks good” and a friend's opinion are preferences, not evaluations, so nothing in the folio records *why* a decision was made. ∴ the folio holds one unrefined design idea rather than a design concept or solution; to meet the two stages the student would need to re-run the ideation with a wider set of subjects, select against the four criteria using a named convergent technique, refine the selection into tested variations, and annotate each with a strength, a limitation and a next action (6 marks: strengths and limitations, specific evidence from both folio pages, the requirements of each stage applied, and an overall judgement with a stated remedy).

Q22. (Drawing task. There is no single correct sheet, so what follows is a marking guide describing the expected work, followed by a written description of a model sheet. The marks are for the strategy being visible in the drawing, not for drawing skill.)

Marking guide — what separates a strong response from a weak one.

Worth	What a strong response shows	What a weak response does instead
2 — count and pace	Twelve numbered sketches, all present inside the fifteen minutes,	Four or five sketches, drawn slowly and finished carefully. Three good

Worth	What a strong response shows	What a weak response does instead
	each about 30 mm, drawn quickly, nothing erased, no neat lettering.	drawings is not a divergent page; the time limit is part of the method, because a sketch that costs seconds can be abandoned.
3 — evidence of the named strategy	A written list of at least six distinct attributes of <i>mending</i> , and every sketch labelled with the attribute it came from, so each drawing is traceable back to the list.	An unlabelled page with no attribute list. This cannot earn the marks even if the sketches are good, because the question asks the student to apply a strategy , and an unlabelled page is indistinguishable from doodling.
2 — range, not repetition	Sketches that are pictures of different <i>things</i> and sketches that change the <i>approach</i> — a silhouette, a monogram, a type-only mark, a container. Apply the cover test: cover any one sketch and the page must lose something.	Twelve versions of a spanner at different angles — one idea drawn twelve times, which is exactly the fault Q7 identifies in the LOMANDRA folio.
1 — seeking inspiration	A quality written beside each reference mark (“a subject held inside a container so the outer shape stays constant”; “one fixed structure, many surfaces”).	A shape written down instead of a quality (“use a triangle”; “use a big letter”), which is a plan to copy, not to be inspired.

A model sheet, described. The attribute list might read: *the action* (stitching, gluing, soldering, tightening); *the tool* (needle, screwdriver, iron); *the join* (a seam, a splice, a patch, a knot); *the material* (thread, solder, tape); *the evidence it leaves* (a darn, a rivet, a visible mend); *the person* (a pair of hands over a table); *the time* (a Saturday, a month); *the object* (lamp, kettle, jumper, bike). Twelve sketches drawn from it: (1) a needle as a single line with a thread loop — *tool*; (2) a running stitch crossing a break in a line — *the join*; (3) a darn drawn as a small woven square, solid — *evidence*; (4) two hands cupped around a small object — *person*; (5) a kettle silhouette with one seam across it — *object*; (6) a screwdriver and a needle crossed as a paired monogram — *tool*, approach changed to a monogram; (7) a broken circle closed by three stitches — *the join*, abstracted to a symbol; (8) a bike chain link redrawn as a ligature inside the wordmark — *object*, approach changed to type; (9) a solder bead joining two wires as a solid silhouette — *material*; (10) a letter C whose gap is closed by one stitch being pulled tight — *the action*, approach changed to type only; (11) an irregular patch shape with four corner stitches used as a container holding the wordmark — *the join*, approach changed to a container; (12) an arrow that leaves and returns to the same point, for *bring it back* — *time*, abstracted.

Sketches 1–5 are pictures of different things; 6–12 change the approach rather than the subject — monogram, symbol, type, silhouette, container. That is the same balance the **BURSARIA ideation page** earlier in this subtopic demonstrates, and it is what earns the range marks.

Q23. (*Drawing task — marking guide and a model sheet, described.*)

Marking guide.

Worth	What a strong response shows	What a weak response does instead
2 — count and pace	Eight numbered sketches inside ten minutes, numbered on from the Q22 sheet, two for each of four pairings, with each pairing written on the page.	Fewer pairings with more sketches each, which collapses the strategy: the point of four unrelated categories is four unrelated visual languages.
2 — the pairing doing work	Each sketch takes on the paired category’s visual language : a mark drawn “as a road sign” adopts a	A drawing of the paired object — an actual road sign with a spanner beside it. Forced association pairs

Worth	What a strong response shows	What a weak response does instead
	fixed outer shape, a flat two-colour reading and one pictogram inside.	the brief's subject with the category's language; it does not add the object to the page.
2 — the comparison sentence	A sentence naming what changed: the strategy changed the visual system, not the subject.	"It gave me more ideas", which states a quantity and identifies nothing.

A model sheet, described. *Road sign* — (13) a needle-and-thread pictogram reversed out of a solid triangle, all detail removed to pictogram weight; (14) a chevron built from a single stitch, read as *repair this way*. *Postage stamp* — (15) the wordmark inside a perforated rectangle with the mark franked across it; (16) an upright stamp format holding a kettle silhouette. *Constellation* — (17) the object drawn only as dots joined by straight lines, so the mend **is** the line between two points; (18) the same structure with dots placed only at the break points. *Fingerprint* — (19) concentric ridge lines interrupted and re-joined, so the mend is the interruption; (20) a thumbprint-shaped patch used as a container for the wordmark.

The comparison sentence, modelled. "Attribute listing gave me more *subjects* drawn from the meaning of mending, so the page stayed literal — a needle was still a needle; forced association changed the *visual system* the mark is drawn in — pictogram-in-a-container, perforated frame, dot-and-line — so the same subjects came back in languages I would not have reached from the attribute list." ∴ a divergent page needs both kinds of move: one strategy widens the **subject matter**, the other widens the **approach**, and a page generated with only one strategy is narrow in whichever direction that strategy does not reach.

Q24. (*Drawing task — marking guide and two model annotations.*)

Marking guide.

Worth	What a strong response shows	What a weak response does instead
2 — development, not tidying	Each sketch redrawn at about 60 mm with exactly one variable changed, and the original still recognisable in the new drawing, so the change can be attributed.	The same sketch redrawn more neatly and larger. Redrawing more neatly is not refinement — see the <i>Watch-out — refining is not tidying up</i> . Changing four things at once is also weak, because nothing can then be attributed to any one change.
3 — annotation content	Kept, changed and rejected each stated separately, each with a reason, each pointed at a numbered CORREA criterion.	Two of the three stated, or all three stated with no reason. "Changed the outer shape" records an event; it is the <i>because</i> that is being marked.
1 — design terminology	Elements and principles named, with the effect stated — figure-ground, line weight, silhouette, contrast, proportion.	Everyday description — "it looks cleaner", "this one is nicer" — which states an impression and names no cause.

Model annotation 1 — sketch 7 (broken circle closed by three stitches), developed at 60 mm; the variable changed is the level of detail. *Kept*: the single-weight line, because criterion 3 requires a volunteer to be able to redraw the mark with one pen, and a line of constant weight is the only mark a hand can repeat consistently. *Changed*: the three short stitches reduced to two and lengthened, because when the sketch was stamped down to 25 mm the three strokes closed into one blur and the figure-ground reading of the gap — which is the whole idea — was lost (criterion 1). *Rejected*: setting the mark inside a solid disc. A solid fill is not a single line weight and a hand stamp will not lay it evenly on unbleached card without a second impression (criterion 3), and the badge silhouette it produces reads as a retail seal rather than as a mend (criterion 5).

Model annotation 2 — sketch 19 (interrupted fingerprint ridges), developed at 60 mm; the variable changed is the crop. *Kept*: the interruption itself, because the break-and-rejoin is what carries *mending* without a literal tool (criterion 5). *Changed*: the drawing cropped to three ridges instead of nine, because at 10 m on the door sign nine fine

concentric lines merge into a flat tone and the identity stops reading as one shape (criterion 2). *Rejected*: adding a needle across the ridges to make the meaning explicit, because a second subject introduces fine detail the single line weight cannot carry at 25 mm (criteria 1 and 3), and the mark already states the idea structurally.

Note that a strong kept / changed / rejected annotation lands the same three moves as the **evaluative annotation** taught earlier — *kept* names a strength, *changed* answers a limitation, and *rejected* records a decision with its reason — which is why the two questions are marked to the same standard: an effect named in design terminology, tied to a numbered criterion.

Chapter 3 Generating, refining & resolving — 3B Manual & digital methods, media and materials

Theory

In 3A you met the **methods used to generate, refine and resolve** a communication design solution — brainstorming, ideation sketching, refinement, resolution. This subtopic is about the **toolkit** you carry out that work with. The key knowledge is:

manual and digital methods, media and materials used to **develop** and **produce** communication design solutions.

Read that dot point carefully, because it contains two separate jobs. **Developing** is the messy, exploratory work of the Develop stage — many ideas, quickly, cheaply, changed often. **Producing** is the Deliver stage — making the one resolved solution real, accurately and repeatably, in a form someone else can print, post or install. The same designer will use quite different methods, media and materials for those two jobs, and the key skill you are assessed on is being able to **select** the right ones for a specified context and purpose — and then **justify** the choice.

Three words, kept apart. “Methods, media and materials” is not one idea repeated three times. It is three different questions with three different answers.

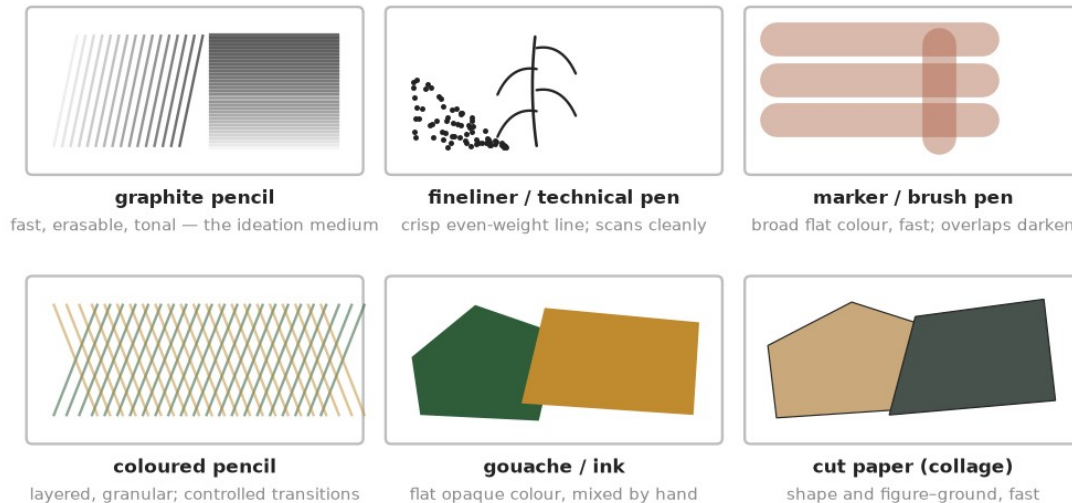
METHOD	MEDIA	MATERIALS
<i>what you DID</i>	<i>the APPLICATION you made it WITH</i>	<i>what you made it ON or OUT OF</i>
MANUAL · freehand ideation sketching · drawing with instruments · collage and cut paper · printmaking (lino, screen print) · model-making and mock-ups DIGITAL · vector drawing · raster painting, image editing · page layout · digital photography · digital typesetting	MANUAL · graphite and coloured pencil · fineliner and technical pen · marker and brush pen · ink, gouache, watercolour · pastel and charcoal DIGITAL · vector-drawing software · image-editing / painting apps · page-layout software · online design platforms · at output: toner, inkjet, ink	FOR DEVELOPING · layout bond, cartridge paper · tracing paper, grid paper · card, greyboard, foam board FOR PRODUCING · uncoated and coated stock · recycled kraft board · acetate, vinyl, fabric, timber · the screen — touchscreen or digital interface

Three different questions — three different answers. Never write “I used digital”: that names none of them.

- A **method** is the **process or technique** you use. Freehand ideation sketching is a method. So is collage, printmaking, model-making, vector drawing, page layout and digital photography. Methods are either **manual** (made by hand, with physical tools) or **digital** (made with software, on a device).
- A **medium** (plural **media**) is the **manual or digital application you make the marks with**. Graphite, ink, marker, gouache and pastel are manual media. Digital media are the **software, apps and online platforms** the work is made in — vector-drawing software, image-editing and painting apps, page-layout software; at output, the medium becomes toner, inkjet ink or press ink. Media, like methods, come in both families: *manual* media and *digital* media.
- A **material** is the **surface or substrate the design is made on or out of** — layout bond, cartridge paper, tracing paper, card, board, uncoated or coated stock, kraft, acetate, vinyl, fabric, timber, and the **touchscreen or digital interface**. Work made in software has a material too: the substrate is the **screen** itself, and its size, pixel density and emitted light are just as much a design constraint as the weight of a sheet of paper.

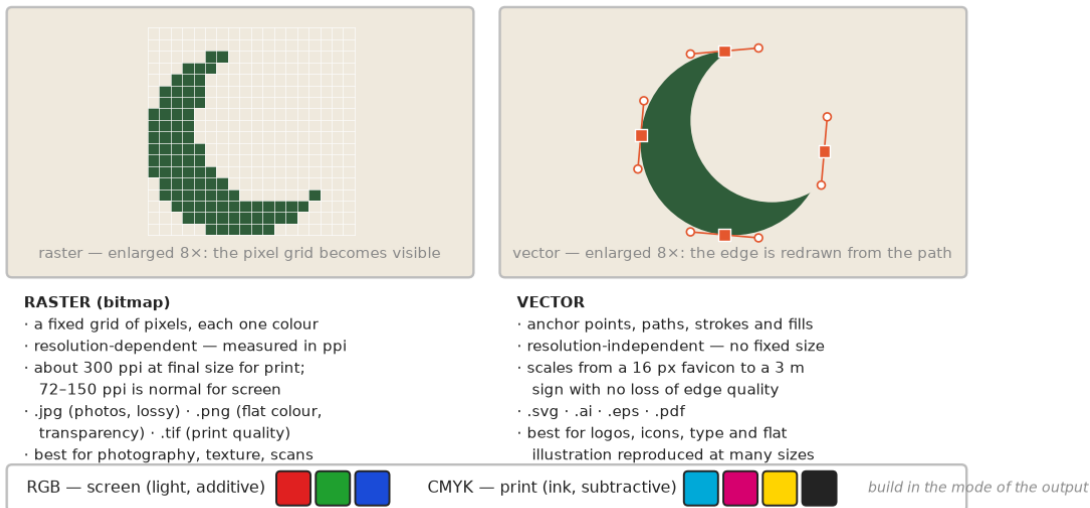
The quick test: **method = what you did** · **media = the application you made it with** · **material = what you made it on or out of**. “I used digital” answers none of the three, which is why it earns nothing.

Manual methods and media, and what each is good for. Manual work is not the old-fashioned option you do before the real work starts — it is chosen because of what it does better.



- **Graphite pencil on layout bond** is the ideation medium: fast, erasable, tonal, and cheap enough that a bad idea costs nothing. Its very roughness is useful, because a rough drawing still looks unfinished and so still invites change.
- A **fineliner** or **technical pen** gives a crisp, even-weight line. It is the medium for the refined drawing, because a clean black line on white **scans cleanly** and can be traced or auto-traced into vector paths without fighting a grey, broken edge.
- **Markers** and **brush pens** lay broad, flat colour very fast, and overlapping strokes darken, so tone can be built in seconds. This makes them ideal for roughs presented at meeting scale, but they cannot be erased, so commitment is high.
- **Coloured pencil** is layered and granular, giving fine control over gradual transitions — the medium of choice when you need to render a surface or a curved form by hand.
- **Gouache and ink** give flat, opaque colour that can be mixed by hand, so a palette can be tested physically rather than trusted to a screen.
- **Collage and cut paper** let you explore **shape, figure-ground and composition** without your drawing skill getting in the way. Because you cut and move whole areas rather than drawing edges, it produces shapes you would not have drawn.
- **Printmaking — lino cut and screen print** — is a manual **production** method: a limited number of flat colours, printed one at a time and registered to each other, and repeatable across an edition, with the texture of the ink and the paper visible in the result. **Mono printing** is the one that behaves differently: each pull lifts the ink off the plate, so it gives a **single unique impression** that cannot be editioned or registered as repeated colour passes. That makes it a way of *developing* — exploring mark, texture and accident — rather than a production method.
- **Drawing instruments** — ruler, set square, compasses, ellipse template, French curve — produce precise geometry by hand, which matters when a mark must be constructed rather than sketched.

Digital methods and media. Everything digital divides into two families, and knowing which one you are working in decides what your artwork can and cannot do.



- **Raster (bitmap)** artwork is a fixed **grid of pixels**, each holding one colour. It is **resolution-dependent**: the file contains a set number of pixels, so enlarging it spreads those pixels over more space and the edges soften or stair-step. Resolution is measured in **ppi** (pixels per inch) **at final size** — about **300 ppi** for print, and 72–150 ppi for screen. Common formats are **.jpg** (photographs; compression loses data), **.png** (flat colour and transparency) and **.tif** (print quality). Raster is the right family for photography, painterly texture, and any scanned manual artwork.
- **Vector** artwork is described mathematically, by **anchor points, paths, strokes and fills**. It is **resolution-independent** — there is no fixed pixel count, so the same file redraws perfectly at 16 pixels or at three metres. Common formats are **.svg**, **.ai**, **.eps** and **.pdf**. Vector is the right family for logos, icons, type and flat illustration: anything that must be reproduced at many sizes and stay identical every time.
- **Page layout** assembles type and images into a document with a grid, columns and consistent margins. **Digital photography and image editing** capture, crop, mask and colour-correct. **Digital typesetting** sets the type and, for a logo, converts letterforms to outlines so the mark no longer depends on the font being installed.

Those are the **methods**. In every case the **medium** is the application the method is carried out in — vector-drawing software, an image-editing or painting app, page-layout software, an online design platform — and the **material** is the **screen**, the touchscreen or digital interface being worked on. Name the application, not the family: write “vector-drawing software”, never just “digital”.

Colour modes. **RGB** is **additive** — red, green and blue *light*, mixed on a screen; adding all three gives white. **CMYK** is **subtractive** — cyan, magenta, yellow and black *ink* laid on paper, each layer absorbing light. They do not cover the same range of colours: the most saturated RGB greens, oranges and blues cannot be reproduced in CMYK ink, so a design built in RGB and then printed will come back duller than the screen promised. Build in the mode of the output, and check a printed proof.

Digital is not “better”. Digital gives precision, unlimited undo, exact repetition, scalable output and instant sharing. It also slows early ideation, because software makes you choose settings before you have chosen an idea, and it makes half-formed ideas **look finished**, which quietly discourages a critique group from suggesting changes. Most professional processes therefore run manual first and digital second — and hand back and forth as needed.

Materials, and why they are a design decision. A material is not packaging for the design; it changes what the design *is*.

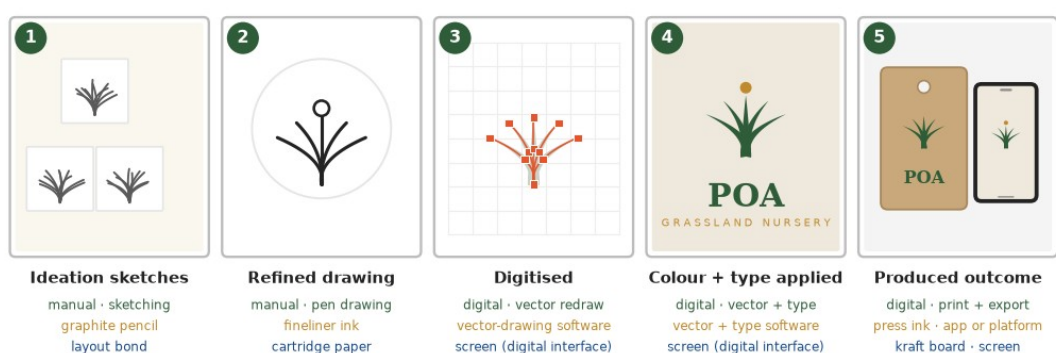
- **Weight** is measured in **gsm** (grams per square metre): 80 gsm copy paper, 170 gsm for a poster, 300–400 gsm for a carton or a swing tag.
- **Coated** stock has a sealed surface, so ink sits on top: colours stay saturated and fine detail holds. **Uncoated** stock absorbs ink, so colours soften and very fine lines can fill in — but the surface feels natural and can be written on.

- **Recycled kraft board** is flecked, warm-brown and unbleached. It cannot show a clean white, and every colour printed on it shifts warmer — so a design for kraft is usually built as one or two flat colours, not as a full-colour photograph.
- Material carries **meaning** before a word is read: uncoated recycled board connotes honesty and natural production; heavy coated board with a smooth finish connotes precision and expense.
- The **screen** is a material too. It emits light rather than reflecting it, so colours read brighter and higher in contrast; it comes in many sizes; and the viewer is often holding it at arm's length in daylight.

Selecting and justifying — the move this subtopic is built on. The key skill is to *select and use a range of appropriate manual and digital methods, media, materials, design elements and principles to develop visual language for a specified context and purpose* — the elements and principles were covered in 2C, and the methods, media and materials are the half you are working on here. A justification that earns full marks always has three parts:

1. **Name the specific method, medium or material.** Not “digital”, not “I drew it” — “redrawn as vector paths”, “fineliner on cartridge paper”, “350 gsm uncoated recycled board”.
2. **State the property that matters.** A fineliner gives an even-weight line that scans cleanly; vector artwork is resolution-independent; uncoated board absorbs ink and softens colour.
3. **Link that property to the stage, the brief, the audience or the output.** So thirty thumbnails take ten minutes; so the mark still reads at 16 pixels; so the pack signals a natural product to a shopper who is looking for one.

Miss part 3 and you have described a tool rather than justified a decision.



DEVELOP — fast, cheap, plentiful, easy to change

► DELIVER — precise, consistent, reproducible, output-ready

The sequence above follows one original mark — **POA Grassland Nursery**, a small business propagating native grasses — from first sketch to produced outcome, and shows the methods, media and materials changing as the job changes.

Stage 1 — ideation sketches. Manual freehand sketching, in **graphite pencil** on **layout bond**. Doubled, searching lines show the designer trying several tussock shapes at once. Cheap, fast, easy to reject. **Stage 2 — refined drawing.** Still manual, but now with instruments as well as freehand: a light pencil circle sets the containing geometry, and the blades are drawn in **fineliner ink** on **cartridge paper**. One idea, resolved, in a clean black line. **Stage 3 — digitised.** The drawing is **scanned** and redrawn as **vector paths** in **vector-drawing software**; the anchor points are visible on the construction grid. The medium has changed from a pen to an application, and the material from a sheet of paper to the **screen** — the digital interface the designer is now working on. **Stage 4 — colour and type applied.** The same software, still on screen: flat fills in the signature deep green with an ochre seed point, and the wordmark set beneath. **Stage 5 — produced outcome.** The one master file feeds two different outputs: a **CMYK** print on **kraft swing tags** for the nursery benches, and an **RGB** export for the **screen**. Same mark, same master file — but two output media (press ink on the tag; the app or online platform the export is viewed in) and two materials (kraft board and the screen).

Notice the direction of travel across the sequence: **Develop** wants fast, cheap, plentiful and easy to change; **Deliver** wants precise, consistent, reproducible and output-ready. A designer who vectorises at Stage 1 wastes hours refining ideas that should have been thrown away; a designer who is still sketching at Stage 5 has nothing a printer can use.

The hand-off. Moving manual work into digital form is itself a method, and it has settings you should be able to name. Scan or photograph the drawing at **300 ppi or more at the size it will be used**, in even light with no shadow; increase the contrast so the line separates cleanly from the paper; then either place the scan as raster artwork, or **redraw it as vector paths** over the top, which is what a logo needs. The traffic runs the other way too: printing a digital layout and marking it up by hand is often the fastest way to critique it.

Annotating your decisions. The key skill asks you to *annotate design ideas and concepts using design terminology to explain and evaluate design decisions*. A complete annotation about methods, media and materials names the choice, gives the reason, and evaluates the result — for example:

Marker rough on layout bond. Chosen because the broad nib forces me to work at the size the mark will be printed and stops me adding detail this early. Strength: the silhouette reads at a glance. Limitation: the nib cannot hold the fine seedhead, so this version loses the detail that identifies the grass — I will resolve that in fineliner before digitising.

Units 3 & 4 preview — beyond the Units 1&2 study design. Two things in this subtopic run ahead of Units 1&2 and are flagged so you know they are not examined here.

(1) Analysing methods, media and materials in someone else’s design. In Units 3 & 4 you are given design examples in an examination Resource Book and asked to *analyse* the methods, media and materials used in the **final presentation** of the solution, and to name its **presentation format** (poster, carton, signage system, interface). That analytical task is Unit 3, Area of Study 2, whose key knowledge includes *methods, media and materials used to create design examples*. The term **presentation format** sits elsewhere again: it is key knowledge in **Unit 4, Area of Study 2**, where you select the formats in which two distinct solutions are delivered. Here you *select and use* methods, media and materials for your own work instead.

(2) Professional prepress specification. The bleed allowance, minimum hairline weight and spot-versus-process colour decisions mentioned in the production examples are what a designer actually supplies to a commercial printer. They are included because they are what “produce” means in practice and because Units 3 & 4 assume them, but they are **not required in any answer in this subtopic** and no question here is marked on them.

Watch-out — method, media and material are three different words. “Collage” is a method, “cut paper” is a medium, “cartridge paper” is a material. If a question asks for a *material* and you name a *method*, you score nothing, however good the reasoning that follows.

Watch-out — “manual” and “digital” name a category, not a medium. Methods *and* media are each divided into manual and digital, so “I used digital media” names nothing at all. Name the application itself: “vector-drawing software”, “an image-editing app”, “graphite pencil”, “marker”.

Watch-out — say resolution-independent, not “better quality”. Vector is not higher quality than raster; it is *scalable*. Raster is not worse; it is the only family that can hold a photograph. Name the property, then the consequence.

Watch-out — justify against the stage and the brief. “I used marker because it looks good” is not a justification. Tie the property of the medium to what that stage of the design process needed, or to the audience, purpose or output named in the brief.

Watch-out — materials are chosen, not left over. A material carries meaning and imposes limits. An answer about production that never mentions what the design is printed on has answered half the question.

Watch-out — check the colour mode against the output. RGB for screen, CMYK for print. Saying “I used bright colours” without saying which mode, and on what, misses the mark that is available.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Using the POA development sequence, identify the method, media and material used at **Stage 1** and at **Stage 3**, and explain why each set of choices suited that stage of the design process. (6 marks)

Working

Comment

Stage 1 — method: manual freehand ideation

Answer all three parts separately and in the question’s

Working	Comment
sketching. Media: graphite pencil. Material: layout bond paper.	own words. Naming “drawing” for the method and “pencil” for the media is the minimum; naming the paper is the part most students forget.
Suited to the stage because graphite is fast and erasable and layout bond is cheap, so the designer can put down many tussock shapes in a few minutes and discard most of them.	The justification must be about <i>this stage</i> . Develop wants quantity and cheapness, so name those properties.
The roughness is itself useful: an unfinished-looking sketch still invites change, so the idea stays open to critique.	A second, less obvious reason lifts a good answer to a full one.
Stage 3 — method: the drawing is scanned and redrawn digitally as vector paths. Media: vector-drawing software (a digital application). Material: the screen — the touchscreen or digital interface being worked on.	Every stage has all three. The medium is the <i>application</i> , so name the software, not the path or the brush; and the study design lists the touchscreen or digital interface among the materials, so “there is no material” scores nothing.
Suited to the stage because vector artwork is resolution-independent, so this single master can later be output at swing-tag size and at sign size without redrawing, and every curve can be adjusted exactly rather than approximately.	Property (resolution-independent, exactly editable) → consequence for the job. This is the sentence that earns the analysis marks.

Example 2 — scaffolded

*Alongside its carton, MICROLAENA is producing a small run of reusable tea pouches, made by **one-colour screen print on unbleached calico**. Explain how that production method and material should influence the digital methods and media used to resolve the mark. (5 marks)*

Working	Comment
One colour means every part of the mark must work in a single ink. Resolved in vector-drawing software (the digital medium), the artwork is therefore built as flat vector shapes with no tints, gradients or drop shadows , and the stem and seeds are separated by shape rather than by colour.	Start from the constraint and work back to the decision — that is the direction the question asks for. Name the software as the <i>medium</i> ; “flat vector shapes” is what you did with it.
Calico is a woven, absorbent fabric , so ink spreads along the threads and any stroke thinner than about 0.5 pt breaks up or fills in. The mark is redrawn with heavier strokes and wider gaps between the seeds so the weave cannot close them.	Name the physical behaviour of the material, then the specific change it forces. Vague answers say “it might not print well”.
Calico is an unbleached cream and cannot show white . The pale sage of the screen version would almost disappear on it, so the print is specified in a single darker ink and the cloth itself is used as the second “colour”.	Materials change colour decisions. This is the point most answers miss.
Screen printing needs a solid, closed artwork file: the mark is supplied as vector (.eps or .pdf) with the type converted to outlines, so the printer’s film is generated from paths rather than from pixels.	Link the production method to the file that has to be handed over — the practical end of “produce”.
∴ the material and the print method have driven four digital decisions — flat shapes, heavier strokes, a single dark ink on a cream ground, and a vector file — none of which are visible in the design itself, but all of which decide whether it can be made.	Close with a statement that ties the choices back to the constraint. The ∴ signals the conclusion.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain how and why a designer's choice of methods, media and materials changes between the **Develop** stage and the **Deliver** stage, using the POA sequence as evidence. (6 marks)

The two stages are doing different jobs, so they need different tools. **Develop** is about producing and testing many possibilities, so it rewards methods, media and materials that are **fast, cheap, plentiful and easy to change**. In the POA sequence this is Stages 1 and 2: freehand ideation sketching in **graphite** on **layout bond**, where several tussock shapes are drawn in doubled, searching lines and most are discarded. Graphite is erasable and layout bond costs almost nothing, so the price of a bad idea is close to zero — which is exactly what divergent thinking needs. The roughness matters too: because the sketches plainly look unfinished, a critique group still feels free to suggest changes.

Deliver is about making one resolved solution real, so it rewards the opposite properties — **precise, consistent, reproducible and output-ready**. In the POA sequence this is Stages 3 to 5. The medium changes first, from graphite to **fineliner ink** on **cartridge paper**, because a crisp, even-weight line has a definite edge and scans cleanly. Then the method changes: the drawing is **scanned and redrawn as vector paths**, so every curve can be adjusted exactly and the artwork becomes **resolution-independent** — and with it the medium changes again, from a pen to **vector-drawing software**, and the material from cartridge paper to the **screen** the designer now works on. Finally the material changes once more, from the surface the designer works on to the materials the audience actually meets — **kraft board** for the printed swing tag and **the screen** for the digital export, each with its own colour mode.

Notice what does **not** change. From Stage 3 onward the method is constant — one vector master — and it is the media and materials that vary with each output. ∴ the shift across the process is from tools chosen for *quantity and changeability* to tools chosen for *accuracy and reproducibility*; a designer who vectorises at Stage 1 spends hours perfecting ideas that should have been thrown away, and a designer still sketching at Stage 5 has nothing a printer can use.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Compare **raster** and **vector** methods, and justify which you would use to produce the POA mark for (i) a 16-pixel browser favicon and (ii) a 3-metre nursery entry sign. (5 marks)

Raster artwork is a fixed grid of pixels, each carrying one colour; it is **resolution-dependent**, measured in ppi at final size, and it is the only family that can hold a photograph or a painterly texture. **Vector** artwork is built from anchor points, paths, strokes and fills described mathematically; it is **resolution-independent** and can be redrawn at any size, but it cannot represent continuous-tone photography. Both can produce the POA mark, and both can be exported as flat colour — the difference is what happens when the size changes.

For **both** outputs I would work from a **vector** master, but for opposite reasons. For the **16-pixel favicon**, vector lets me redraw a deliberately simplified version — fewer blades, thicker strokes, the ochre seed enlarged — and export it exactly on the pixel grid, so the edges land on whole pixels instead of blurring across them. For the **3-metre sign**, a raster file would have to be about 35 000 pixels across to hold 300 ppi at that size, which is impractical, whereas the vector file is simply scaled up and cut or printed at full size with no loss of edge quality; the sign is also read from several metres away, so flat vector colour is exactly what is wanted.

∴ the same choice — vector — is justified twice over, but the reasoning differs: at 16 pixels vector buys me *editability* to simplify the mark, and at 3 metres it buys me *scalability*. Raster would only enter this job if a photograph of the nursery were placed behind the mark on a poster.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Using **Stage 2** of the POA development sequence: (a) Name the medium used. (1 mark) (b) Name the material it was used on. (1 mark) (c) Explain one reason a fineliner is a better choice than graphite pencil at this stage. (2 marks)

Q2. Using **Stage 5** of the POA development sequence: (a) Name the two materials the resolved mark is output onto. (2 marks) (b) State the colour mode appropriate to each. (2 marks) (c) Explain why the artwork does not need to be redrawn for the second output. (2 marks)

- Q3.** Methods, media and materials: (a) Explain the difference between a **method**, a **medium** and a **material**. (3 marks) (b) Classify each of the following as a method, a medium or a material: **screen printing**, **gouache**, **acetate**. (3 marks)
- Q4.** Using the raster and vector diagram: (a) State what a raster image is made of, and what a vector image is defined by. (2 marks) (b) Name the one that is resolution-independent. (1 mark) (c) Describe what happens to each when it is enlarged eight times. (2 marks)
- Q5.** Using the manual media figure: (a) Name the medium best suited to laying broad, flat areas of colour quickly. (1 mark) (b) Name the medium best suited to a crisp, even-weight outline. (1 mark) (c) State one strength and one limitation of using marker for ideation. (2 marks)
- Q6.** Materials: (a) Define what is meant by the **substrate** of a design. (1 mark) (b) Describe two ways uncoated recycled board behaves differently from coated gloss board when printed. (2 marks) (c) Explain how choosing kraft board would affect the colour palette of a design. (2 marks)

Un scaffolded



Questions 7–17 refer to the *THEMEDA Mill* folio pages A–D shown above, unless otherwise stated. Questions 18–21 refer to the *POA* and *MICROLAENA* material in this subtopic.

- Q7.** Identify the manual method, medium and material most likely used to produce **page A**, and explain why that combination suited the stage of the design process it belongs to. (4 marks)
- Q8.** **Page B** was made by collage. Explain what a designer can explore through collage that is harder to explore by drawing. (3 marks)
- Q9.** Identify the digital method used to produce **page C**, and explain **two** things the designer can now do with the artwork that were not possible with pages A or B. (4 marks)
- Q10.** **Page D** shows the resolved mark from **page C** applied to an uncoated kraft paper bag and printed in one colour. Identify **two** changes the designer has made between page C and page D, and explain why the material made each one necessary. (4 marks)
- Q11.** Describe the process you would follow to take the rough on **page A** through to the resolved digital version on **page C**, naming the methods used and one setting you would specify. (4 marks)
- Q12.** Explain the difference between **RGB** and **CMYK**, and describe one consequence of building the *THEMEDA* packaging artwork in the wrong mode. (4 marks)
- Q13.** *THEMEDA* supplies a photograph of its mill for the back of the flour bag. The file is 800 × 600 pixels. The photograph must print 150 mm wide. Determine whether the file is suitable, showing your reasoning, and state the largest width at which it could be printed at 300 ppi. (4 marks)
- Q14.** *THEMEDA* needs three files: the mark for a sign-writer, a photograph for a printed flyer, and the mark for its website header. Recommend a file format for each and justify each choice. (6 marks)

- Q15.** Screen printing is being considered for the THEMEDA bags. Describe **two** features of screen printing as a production method and explain **one** limitation it places on the designer. *(4 marks)*
- Q16.** Explain what a physical **mock-up** of the THEMEDA bag would reveal that viewing the design on screen could not. *(4 marks)*
- Q17.** Write an annotation of no more than four sentences for **page A**, explaining and evaluating the methods, media and materials decisions. *(4 marks)*
- Q18.** Evaluate the decision to develop the POA mark manually rather than starting digitally. *(6 marks)*
- Q19.** Distinguish between **manual** and **digital** methods. Give one example of each from this subtopic, and explain one thing each does better than the other. *(4 marks)*
- Q20.** The MICROLAENA tea carton could be produced on 350 gsm uncoated recycled board or on 350 gsm coated gloss board. Explain how each material would change what the design communicates to a buyer. *(4 marks)*
- Q21.** MICROLAENA is launching a loose-leaf tea. Select and justify the manual and digital methods, media and materials you would use to **develop** the identity and to **produce** three outcomes: a printed carton, a social-media tile and a two-metre market banner. *(8 marks)*

Answers

Q1. (a) Fineliner (technical pen) ink. (b) Cartridge paper. (c) See solutions. **Q2.** (a) Kraft board (the swing tag) and the screen. (b) CMYK for the printed tag; RGB for the screen. (c) Because the artwork is vector — one resolution-independent master serves both outputs. **Q3.** (a) Method = the process; medium = the manual or digital application the marks are made with; material = the surface or substrate it is made on or out of. (b) Screen printing = method; gouache = medium; acetate = material. **Q4.** (a) Raster = a fixed grid of pixels; vector = anchor points, paths, strokes and fills. (b) Vector. (c) See solutions. **Q5.** (a) Marker (or brush pen). (b) Fineliner (or technical pen). (c) See solutions. **Q6.** (a) The material a design is printed or made on. (b) and (c) See solutions. **Q7–Q21.** See fully-worked solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) Fineliner (technical pen) ink. (b) **Cartridge paper.** (c) At Stage 2 the designer is resolving one chosen idea rather than searching for ideas, so the drawing needs a crisp, even-weight line with a definite edge instead of graphite's soft, doubled, searching strokes. That clean black line also separates cleanly from white paper when the drawing is scanned at Stage 3, so it can be traced or redrawn as vector paths without the designer having to fight a grey, broken edge (*2 marks: a property of the medium + a reason tied to this stage of the process; accept either the resolution reason or the scanning reason*).

Q2. (a) Kraft board (the printed swing tag) and **the screen** (the digital export). (b) **CMYK** for the printed swing tag, because it is produced with cyan, magenta, yellow and black ink; **RGB** for the screen version, because a screen produces colour with red, green and blue light. (c) Because the mark was redrawn as **vector** artwork at Stage 3, it is **resolution-independent**: the same master file can be output at swing-tag size and at screen size with no loss of edge quality, so only the colour mode and the export settings change, not the drawing (*2 marks*).

Q3. (a) A **method** is the process or technique used to make the design — for example freehand ideation sketching, collage or vector drawing. A **medium** is the manual or digital **application** the marks are actually made with — for example graphite or ink (manual), or vector-drawing and image-editing software (digital). A **material** is the **surface or substrate** the design is made on or out of — for example layout bond, kraft board, acetate or the touchscreen / digital interface (*1 mark each*). (b) **Screen printing** = a **method** (a printing process). **Gouache** = a **medium** (an opaque paint that makes the mark). **Acetate** = a **material** (a transparent sheet the design is printed on).

Q4. (a) A **raster (bitmap)** image is made of a fixed **grid of pixels**, each holding a single colour. A **vector** image is defined by **anchor points and paths**, with strokes and fills described mathematically. (b) **Vector.** (c) Enlarged eight times, the raster image spreads the same fixed number of pixels over eight times the area, so each pixel becomes visible and curved edges break into visible steps — the image softens and looks blocky. The vector image is simply recalculated from its paths at the new size, so the edges are redrawn just as sharply as before and nothing is lost (*2 marks: one correct outcome for each*).

Q5. (a) Marker (accept brush pen). (b) **Fineliner** (accept technical pen). (c) **Strength:** a marker lays broad, flat colour very fast and overlapping strokes build tone in seconds, so a designer can produce and compare many roughs quickly at the size the design will be seen. **Limitation:** marker cannot be erased or lightened, so every stroke is a commitment — a mistake means starting the rough again — and the nib is too broad to hold fine detail (*2 marks: one of each*).

Q6. (a) The **substrate** is the material a design is printed on or made from — the paper, board, fabric, vinyl or screen that carries the design. (b) First, **uncoated** board has an open, absorbent surface, so ink soaks in: colours dry softer and less saturated, and very fine lines spread and can fill in. **Coated** board has a sealed surface, so ink sits on top: colours stay saturated and fine detail holds its edge. Second, uncoated board has a matt, textured feel and can be written on, whereas coated gloss board is smooth and reflective (*2 marks*). (c) Kraft board is warm brown, flecked and unbleached, and it cannot show white — anything meant to be white must be left as brown board or printed as an opaque ink. Every colour printed on it is also shifted warmer and duller by the ground beneath. The palette therefore has to be built *for* the brown: a small number of flat, darker colours that hold their identity on a mid-toned warm ground, rather than pale tints or a full-colour photograph (*2 marks: the property of the material + the specific effect on the palette*).

Q7. Method: manual freehand sketching — a quick development rough. **Medium:** a broad-nibbed **marker or brush pen**, shown by the wide, soft-edged strokes and the darker areas where strokes overlap. **Material:** a lightweight **layout bond or marker paper**. The combination suits the early **Develop** stage: a broad nib forces the designer to

work at whole-shape scale and makes it physically impossible to add fine detail, so the decision being tested is the silhouette of the seedhead and nothing else. Marker is also fast and the paper is cheap, so several versions can be laid down and compared in minutes, and because the result plainly looks unfinished it still invites a critique group to suggest changes (4 marks: three correct identifications + a justification tied to the stage).

Q8. Collage works with **whole areas of shape** rather than with edges. Because the designer cuts, tears and moves complete pieces of paper, the composition can be rearranged in seconds and **figure–ground** relationships tested directly — the ground is a physical piece of paper that can be swapped for another colour. It also produces shapes the designer would not have drawn: a torn edge or an accidental overlap creates forms that no deliberate pencil line would have made. Finally, it removes drawing skill from the equation, so the quality of the *idea* is what is being judged rather than the quality of the rendering (3 marks: any three distinct points, each with a reason).

Q9. The method is **digital vector drawing** — the mark has been redrawn as anchor points, paths, strokes and fills, and the type has been digitally typeset. **First**, the artwork is now **resolution-independent**, so the same file can be output on a 1 kg paper bag, a website header and a two-metre banner and stay identical every time; neither the marker rough nor the collage can be enlarged without degrading. **Second**, every part of the artwork is now **exactly editable and repeatable**: a colour can be changed to a specified value across every application at once, a stroke weight can be set numerically, and the four spikelets can be made truly identical rather than approximately alike — none of which is possible once ink or cut paper has been committed. (Accept also: the file can be sent to a printer or developer; the mark can be reused as a component in other layouts.) (4 marks: method named + two distinct, correctly reasoned advantages.)

Q10. Change 1 — the colour of the mark. On page C the seedhead is a mid-toned rust; on page D the whole design is printed in a single dark ink. This is necessary because kraft is a **warm brown, mid-toned board that cannot show white**: a rust mark on brown board would sit too close to the ground in tone to separate from it, and every printed colour is shifted warmer and duller by the board beneath. A single dark ink restores the tonal contrast the mark needs to be read. **Change 2 — the wordmark and supporting type.** The letter-spaced descriptor of page C has been replaced by larger, simpler type carrying the practical information a bag needs. This is necessary because **uncoated stock absorbs ink**, so fine strokes spread and small counters fill in; delicate letter-spaced capitals at that size would close up and become unreadable on this material. (Accept also: the artwork has been reduced to one colour with no tints or gradients, because each extra colour is a separate pass and a registration risk; or the mark has been scaled and repositioned to sit within the printable area of a bag that creases and folds.) (4 marks: two changes correctly identified from the evidence + a property of the material explaining each.)

Q11. First, **select** one rough from page A and, if needed, redraw it in **fineliner on cartridge paper**, because a crisp, even-weight black line separates from white paper far better than a soft marker edge. Second, **digitise** it: scan the drawing at **600 ppi at the size it will be used** (the setting), in even light with no shadow across the sheet, and increase the contrast so the line is solid black on clean white. Third, place the scan in vector software on a locked template layer and **redraw the mark as vector paths** over the top — tracing by hand rather than auto-tracing, so the curves are deliberate and the number of anchor points stays low. Fourth, apply **flat vector fills** in the specified colours and **typeset** the wordmark, converting the type to outlines so the file no longer depends on the font. ∴ the manual drawing supplies the idea and the digital redraw supplies the precision and scalability (4 marks: a sensible ordered process, the scan-and-redraw method named, and one specific setting such as 600 ppi or “at final size”).

Q12. RGB is an **additive** mode: red, green and blue **light** are mixed on a screen, and adding all three at full strength gives white. CMYK is a **subtractive** mode: cyan, magenta, yellow and black **ink** are laid on paper, and each layer absorbs part of the light reflecting off the sheet, so adding more ink moves toward black. The two do not cover the same range of colours — the most saturated RGB greens, oranges and blues simply cannot be made with process ink. **Consequence**: if the THEMEDA packaging were built in RGB and sent to print, the printer’s conversion to CMYK would flatten those saturated colours, and the bags would come back noticeably duller and slightly shifted in hue compared with the screen the designer approved — a difference the client sees immediately and the designer cannot fix after the run. ∴ artwork should be built in the colour mode of its output and checked on a printed proof (4 marks: both modes correctly explained + one specific, correctly reasoned consequence).

Q13. For print the working standard is **300 ppi at final size**. The required width is 150 mm, which is $150 \div 25.4 = 5.91$ inches. The pixels needed are therefore $5.91 \times 300 \approx 1772$ pixels, but the file has only **800**. It is short by $1772 - 800 = 972$ pixels, and the resolution the file would actually deliver at 150 mm is $800 \div 5.91 \approx 135$ ppi — well under half the standard. ∴ the file is **not suitable**: printed 150 mm wide it would look soft, and enlarging it cannot add detail

that was never captured. The largest width at which it holds 300 ppi is $800 \div 300 = 2.67$ inches $\approx$ **68 mm**. THEMEDA should be asked to supply a re-shot or higher-resolution file (4 marks: the 300 ppi standard stated, the calculation shown, a clear judgement, and the correct maximum width).

Q14. For the sign-writer — the mark as a vector file (.eps, .ai or .pdf). A sign is produced at a large size and often cut from vinyl, so the artwork must be **resolution-independent** and made of paths the cutter can follow; the type must be converted to outlines so the sign-writer does not need the font. **For the printed flyer — the photograph as a .tif (accept a high-quality .jpg).** A photograph is continuous-tone, so it must be raster; .tif keeps the full data with no compression loss, which matters because the flyer is printed at 300 ppi and compression artefacts become visible in ink. **For the website header — the mark as an .svg (accept .png).** SVG is vector, so it stays sharp on any screen including high-density displays, and the file is very small, which keeps the page fast; a .png is an acceptable fallback because it holds flat colour with transparency, but it is resolution-dependent and would need several sizes exporting (6 marks: 2 for each recommendation, awarded for a correct format plus a reason drawn from the property of the format and the demands of that output).

Q15. Feature 1: screen printing pushes ink through a stencilled mesh onto the material, **one colour at a time**, with each colour needing its own screen and each screen registered to the last. **Feature 2:** it lays down a **thick, opaque layer of ink**, so it prints strongly onto dark, coloured or textured materials such as kraft, fabric or timber, where a digital press would be washed out — and the ink layer has a slight physical texture that can be felt. **Limitation:** because each colour is a separate screen and a separate pass, the design is effectively limited to a small number of **flat** colours: continuous-tone photographs, fine gradients and very fine detail cannot be reproduced, and each extra colour adds cost and a registration risk. The designer must therefore resolve the artwork as flat, separated shapes from the outset (4 marks: two accurate features + one limitation explained, with the design consequence).

Q16. A mock-up puts the design into the **material** and at the **actual size** it will exist in. It reveals, first, how the **material behaves** — how the printed colour actually looks on flecked brown kraft under shop lighting rather than as light emitted from a screen, and how heavily the ink sits on an absorbent surface. Second, it reveals **scale and legibility in the hand**: whether the “1 kg” line can be read at arm’s length, and whether the mark still holds once it is 40 mm wide rather than filling a monitor. Third, it reveals the **three-dimensional reality** of the bag — that the design wraps around gussets, creases at the fold, and disappears where the top is rolled and stapled, none of which is visible on a flat screen artboard. Fourth, it lets the design be **handled**, so the weight, stiffness and surface of the board can be judged as part of the brand experience (4 marks: any four distinct points, or three developed in depth; the material behaviour and the flat-versus-three-dimensional points are the strongest).

Q17. (Model annotation — four sentences.) “Broad-nib marker rough on layout bond, made at the size the mark will be printed. I chose marker deliberately because its nib is too wide to hold detail, which forces this stage to be a test of the silhouette only. **Strength:** the seedhead reads instantly as a grass at a glance, so the basic idea is sound. **Limitation:** the nib closes up the gaps between the spikelets, so the mark currently reads as one blob rather than four separate seeds — I will resolve the spacing in fineliner before digitising.” (4 marks: the method, medium and material named; a reason for the choice; at least one strength and one limitation, i.e. genuine evaluation, not description; design terminology used throughout.)

Q18. Developing the POA mark manually before going digital was, on balance, the right decision. **Strengths:** graphite on layout bond is fast, erasable and cheap, so the designer could generate and reject a large number of tussock variations at a stage where quantity matters more than quality — the divergent thinking the Develop stage requires. Because the sketches plainly look unfinished, they also invited genuine change in critique, whereas a neatly vectorised version of the same idea tends to be received as a finished proposal and attracts fewer suggestions. Manual sketching keeps the designer’s attention on the idea rather than on tool settings, and the sheets themselves become evidence of the thinking in the folio. **Limitations:** manual work has to be redrawn later, so Stage 3 is duplicated effort; the hand-drawn blades are not exactly repeatable, so symmetry and stroke weight cannot be judged accurately from the sketches; and a client shown pencil roughs may not be able to imagine the resolved outcome. **Judgement:** for the Develop stage the strengths clearly outweigh the limitations, because the cost of the redraw is small and it is paid once, whereas the cost of refining the wrong idea digitally is paid over and over. $\therefore$ manual for developing, digital for resolving and producing, is the correct sequence here — a designer who had vectorised at Stage 1 would have spent hours perfecting ideas that should have been thrown away (6 marks: at least two strengths and two limitations, each reasoned, plus an overall judgement tied to the stage of the design process).

Q19. Manual methods are carried out **by hand with physical tools and materials** — the mark is made by a real substance on a real surface, and the result exists as a physical object. **Digital** methods are carried out **in software on a device** — the mark is stored as data (pixels or paths), the medium is an application rather than a physical substance, and the surface worked on is the **screen** (a digital interface) rather than a sheet of paper. *Example of manual:* the fineliner drawing of the POA mark on cartridge paper. *Example of digital:* the same mark redrawn as vector paths in vector-drawing software at Stage 3. **Manual does better:** speed and freedom at the ideation stage — there are no settings to choose before you can draw, the roughness of the result keeps ideas open to change, and physical media and materials can be judged by hand. **Digital does better:** precision, exact repeatability and output — a colour can be specified numerically and changed everywhere at once, curves can be adjusted rather than redrawn, and vector artwork is resolution-independent so one file produces every size of every outcome (4 marks: the distinction made, one correct example of each, and one genuine advantage of each).

Q20. 350 gsm uncoated recycled board has an open, absorbent, slightly flecked surface. Printed colour soaks in and dries softer and less saturated, fine detail spreads a little, and the board feels matt and textured in the hand. That combination reads as **honest, natural and unprocessed**, and it carries a visible sustainability claim before a word is read — appropriate for a loose-leaf tea sold on its provenance, and consistent with a muted sage palette. **350 gsm coated gloss board** has a sealed, smooth surface, so ink sits on top: colours stay saturated, fine hairlines and small type hold their edges, and the surface is reflective and slick. That reads as **precise, modern, manufactured and premium in a commercial sense**, and it suits a product competing on shelf impact rather than on naturalness. ∴ at identical weight and identical printed artwork, the two materials would give the same carton two different meanings — the uncoated board would say “grown”, the coated board would say “made” — which is why the substrate is a design decision and not a printing detail (4 marks: the physical behaviour of each material + the meaning each communicates to the buyer, with a comparative conclusion).

Q21. (Model response. The figure below shows the resolution plan the answer describes.)

	PRINTED CARTON	SOCIAL TILE	MARKET BANNER 2 m
 MICROLAENA LOOSE-LEAF TEA one resolved mark drawn as VECTOR paths	· vector master at 100% · colour mode: CMYK · photographs at 300 ppi at final size · 3 mm bleed, all four edges · uncoated 350 gsm recycled board — absorbs ink and softens the sage, so the pack reads as natural · no hairlines under 0.25 pt	· the same vector master, exported for screen · colour mode: RGB · 1080 × 1080 px, .png · flat colour, transparency preserved · screen light makes the sage read brighter than it will in print · type set larger relative to the mark, for a phone	· vector only — .pdf / .eps · resolution-independent, so it scales with no loss · a raster export would need ~24 000 px across at 300 ppi · woven polyester material — textured, so fine detail is dropped · read at 5 m: the mark and the name only

One vector master · three outputs · three different materials — the method stays constant, the media and materials change with the output.

Develop — manual. I would generate ideas by freehand **ideation sketching** in **graphite pencil** on **layout bond**, because graphite is fast and erasable and the paper is cheap, so I can produce a large number of variations on the weeping-grass motif and discard most of them without hesitation. I would also run one **collage** exploration in **cut paper** on cream stock, because cutting whole shapes tests the figure–ground relationship between the arching stem and its ground far faster than drawing does, and it produces silhouettes I would not have drawn. The chosen idea would then be resolved in **fineliner ink** on **cartridge paper**, because an even-weight black line scans cleanly.

Resolve — digital. I would **scan** the refined drawing at 600 ppi at final size and **redraw it as vector paths** in **vector-drawing software** — the digital medium, worked on the **screen** as its material — then apply **flat vector fills** in the sage and ochre palette and **typeset** the wordmark, converting the type to outlines. Vector is essential rather than optional here, because the three outcomes span roughly 40 mm to two metres and vector artwork is **resolution-independent**, so one master serves all three with no loss of edge quality.

Produce — three outputs from one master. The **printed carton** is exported as **CMYK** and printed on **350 gsm uncoated recycled board**, which absorbs ink and softens the sage — appropriate, because the matt, flecked surface itself signals a natural product to the buyer; any photograph placed on it must be supplied at **300 ppi at final size**. The **social tile** is exported as **RGB**, 1080 × 1080 pixels, as a **.png**, so flat colour stays crisp and transparency is preserved; because a screen emits light, the sage reads brighter there than it will in print, and the type is set larger relative to the

mark so it holds on a phone. The **two-metre market banner** is supplied as **vector only** (.pdf or .eps) and printed on **woven polyester**; a raster export would need roughly 24 000 pixels across to hold 300 ppi at that width, which is impractical, and the woven surface drops fine detail, so the banner carries the mark and the name only and is designed to be read at five metres.

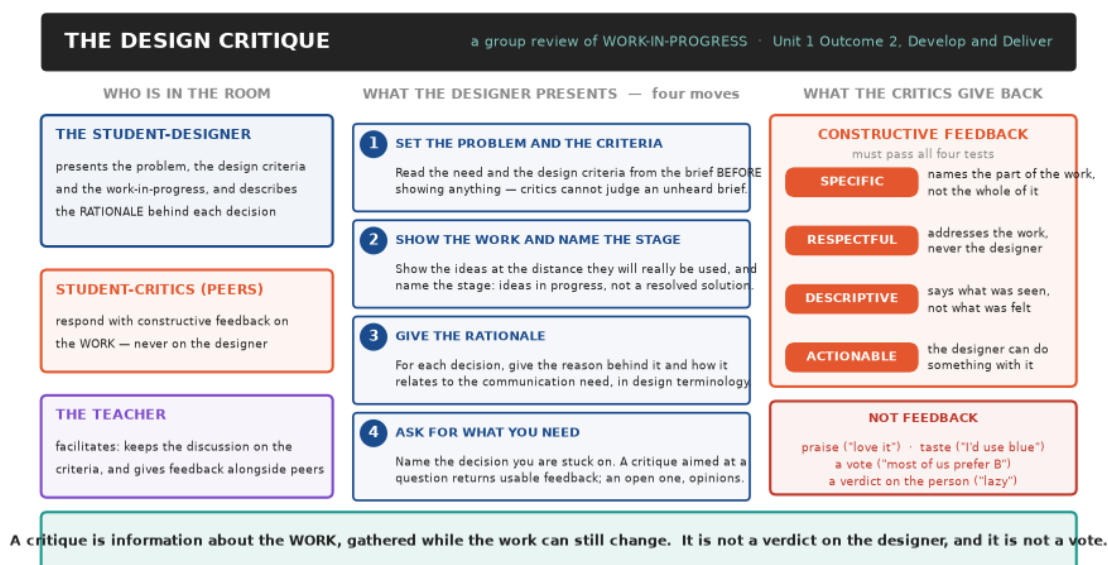
∴ the **method** is constant from the vector redraw onward, and one digital **medium** — the vector-drawing software — generates all three files; it is then the **output media** (press ink, the platform the tile is viewed in, dye on polyester) and the **materials** (uncoated board, the screen, woven polyester) that change with each output — which is exactly why resolving the identity as a single vector master is the decision the whole production plan depends on *(8 marks: manual development justified with named media and materials; the digitising method named; three outputs each with a named material, an appropriate colour mode or file type, and a reason drawn from the property of that material or format; and an overall statement linking the choices. Bleed allowances and minimum hairline weights are Units 3 & 4 preview material and are not required for full marks.)*

Theory

You have generated ideas and refined them using a range of manual and digital methods, media and materials. At some point the work has to leave your own desk. In the VCD design process that moment has a name and a procedure: the **design critique**.

The study design is explicit about why. Unit 1 Outcome 2 asks you to *present design concepts for critique, and both deliver and respond to feedback* — and it asks you to use that feedback, together with convergent thinking strategies, to guide the selection and refinement of concepts. Critique is therefore not a ceremony bolted onto the end of Develop. It is the mechanism by which a design process finds out whether the work does what the brief requires, **while there is still time to change it**.

What a design critique is. A critique is a group review of **work-in-progress**. The student-designer presents design ideas and concepts *together with the project's problem and its design criteria*, and describes the **rationale** behind the decisions made and how those decisions relate to the communication need. Student-critics and the teacher then respond with **constructive feedback**, which the study design defines as feedback that is **specific, respectful, descriptive and actionable**.



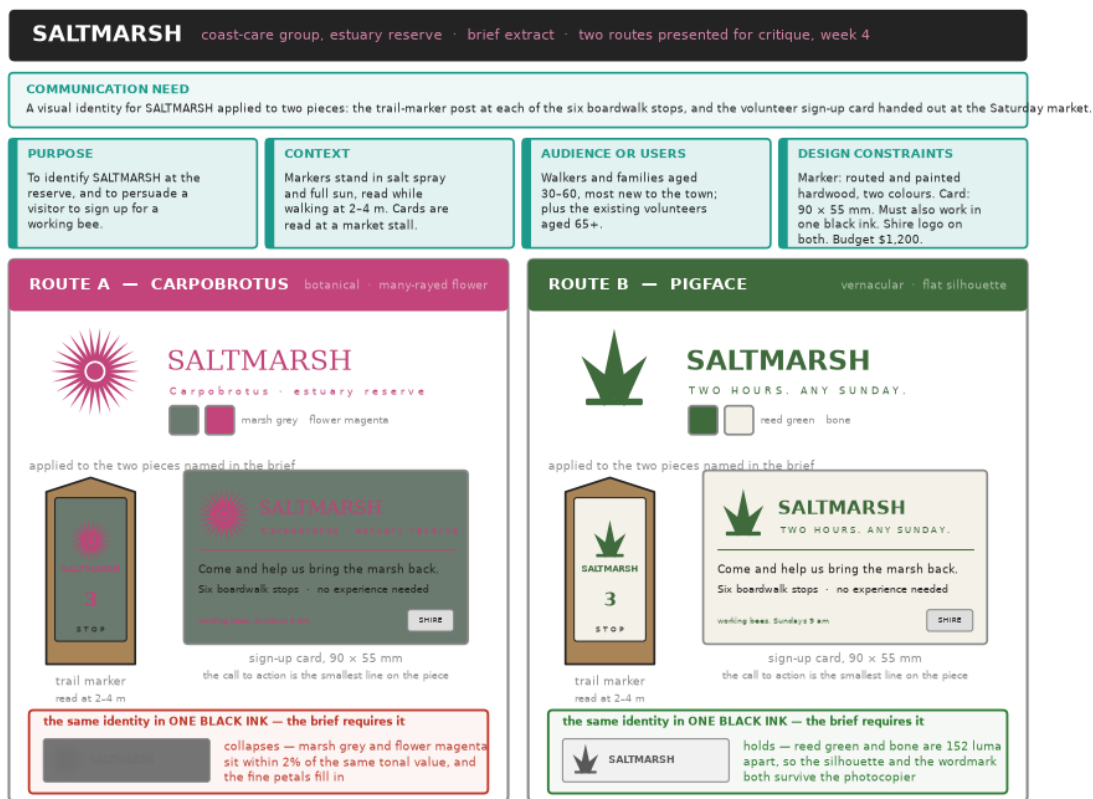
Three things in that definition do most of the work, and all three are easy to skip.

- **Work-in-progress, not finished work.** Feedback on something you have already resolved is a post-mortem. Bring the work at the stage where the decision is still open.
- **With the problem and the criteria.** Critics cannot judge work against a brief they have not heard. If you show only the artwork, you will get opinions about artwork.
- **With a rationale.** The critics are not there to guess what you were trying to do. Tell them.

The running example — the SALTMARSH critique

SALTMARSH is a volunteer coast-care group working on an estuary reserve. It is known to a small circle of long-standing regulars and wants to be known as the group anyone in town can join for two hours on a Sunday. Its brief asks for a visual identity applied to two pieces: the **trail-marker post** at each of six boardwalk stops, and a **volunteer sign-up card** handed out at the Saturday market.

At the week 4 critique the designer pinned up two development routes, codenamed after the same plant — *Carpobrotus* is the botanical name of the succulent that grows on the dune, and **pigface** is what everyone in town calls it. The codenames capture the argument the critique has to settle: whether SALTMARSH should sound precise and expert, or plain and open.



Move 1–4 — what the designer does at the front of the room

Move	What you do	Why it matters
1. Set the problem and the criteria	State the communication need and read the four design criteria — purpose, context, audience or users, constraints — before showing anything.	The criteria are what the feedback will be measured against. Announce the ruler before you ask people to measure.
2. Show the work and name the stage	Put the routes up together, at the size and distance the brief specifies, and say what stage they are at.	“These are two routes, not two finished identities” tells critics to comment on the direction, not the kerning.
3. Give the rationale	For each decision, state the reason behind it and its relationship to the communication need, in design terminology.	This is the move that converts a display into a critique. Without it, critics can only respond to appearance.
4. Ask for what you need	Name the one decision you are stuck on.	A critique aimed at a question returns usable feedback. A critique aimed at nothing returns opinions.

The rationale is the heart of it. Here is what each SALTMARSH route sounded like when it was presented.

Route	The rationale, as presented
A — CARPOBROTUS	“I used the many-rayed flower and the botanical name because the shire and our 65+ volunteers need to see a group that knows what it is doing. Magenta is the true colour of the flower on the marsh in November, so the palette comes from the place rather than from a stock scheme.”
B — PIGFACE	“I reduced the plant to one flat silhouette so it can be routed into hardwood and still read while somebody

Route	The rationale, as presented
	walks past. The sub-line is the plainest sentence I could write — <i>two hours, any Sunday</i> — because the repositioning is from a specialists' club to a group anyone can join, and that is the promise a newcomer has to read at a market stall."

Each names the **decision**, the **reason** and the **criterion or audience** it serves. Neither says "I liked it". Compare:

A rationale that gives critics nothing	A rationale they can work with
"I went with the flower because it looked nice."	"I used the many-rayed flower because the audience includes volunteers aged 65+ who know the plant by sight, and the radial form centres well on a 90 mm post face."
"The green just felt right."	"Reed green on bone gives the tonal contrast the context criterion needs — the marker is read at 2–4 m in full sun — and the same pair still separates in one black ink."

Techniques to present design ideas

Presenting is a set of methods, not a personality trait. These are the ones that earn their place in a school critique.

Technique	What it is	What it gets you
Pin-up / presentation board	Ideas mounted together in a deliberate order rather than handed round.	Everyone sees the same thing at once, and the order you pin them in is the order they are read.
Side-by-side comparison	Two or more routes shown together at the same size.	Feedback about the <i>differences</i> between routes, which is what a selection decision needs.
Viewing at true distance	The work pinned or held at the distance the brief specifies — 2–4 m for the SALTMARSH marker.	Tests the context criterion in the room, instead of guessing about it afterwards.
Full-size mock-up or dummy	The piece made at real size in something like the real material — a 90 × 55 mm card, a post face.	Shows what a screen preview hides: true scale, weight in the hand, glare.
Production test print	The same artwork output the way it will really be produced — here, in one black ink.	Turns a constraint from a claim into visible evidence.
Annotation	Short written notes on the work naming the criterion each decision serves.	Lets critics follow the reasoning without you narrating every mark.
A stated question	One sentence naming the decision you want help with.	Aims the critique. It is the cheapest technique here and the most often skipped.

Notice that the one-ink test strip on each SALTMARSH board is doing exactly this job. The brief requires the identity to work in a single black ink. Printed that way, route B holds — reed green and bone sit about 152 steps apart on a 255-step tonal scale, so the silhouette and the wordmark both survive. Route A collapses: marsh grey and flower magenta sit within two per cent of the same tonal value, so the wordmark disappears into its ground, and the fine petals fill in. Nobody has to be persuaded of that in the room. They can see it.

Delivering constructive feedback

When you are the critic, your job is to give the designer **information about the work**. The study design sets four tests, and useful feedback passes all four.

- **Specific** — names the part of the work, not the whole of it. “The marker” not “it”.
- **Respectful** — addresses the work, never the designer. “The mark” not “you”.
- **Descriptive** — says what you *saw*, not what you *felt*. “I lost the wordmark at 3 m” not “it doesn’t work”.
- **Actionable** — leaves the designer something they can do.

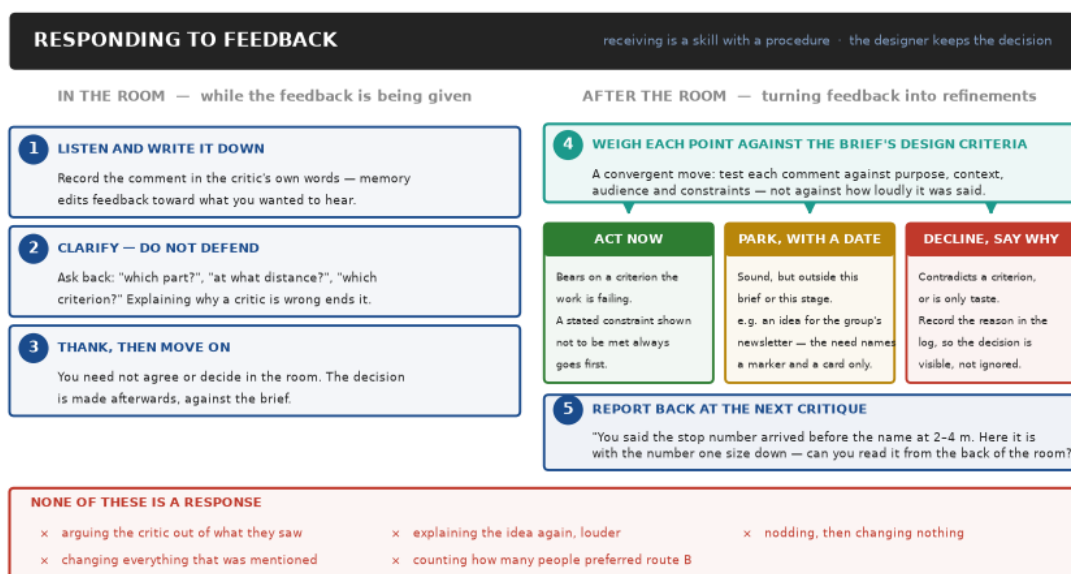
DELIVERING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK		
the same observation, failed and repaired · SALTmarsh critique, week 4		
WHAT THE CRITIC SAID	THE TEST IT FAILS	THE SAME POINT, MADE CONSTRUCTIVELY
"The marker's a bit boring."	SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIVE ACTIONABLE	▶ "On the marker the stop number is the largest thing on the face, so at 2-4 m a walker reads '3' before they read SALTmarsh. The purpose puts identifying the group first — is the number carrying more weight than it needs to?"
"You have obviously rushed the marker."	RESPECTFUL SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIVE	▶ "The routed lines on the marker face change width where they meet the mark. The brief has the marker read at 2-4 m in full sun, so I would check how those joins hold at that distance before the post is cut."
"I'd make the mark bigger."	DESCRIPTIVE	▶ "At 2-4 m I lost the mark before I lost the wordmark, so identification is arriving late. The context criterion is the one at risk here — could you test the mark one size up against the same wordmark?"
"Route A is way more professional than route B."	SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIVE ACTIONABLE	▶ "Route A's botanical name and finer palette suit the 65+ volunteers named in the audience criterion. But 'professional' is not in the brief — the testable question is which route survives one ink, and on that evidence route B does."
Every repaired comment names WHAT was seen, WHERE, and WHICH criterion it bears on — then leaves the decision with the designer.		

Every repaired comment above makes the same three moves: it names **what** was seen, **where** it was seen, and **which** **criterion** it bears on. Then it stops, and leaves the decision with the designer. That last part matters. “I’d make the mark bigger” hands over a solution; “at 2–4 m I lost the mark before the wordmark” hands over a problem, and the designer may solve it with weight, colour or position instead of size.

Praise fails the tests as badly as insult does. “I love it” names nothing, describes nothing and cannot be acted on — and it costs the designer a turn they could have used. If you genuinely think something works, say *what* works and *why*, so the designer knows which part to protect.

Responding to feedback

Receiving is the half of this that students find harder, and it is assessable in its own right: the key knowledge names *techniques to deliver and respond to constructive feedback*. Responding is a procedure, not a mood.



In the room, do three things. **Write the comment down in the critic's own words** — memory quietly edits feedback toward what you already wanted to hear. **Clarify rather than defend**: “which part?”, “at what distance?”, “which

criterion were you thinking of?” are all legitimate; “yes, but what I was going for was...” is not, because the moment you start explaining why a critic is wrong, they stop telling you what they saw. Then **thank them and move on**. You are not required to agree, decide or reply in the room.

After the room, weigh each comment against the brief’s design criteria. This is a **convergent** move — the same kind of criteria-referenced scoring you met in Chapter 1 — and it is what stops a critique from becoming a popularity contest. Each comment then gets one of three outcomes:

Outcome	When	What you write down
Act now	The comment bears on a criterion the work is failing. A stated constraint shown not to be met always goes first, because a solution that cannot be produced does not exist.	The change, and the criterion it serves.
Park, with a date	The point is sound but sits outside this brief or this stage.	Where it is parked and when it will be looked at.
Decline, with a reason	The comment contradicts a criterion, or is a preference with no criterion behind it.	The reason — so the decision is <i>visible</i> , not ignored.

The third row is the one students skip. Declining feedback is a legitimate, professional act; ignoring it is not. The difference is entirely in whether the reason is recorded.

Then report back. At the next critique, tell the critics what you did with what they gave you: “you said the stop number arrived before the name at 2–4 m — here it is one size down; can you read it from the back now?” This is not a courtesy. It closes the loop, it shows the critique produced a change, and it makes the next round of feedback better, because critics who can see their comments being used give sharper ones.

The critique record

Everything above depends on writing things down. A usable record captures, for each comment: **what was said**, in the critic’s words; **who said it**; **which criterion it bears on**; the **decision** (act, park or decline); and, where relevant, **the reason**. It is the document that turns a half-hour conversation into a refinement plan, and it is the evidence that your later decisions were criteria-referenced rather than remembered.

#	SPOKEN BY	WHAT WAS SAID	THE DESIGNER'S ACTION
1	Peer A	"I love CARPOBROTUS — it's just gorgeous. Really nice work."	
2	Peer B	"The petals on the CARPOBROTUS mark are about 1 mm wide at marker scale. Routed into hardwood they would close up, and in one ink on the card they would fill in. Could you print it at 40 mm and look at it again before you commit?"	
3	Peer C	"PIGFACE is obviously the one. Everyone in the room likes it better — just go with that."	
4	Peer D	"Honestly, the serif type is a lazy choice. You always fall back on that."	
5	Teacher	"On the sign-up card, 'working bees, Sundays 9 am' is the smallest line on the piece, but the brief's purpose is to persuade a visitor to sign up. What would it do to the card if that line were second-level type?"	
6	Peer A	"It needs to feel more coastal. Maybe make it more coastal?"	
7	Peer B	"When you held the marker up at the back of the room I could not separate the magenta wordmark from the grey ground — they read as the same darkness. The brief has the marker read at 2-4 m in full sun."	
8	Peer C	"The PIGFACE mark would animate really well for the group's social posts — you should develop that too."	

THE BRIEF, IN ONE LINE

Identify SALTMARSH at the reserve and persuade a visitor to sign up · markers read at 2-4 m in salt spray and full sun; cards read at a market stall
Walkers and families aged 30-60, most new to the town, plus volunteers aged 65+ · routed hardwood, two colours; 90 x 55 mm card; must also work in one black ink; shire logo on both; budget \$1,200.

Watch-out — a critique is not a vote. How many people preferred a route is not evidence about the route. Five people can prefer the concept that fails a stated constraint. Selection is settled by the criteria in the brief, not by a show of hands.

Watch-out — feedback addresses the work, never the designer. "The wordmark is set light" is feedback. "You're lazy", "you rushed this", "you always do that" are not — they cannot be acted on, and they close the room down for everyone still to present.

Watch-out — praise is not feedback. "I love it" and "it's gorgeous" fail *specific, descriptive* and *actionable* at once. Say what works, where, and why.

Watch-out — do not defend in the room. Explaining why a critic is wrong ends the feedback and costs you the only thing you came for. Clarify, record, and decide afterwards.

Watch-out — do not act on everything. A designer who changes every element that was mentioned has replaced their own convergent thinking with the loudest voice in the room. Weigh each comment against the criteria first; some are meant to be declined.

Watch-out — silence is not a decision. Feedback you neither act on nor decline is feedback you ignored. Record the reason and the decline is defensible; leave it blank and it is not.

Watch-out — the criteria come before the work. If you show the boards first and read the brief afterwards, the first two minutes of the critique are spent on appearance, and you cannot get them back.

Units 3 & 4 preview — beyond the Units 1&2 study design. In Unit 4 you will meet a different presentation method, the **design pitch**: the presentation, explanation and *justification* of **resolved** design concepts **to a client**, in which you explain your reasons for selecting particular methods, media and materials as well as design elements and principles, and for your chosen presentation format. A pitch differs from a critique in audience (a client, not peers), in stage (resolved concepts, not work-in-progress) and in purpose (to justify and win agreement, not to gather information). The techniques for devising and delivering a pitch are key knowledge in **Unit 4 Outcome 1**, not here — in Units 1 and 2 the presentation you are assessed on is the **critique**. Nothing in this preview is assessed in this book.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Describe the sequence a student-designer should follow when presenting the two SALTMARSH routes at a critique, and explain what each move gives the critics. (6 marks)



Working	Comment
Move 1 — set the problem and the criteria. State the communication need (an identity applied to the trail marker and the sign-up card), then read the four criteria: the purpose (identify SALT MARSH and persuade a visitor to sign up), the context (2–4 m, salt spray, full sun; a market stall), the audience (walkers aged 30–60 new to the town, plus volunteers aged 65+) and the constraints (routed hardwood, two colours, one black ink, 90 × 55 mm, shire logo, \$1,200). This gives the critics the measure they will judge against. Move 2 — show the work and name the stage. Pin both routes up together, at the same size, and hold the marker face at 2–4 m. Say that these are two development routes, not resolved identities. Move 3 — give the rationale. For each route, state the reason behind the decision and how it relates to the communication need — for route B, that the plant was reduced to a single flat silhouette so it can be routed into hardwood and still read while a walker passes, and that the sub-line was written as plainly as possible because the repositioning is toward a group anyone can join. Move 4 — ask for what you need. Name the open decision: “the constraint says one black ink — I need help deciding whether route A can survive that, or whether it has to become route B.” Support it with evidence. Show the one-ink test strip for both routes, so the constraint is visible rather than asserted.	“Describe ... and explain” is two tasks. Do the describing in order, and attach the <i>why</i> to each step. Naming the four criteria explicitly is worth the words — it is the move most students omit. Side-by-side and true-distance viewing are presentation <i>techniques</i>; naming them earns more than “I showed my work”. Naming the stage tells critics what kind of comment is useful. The rationale is what makes it a <i>critique</i> rather than a display. Tie each reason to a criterion or to the communication need, using design terminology. A stated question aims the feedback. Without it critics answer questions that were never asked. Presenting a production test is a technique in its own right, and it is what lets the critics give <i>descriptive</i> feedback.

Example 2 — scaffolded

A student-critic’s first attempt at feedback on route B is: “Route B’s mark just looks like a plant.” Rewrite it as constructive feedback, and explain each change you made. (4 marks)

Working	Comment
Diagnose first. The comment names a part of the work (the mark), so it partly passes <i>specific</i>, and it is not disrespectful. It fails descriptive — “looks like a plant” reports an impression, not an observation — and it fails actionable, because there is nothing the designer can do with it. Rewrite: “The three-leaf silhouette reads as a generic succulent to me — at 3 m I could not tell it was pigface rather than any coastal plant. The purpose is to identify this group at this reserve, so is there a detail of the plant, or a tidal cue, that would tie the mark to the estuary without adding line work too fine to route?” Change 1 — descriptive. “Looks like a plant” became “I could not tell it was pigface rather than any coastal plant at 3 m”, which reports what the critic actually saw and under what condition. Change 2 — actionable, and criterion-referenced. The rewrite names the purpose criterion and poses a	Always say which tests fail before you rewrite. That is where the marks for “explain each change” come from. The rewrite adds the three moves: what was seen (a generic succulent), where (at 3 m), and which criterion it bears on (purpose — identification). Naming the viewing condition is what makes an observation checkable by everyone else in the room. Handing over a <i>problem</i> rather than a <i>solution</i> is the mark of the better critic — and the closing clause shows

question, while respecting the routing constraint. It does not prescribe a solution, so the designer keeps the decision.

the critic has read the constraints.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain how a designer should respond, during a critique, to feedback they disagree with. (4 marks)

The response in the room is the same whether the designer agrees or not, because the decision is not made in the room. First, they **record the comment in the critic's own words**, rather than in the version of it they would prefer to answer. Second, they **clarify rather than defend**: questions such as “which part of the marker?”, “at what distance were you looking?” or “which criterion were you thinking of?” extract the observation behind the comment, and often reveal that the critic saw something real even where the conclusion drawn from it is wrong. Explaining why the critic is mistaken does the opposite — it ends the flow of feedback, and the critics still waiting to speak learn that disagreement will be argued with rather than written down. Third, they **thank the critic and move on**, because agreement is not required and a critique has other work to do. The disagreement is then resolved *after* the critique, by weighing the comment against the brief's design criteria: if it bears on a criterion the work is failing, it is acted on however unwelcome it is; if it contradicts a criterion or rests on nothing but preference, it is **declined and the reason recorded**, so the decision is visible rather than silently ignored.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

After the SALTMARSH critique the designer has a page of comments and one week before the next review. Explain how the brief and convergent thinking are used to turn those comments into a refinement plan. (6 marks)

The comments arrive as an unsorted, divergent pile: some describe a production failure, some describe a hierarchy problem, some are preferences, and one proposes a piece of work that was never commissioned. Convergent thinking is what reduces that pile to a plan, and the brief supplies the criteria it converges on.

The designer takes each comment in turn and asks a single question: **which design criterion does this bear on?** A comment that maps onto no criterion — a critic's colour preference, a count of who liked which route — carries no weight, however confidently it was delivered. A comment that maps onto a criterion is then tested: is the work actually failing that criterion, and what is the evidence?

Sorting by criterion also ranks the work, because the criteria are not equal. A stated **constraint** shown not to be met goes first: a solution that cannot be produced does not exist, so the one-ink requirement outranks everything else on the page. Failures of **purpose** come next, because the purpose is what the design is for. **Context** and **audience** shortfalls follow, and cosmetic preferences do not enter the plan at all.

Each surviving comment then gets an outcome and a line in the record — **act now** with the change and the criterion it serves, **park with a date** where the point is sound but outside this brief, or **decline with a reason** where it contradicts a criterion or rests on taste. Writing the reason is what distinguishes a decline from an omission.

∴ the brief supplies the criteria, convergent thinking applies them one comment at a time, and the output is not a list of everything that was said but a short, ordered set of refinements — each one traceable to a requirement rather than to whoever spoke loudest.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Questions 1–6 refer to the SALTMARSH brief and the two routes, CARPOBROTUS and PIGFACE, shown in this subtopic.

Q1. Design critique. (a) State what a design critique is. (1 mark) (b) Identify **two** things a designer presents at a critique besides the work itself. (2 marks) (c) Explain why work is presented as work-in-progress rather than finished. (2 marks)

Q2. Constructive feedback. (a) Name the four qualities of constructive feedback. (2 marks) (b) For each of these comments on route A, state which quality it most clearly fails: (i) “the whole thing is a bit much”; (ii) “you clearly

didn't try very hard with the post". (2 marks) (c) Explain why *respectful* is a requirement of useful feedback and not merely good manners. (2 marks)

Q3. The rationale. (a) Define what is meant by the **rationale** for a design decision. (1 mark) (b) Write one sentence of rationale for the choice of a heavy sans-serif wordmark in route B. (2 marks) (c) Explain why a rationale must relate the decision to the communication need. (2 marks)

Q4. Receiving feedback. (a) State **two** things a designer should do while feedback is being given. (2 marks) (b) Explain why a comment should be recorded in the critic's own words rather than in the designer's summary of it. (2 marks) (c) State one legitimate reason for **not** acting on a piece of feedback. (1 mark)

Q5. Presentation techniques. (a) Identify **two** techniques a designer could use to present the SALTMARSH marker so that critics can give useful feedback. (2 marks) (b) Explain how viewing the marker at 2–4 m in the room changes the feedback the designer receives. (2 marks) (c) Explain why the designer should name the stage the work is at. (2 marks)

Q6. The critique record. (a) State **two** things a critique record should capture for each comment. (2 marks) (b) Distinguish between **declining** a piece of feedback and **ignoring** it. (2 marks) (c) Explain why the record matters at the *next* critique. (2 marks)

Un scaffolded

SALTMARSH — CRITIQUE RECORD			
week 4 · routes A and B presented · eight comments recorded verbatim			
#	SPOKEN BY	WHAT WAS SAID	THE DESIGNER'S ACTION
1	Peer A	"I love CARPOBROTUS — it's just gorgeous. Really nice work."	
2	Peer B	"The petals on the CARPOBROTUS mark are about 1 mm wide at marker scale. Routed into hardwood they would close up, and in one ink on the card they would fill in. Could you print it at 40 mm and look at it again before you commit?"	
3	Peer C	"PIGFACE is obviously the one. Everyone in the room likes it better — just go with that."	
4	Peer D	"Honestly, the serif type is a lazy choice. You always fall back on that."	
5	Teacher	"On the sign-up card, 'working bees, Sundays 9 am' is the smallest line on the piece, but the brief's purpose is to persuade a visitor to sign up. What would it do to the card if that line were second-level type?"	
6	Peer A	"It needs to feel more coastal. Maybe make it more coastal?"	
7	Peer B	"When you held the marker up at the back of the room I could not separate the magenta wordmark from the grey ground — they read as the same darkness. The brief has the marker read at 2–4 m in full sun."	
8	Peer C	"The PIGFACE mark would animate really well for the group's social posts — you should develop that too."	

THE BRIEF, IN ONE LINE
 Identify SALTMARSH at the reserve and persuade a visitor to sign up · markers read at 2–4 m in salt spray and full sun; cards read at a market stall
 Walkers and families aged 30–60, most new to the town, plus volunteers aged 65+ · routed hardwood, two colours; 90 × 55 mm card; must also work
 in one black ink; shire logo on both; budget \$1,200.

Questions 7–21 refer to the SALTMARSH critique record above, and to the two routes shown earlier in this subtopic.

Q7. Comment 1 was intended as encouragement. Analyse it against the four qualities of constructive feedback, and rewrite it so that it passes all four. (4 marks)

Q8. Comment 3 offers a count of preferences as a reason for a decision. Explain why the number of people who prefer a route is not a sound basis for selecting it. (4 marks)

Q9. Comment 4 is directed at the designer rather than the work. Discuss its likely effect on the critique, and rewrite it so that the observation behind it survives. (4 marks)

Q10. Comment 6 cannot be acted on. Explain why, and rewrite it as actionable feedback. (3 marks)

Q11. Comments 2 and 5 are both constructive, but they use different techniques. Compare them, identifying what each does well. (6 marks)

- Q12.** In comment 7 the critic has used a presentation-and-testing technique to reach their observation. Identify the technique, and describe how the designer should verify the claim before acting on it. *(4 marks)*
- Q13.** The designer decides not to act on comment 8. Write the entry they should place in the critique record, and justify why this is a legitimate professional response. *(4 marks)*
- Q14.** Place the eight comments in an order of action for the coming week, and justify the top three against the design criteria in the brief. *(6 marks)*
- Q15.** Write the designer's spoken reply, in the room, to comment 4, and explain why you have answered it that way. *(4 marks)*
- Q16.** Describe **four** techniques you would use to present the **trail marker** at a critique, justifying each against a stated criterion in the SALTMARSH brief. *(4 marks)*
- Q17.** Discuss the value of a design critique to the student-critics, not only to the designer. *(4 marks)*
- Q18.** A designer leaves the critique and changes every element that was mentioned. Explain why this is a failure of convergent thinking. *(4 marks)*
- Q19.** A student presents only their preferred route, and describes only its strengths. Evaluate this as a critique presentation. *(4 marks)*
- Q20.** Explain how the use of appropriate design terminology improves both the **delivery** of feedback and the **response** to it, referring to one comment in the record for each. *(4 marks)*
- Q21.** Evaluate the extent to which the recorded feedback supports moving forward with route B (PIGFACE) rather than route A (CARPOBROTUS). *(6 marks)*

Answers

Q1. (a) A group review of work-in-progress in which the designer presents the problem, the criteria and the work, and critics respond with constructive feedback. (b) The design problem/communication need; the design criteria; the rationale (any two). (c) See solutions. **Q2.** (a) Specific; respectful; descriptive; actionable. (b) (i) specific; (ii) respectful. (c) See solutions. **Q3.** (a) The stated reason behind a decision and its relationship to the communication need. (b)/(c) See solutions. **Q4.** (a) Record it verbatim; clarify by asking questions; thank the critic (any two). (b) A paraphrase drifts toward what the designer wanted to hear and loses the testable evidence. See solutions. (c) It contradicts a criterion, or rests on preference with no criterion behind it. **Q5.** (a) e.g. side-by-side pin-up; viewing at true distance; full-size mock-up; one-ink test print. (b)/(c) See solutions. **Q6.** (a) What was said (verbatim), who said it, the criterion it bears on, the decision, the reason (any two). (b) A decline is recorded with a reason; ignoring leaves no record. (c) See solutions. **Q7.** Fails specific, descriptive and actionable; passes respectful. See solutions. **Q8.** Preference is not evidence about the work; the criteria decide. See solutions. **Q9.** Attacks the designer, not the work; the observation about type weight survives. See solutions. **Q10.** No observable property, no location, no criterion. See solutions. **Q11.** Comment 2 = production evidence + a proposed test; comment 5 = criterion-referenced hierarchy question. See solutions. **Q12.** Viewing at true distance (a distance/legibility test); verify by printing and viewing at 2–4 m in full sun, and in one black ink. See solutions. **Q13.** Park, with a reason: the communication need names a marker and a card only. See solutions. **Q14.** 7, 2, 5 first (constraint, then constraint, then purpose); then 4 and 3 stripped for their observations; 6 returned for clarification; 8 parked; 1 no action. See solutions. **Q15.** Clarify, do not defend; ask what was seen. See solutions. **Q16.** e.g. full-size mock-up (constraint); viewing at 2–4 m (context); side-by-side at the same size (purpose); one-ink test print (constraint). See solutions. **Q17.** Critics practise analysis, terminology and judgement against criteria. See solutions. **Q18.** Replaces the designer’s convergent thinking with the volume of the room. See solutions. **Q19.** Fails as a critique presentation — no criteria, no alternatives, no question. See solutions. **Q20.** Terminology makes an observation checkable and a response precise. See solutions. **Q21.** Route B is supported on the constraint and context criteria; route A’s audience advantage remains. ∴ move forward with B, carrying A’s strengths across. See solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) A design critique is a group review of **work-in-progress** in which the student-designer presents design ideas or concepts together with the project’s problem and design criteria, describes the rationale for the decisions made, and the student-critics and teacher respond with constructive feedback. (b) Any two of: the design problem or communication need; the design criteria from the brief; the rationale behind each decision; the stage the work is at; the specific question the designer wants answered. (c) Because the purpose of a critique is to inform decisions that have not yet been made. Feedback on resolved work can only confirm or regret it, whereas feedback on work-in-progress can change the direction of the next refinement — which is exactly what the design process needs it for. Presenting unfinished work also signals to critics that structural comments are welcome, so they raise questions of direction rather than restricting themselves to polite notes on finish (2 marks: *the decision is still open + the effect on what critics say*).

Q2. (a) **Specific, respectful, descriptive and actionable** (2 marks for all four). (b) (i) **Specific** — “the whole thing” names no part of the work (accept *actionable*). (ii) **Respectful** — it judges the designer’s effort rather than the work. (c) Because disrespectful feedback destroys the information it was meant to carry. A comment aimed at the person cannot be acted on: “you didn’t try” describes no property of the marker, so there is nothing to change. It also provokes defence, and a designer who is defending has stopped recording. Beyond the individual, it changes the room — the students still to present learn that the safe move is to bring work that cannot be criticised, which is the opposite of what a critique is for. Respect is therefore a condition of the feedback being **usable**, not a courtesy laid over the top of it (2 marks: *unusable + its effect on the designer or the room*).

Q3. (a) The **rationale** is the reason behind a design decision, stated together with the way that decision relates to the communication need and the design criteria. (b) (*Model.*) “The wordmark is set in a heavy sans-serif because the **context** criterion has the marker read at 2–4 m in full sun and salt spray, and heavy strokes hold their tonal contrast against the bone ground at that distance where a light weight would not.” (2 marks: *a decision + a reason tied to a named criterion.*) (c) Because without that link the critics have no way to judge the decision. A reason on its own — “magenta is the colour of the flower” — is a fact about the world, not an argument about the design; it becomes an argument only when it is attached to what the piece has to achieve, for whom, and under what conditions. Relating the

decision to the communication need also tells critics which criterion to test it against, so the feedback comes back aimed at something (2 marks).

Q4. (a) Any two of: write the comment down in the critic's own words; ask clarifying questions ("which part?", "at what distance?", "which criterion?"); thank the critic and move on; keep listening rather than replying. (b) Because a summary written in the moment is not neutral. A designer under pressure edits feedback toward what they already wanted to hear — "the wordmark disappeared at 3 m" becomes "they thought the type could be bigger", which is easier to live with and no longer true. Verbatim wording also preserves the **evidence** inside the comment (the distance, the element, the condition), which is what the designer later needs in order to test the claim and to decide which criterion it bears on; a paraphrase usually keeps the conclusion and throws away the observation (2 marks: *the paraphrase drifts toward the palatable + the testable evidence is lost*). (c) The comment contradicts a criterion in the brief, or rests on the critic's preference with no criterion behind it (accept: it falls outside the communication need).

Q5. (a) Any two of: pinning both routes up **side by side** at the same size; **viewing at true distance** (holding the marker face at 2–4 m); a **full-size mock-up** of the post face in a similar material; a **production test print** of the identity in one black ink; **annotation** naming the criterion each decision serves. (b) It converts an argument into an observation. The context criterion specifies 2–4 m, so at that distance critics stop reporting what they think *will* happen and start reporting what they *can* see — which of the two routes loses its wordmark first, whether the mark or the number arrives first, whether the magenta separates from the grey. Feedback gathered this way is **descriptive** by construction, and it is checkable by everyone else in the room (2 marks). (c) Because the stage determines which comments are useful. Told that these are two development routes rather than resolved identities, critics comment on direction — whether a route can meet the constraints at all — instead of on finish. If the designer does not say, critics assume the work is nearly done and offer refinements to a route that may be about to be abandoned, wasting the critique (2 marks).

Q6. (a) Any two of: what was said, in the critic's own words; who said it; which design criterion it bears on; the decision taken (act, park or decline); the reason for that decision; what was actually changed. (b) **Declining** is a decision: the designer has weighed the comment against the criteria, judged that it should not be acted on, and **recorded the reason**, so the judgement is visible and can be defended or reversed. **Ignoring** leaves no record — the comment simply disappears, and neither the designer nor the critic can tell later whether it was considered or merely lost (2 marks: *the decision + the record*). (c) Because it is what allows the designer to **report back**: to say which comments produced which changes, and why the others did not. That closes the loop for the critics, shows the critique had an effect, and produces better feedback next time — critics who can see their observations being used give sharper ones. It is also the evidence that the designer's selections were criteria-referenced rather than remembered (2 marks).

Q7. Comment 1 — "I love CARPOBROTUS — it's just gorgeous. Really nice work." — passes only one of the four tests. It is **respectful**. It is not **specific**: it names a whole route, not a part of it, so the designer cannot tell whether the flower mark, the serif wordmark, the palette or the layout is being praised. It is not **descriptive**: "gorgeous" reports the critic's feeling, not anything they observed. And it is not **actionable**: there is nothing in it the designer can do, and because praise identifies nothing, it does not even tell them which part to protect in the next refinement. The comment is also expensive — it uses one of a limited number of speaking turns.

Rewritten: "On route A, the magenta flower was the first thing I looked at on the board, before the wordmark — so on the marker the mark is doing the identifying, not the name. That suits the purpose criterion, provided the mark survives routing. Can we see it beside route B at 3 m?" (4 marks: *the four tests applied with a verdict on each, plus a rewrite that names what was seen, where, and which criterion it bears on.*)

Q8. Because a preference is a fact about the critics, not about the work. The brief specifies what the identity must achieve — identify SALT MARSH and persuade a visitor to sign up, at 2–4 m in salt spray and full sun, for walkers aged 30–60 and volunteers aged 65+, within a routed-hardwood, two-colour, one-black-ink constraint set — and none of those requirements is satisfied or breached by how many people in the room liked a route. The room is not the audience: the critics are peers of the designer, not walkers new to the town or long-standing volunteers, so their aggregate taste is not even a sample of the people the brief names.

A count is also *unusable*. "Everyone likes B" tells the designer nothing about **why**, so it cannot be turned into a refinement — and if route B were later found to fail a constraint, the count would offer no way to reconsider. Worse, a vote can be right for the wrong reason: route B may well be the stronger route, but it is stronger because it survives one black ink and holds at 2–4 m, and a designer who selects it on a show of hands has not learned that, and cannot

defend the choice to the client. ∴ preference may indicate where to look, but only the criteria decide (4 marks: preference is not evidence about the work; the room is not the audience; a count is unactionable; the criteria are the proper instrument).

Q9. Comment 4 — “Honestly, the serif type is a lazy choice. You always fall back on that.” — is made of two parts, and only one of them is about the work. “The serif type” is a real observation about route A; “lazy”, and the generalisation “you always”, are judgements about the designer. The likely effect on the critique is threefold. The designer will defend rather than record, so the observation buried in the comment is lost. The exchange shifts from the work to the person, which neither the brief nor the criteria can settle, so it cannot be resolved. And the students still waiting to present learn that the safe strategy is to bring work that invites no comment — which removes the value of the critique for everyone, not just for this designer.

Rewritten so the observation survives: “The route A wordmark is a serif set in a light weight. Against the marsh-grey ground it holds less tonal contrast than route B’s does, and the brief has the marker read at 2–4 m in full sun — so I think the **weight**, rather than the typeface, is the risk here. Could you show it in a heavier cut?” (4 marks: the personal attack identified and separated from the observation, at least two effects on the critique, and a rewrite that is specific, descriptive and actionable.)

Q10. “It needs to feel more coastal. Maybe make it more coastal?” cannot be acted on because it names no observable property of the work, no place in the work where the problem was seen, and no criterion it bears on. “Coastal” is a feeling, and the designer has no way to tell whether a change has satisfied it — two people could look at the same revision and disagree, with equal justification. It also fails *specific*: “it” could be either route, either piece, or the palette.

Rewritten: “Neither route says salt water to me — the greens and greys could belong to any bush reserve, and the brief names an estuary. Could one route carry a tidal cue that still survives routing: a horizon line under the wordmark, or the post painted up to a tide mark?” (3 marks: the comment names no observable property and no criterion, plus a rewrite that supplies both and respects the routing constraint.)

Q11. Both comments pass all four tests, and both leave the decision with the designer, but they work in different ways.

Comment 2 is a **production** critique supported by a proposed **test**. The critic measures the work against a physical fact — the petals are about 1 mm wide at marker scale — and traces that fact through two of the brief’s constraints: routing into hardwood, where fine strokes close up, and reproduction in one black ink on the card, where they fill in. It is strong because the observation is checkable by anyone, and because it ends with an action the designer can take *before* committing: print it at 40 mm and look again. Its limitation is that it addresses a single element in isolation.

Comment 5 is a **hierarchy** critique framed as a **criterion-referenced question**. The critic observes that on the sign-up card the line “working bees, Sundays 9 am” is the smallest on the piece, then places that observation directly against the purpose criterion — to persuade a visitor to sign up — so the mismatch is between what the piece ranks highest and what the brief says it is for. It is strong because it identifies a whole-piece problem, and because posing it as a question (“what would it do to the card if that line were second-level type?”) invites the designer to solve it rather than prescribing a solution.

The common structure is what makes both usable: each names **what** was seen, **where**, and **which criterion** it bears on. The difference is in scope and method — comment 2 supplies evidence and a test for one element and a constraint; comment 5 supplies a reading of the whole composition against the purpose (6 marks: each comment analysed with its strength and its method, a genuine two-sided comparison, and the shared structure drawn out).

Q12. The technique is **viewing the work at the distance the brief specifies** — a distance and legibility test. The critic did not judge the marker from arm’s length on the table; they looked at it held up from the back of the room, which approximates the 2–4 m the context criterion names, and reported what they could and could not separate at that distance.

To verify it, the designer should reproduce the condition rather than argue about it. Print the marker face at full size and view it at 2–4 m, outdoors in direct sun if possible, since the brief specifies full sun and salt spray and glare compresses tonal differences further than a classroom does. Then test the same artwork **in one black ink**, because a difference that survives in colour may not survive in tone: marsh grey and flower magenta sit within about two per

cent of the same tonal value, so the greyscale print will show whether the wordmark separates from its ground at all. Finally, view route B under the identical conditions, so the comparison is like for like. If the observation holds, the comment bears on the context criterion **and** a stated constraint, and goes to the top of the action list (4 marks: *the technique named; the viewing condition reproduced; the one-ink test; a comparison, with the consequence for the action list*).

Q13. (Model record entry.)

Comment 8 (Peer C): “The PIGFACE mark would animate really well for the group’s social posts — you should develop that too.” **Criterion:** none — falls outside the communication need. **Decision:** **Park**, revisit after the marker and card are resolved. **Reason:** The communication need in the brief names two pieces only, the trail-marker post and the 90 × 55 mm sign-up card, and the \$1,200 budget is allocated to those. An animated version is not commissioned, so developing it now would spend time on work that cannot be evaluated against this brief. The point is sound and worth keeping: if the mark survives routing and one black ink, it will be simple enough to animate later.

This is a legitimate professional response for two reasons. First, the comment is not *wrong* — it is **out of scope**, which is a different verdict and deserves a different outcome; parking it preserves a good idea instead of discarding it. Second, and decisively, the decision is **recorded with its reason**, so it is visible: the critic can see their comment was considered, the teacher can see the judgement was made against the brief rather than by preference, and the designer can revisit it if the communication need is later amended. A comment that is neither acted on nor recorded has simply been ignored, and that is not a decision at all (4 marks: *a record entry with criterion, decision and reason; out-of-scope distinguished from wrong; the recorded reason as what makes it defensible*).

Q14. (Model order — accept any defensible ranking argued from the criteria.)

Order of action: 7, 2, 5, 4, 3, 6, 8, 1.

1st — comment 7 (tonal value at 2–4 m). This is the most serious, because it bears on a stated **constraint** and on the **context** criterion at once. The brief requires the identity to work in one black ink, and marsh grey and flower magenta sit within about two per cent of the same tonal value, so route A’s wordmark does not separate from its ground in a single ink and is already weak in full sun at 2–4 m. A solution that cannot be produced to the brief does not exist, so this is settled first — and it may settle the choice of route by itself.

2nd — comment 2 (petal width at marker scale). Also a **constraint** failure, and from the same route: 1 mm strokes close up when routed into hardwood and fill in when printed in one ink. It ranks just below comment 7 only because it affects one element rather than the whole identity, and because it comes with a cheap test — print at 40 mm — that can be run the same day.

3rd — comment 5 (the call to action is the smallest line). A failure of **purpose**, not of production. The brief’s purpose has two halves, to identify and to persuade, and the one line that converts interest into a sign-up is ranked lowest on the card. It is third rather than first because the piece can still be made; but of the criteria the work is failing, purpose is the one the client’s repositioning depends on.

Then: comment 4 is stripped of its personal judgement and its surviving observation about type weight is tested with comments 7 and 2, since all three concern route A’s contrast. Comment 3 has its count discarded, but the preference is a signal worth checking against the criteria. Comment 6 is returned to the critic for clarification, since it names nothing observable. Comment 8 is **parked** as outside the communication need. Comment 1 requires no action.

∴ the order is set by which criterion each comment bears on and whether the work is failing it — constraints first because they govern whether the work can exist, then purpose, then context and audience — and not by how forcefully or how often anything was said (6 marks: *a defensible order, the top three justified against named criteria with evidence, and the ranking principle made explicit*).

Q15. (Model reply.) “Thanks — can I just pin down what you saw? You’re looking at the route A wordmark: is it the serif itself that’s the problem, or the weight it’s set in? And were you looking at it up close or from the back of the room? I’ll write it down and take it away.”

The reply is built this way for three reasons. It **does not defend**: the designer does not say “I chose a serif because...”, which would answer the insult rather than harvest the observation, and would teach the room that comments get

argued with. It **clarifies**, separating the usable part of the comment — an observation about route A’s type — from the part aimed at the designer, which cannot be acted on and is not worth the critique’s time. And it **records and defers**: “I’ll write it down and take it away” ends the exchange without conceding or contesting, and moves the decision to where it belongs, which is afterwards, against the design criteria. Asking about viewing distance is not incidental — it is the question that turns a judgement into evidence the whole room can check *(4 marks: a reply that clarifies rather than defends, plus reasons covering no defence, the observation preserved, and the decision deferred to the criteria).*

Q16. *(Model — any four techniques, each tied to a stated criterion.)*

1. Full-size mock-up. Print each marker face at its real size and mount it on board rather than showing it on a screen, so scale, stroke weight and the relationship between the mark, the wordmark and the stop number are all true. This tests the **constraint** that the face is routed and painted on a hardwood post — a screen preview cannot show whether a stroke is wide enough to cut.

2. Viewing at true distance. Pin the faces at the far end of the room and have the critics look from 2–4 m, then say what arrives first, what arrives last and what does not arrive at all. This is the **context** criterion tested in the room instead of guessed at afterwards, and it makes the feedback descriptive by construction.

3. Side-by-side comparison at the same size. Show both routes together rather than one at a time, so critics comment on the differences the selection decision actually turns on. This serves the **purpose** criterion, because the question is which route identifies SALTMARSH faster, not whether one route is pleasant.

4. Production test print in one black ink. Beside each colour face, pin the same artwork output in a single black ink. This turns the stated **constraint** — the identity must also work in one black ink — from a claim into visible evidence, and it is the technique that settles route A’s tonal problem without anyone having to argue about it.

Then state the question the critique is for: “at 2–4 m, does route A’s wordmark separate from its ground — and if it does not, is there a version of route A that survives one ink?” *(4 marks: four techniques, each named and justified against a criterion quoted from the brief.)*

Q17. A critique is a teaching instrument that runs in both directions. For the **critics**, the first value is analytical: to say anything usable they must read someone else’s work against a brief they did not write — identifying the criteria at stake, locating evidence in the piece, and building an observation into an argument. That is the same analytical move they will need on their own work, practised without the defensiveness that comes from owning it. Second, it develops **design terminology**: a critic who has to say *why* the marker fails cannot manage on “it doesn’t work”, and is pushed toward tonal contrast, weight, hierarchy and scale — the vocabulary the study design asks students to expand through exactly this activity. Third, it builds **judgement against criteria rather than taste**, because the discipline of naming the criterion a comment bears on trains critics out of preference and into evidence. Finally, it is professionally realistic: designers work in studios where reviewing colleagues’ work is routine, and learning to deliver a difficult observation respectfully is a skill in its own right. ∴ the designer takes away a refinement plan, but the critics take away transferable analytical skill — which is why participation is required of everyone, not only of whoever is presenting *(4 marks: at least three distinct benefits to the critics, with reasons).*

Q18. Convergent thinking is the deliberate narrowing of many options to a defensible few by applying agreed criteria. A designer who changes everything that was mentioned has done the narrowing without applying any criteria — the selection has been made by the room, and specifically by whoever spoke. That fails in four ways.

It **substitutes volume for evidence**: a comment repeated twice is not thereby more valid than one made once, and a preference with no criterion behind it gets the same weight as a demonstrated constraint failure. It **discards the designer’s own judgement**, which the outcome requires them to exercise — the key skill is to *respond to* feedback, not to transcribe it. It **produces an incoherent solution**, because comments made independently often pull in opposite directions: acting on both “make the mark bigger” and “give the wordmark more room” on a 90 mm post face is not possible, and attempting both yields a compromise that serves neither criterion. And it **wastes the week**, because effort goes to cosmetic points while a stated constraint failure sits unfixed.

The convergent alternative is to test each comment against the brief’s design criteria, act on those that bear on a criterion the work is failing, park those outside the brief, and decline the rest with a recorded reason. ∴ responding to feedback means weighing it, and a designer who changes everything has weighed nothing *(4 marks: convergent thinking defined; at least three consequences; the correct procedure named).*

Q19. As a critique presentation it fails, and it fails at the level of design, not delivery.

It removes the comparison. Showing one route means the critics can only respond to the route in front of them; they cannot say which of two better serves a criterion, which is precisely the judgement the designer needs before selecting. A critique held at the point of selection with nothing to select between is not doing its job.

It suppresses the evidence. Describing only the strengths means the known weaknesses — the ones the designer is best placed to identify — are never tested. If route A's one-ink behaviour is not raised, the critics may never look, and a stated constraint failure survives into refinement, where it is far more expensive to fix.

It changes what the critics can give. Presented with a defended favourite, critics take the cue and offer confirmation. The designer leaves with agreement rather than information, and agreement cannot be used to refine anything.

In its favour, presenting a preferred route with a clear rationale does at least give critics a position to test, and it is better than showing work with no reasoning at all — the failure here is one of scope and candour, not of preparation.

∴ the presentation is ineffective as a critique because it is optimised to defend a decision already made, whereas a critique exists to inform one that has not been. The repair is small: show both routes side by side, state where each is weak as well as strong, and name the open question (*4 marks: at least two substantiated weaknesses, a strength or qualification, a judgement, and a remedy*).

Q20. Design terminology is what makes a comment **checkable** and a response **precise**.

In delivery, terminology converts an impression into an observation that another person can verify. Comment 7 does this: instead of “the marker doesn't work”, the critic names the elements (the magenta **wordmark**, the grey **ground**) and the property at issue (they “read as the same darkness” — that is, they share a **tonal value**), and attaches it to the stated viewing distance. Anyone in the room can now look and agree or disagree, and the claim can be tested by printing in one ink. The same comment without terminology — “the magenta looks weird on the grey” — points at nothing that can be measured.

In response, terminology lets the designer act on the right thing. Comment 5 names the problem as one of **hierarchy** — the call to action is the smallest line on the piece — rather than as “the card needs more punch”. Because the term identifies the actual mechanism, the designer's options open up correctly: promote that line to second-level type, change its weight, or reposition it, any of which addresses the ranking. A vaguer version invites a change of colour or a bigger logo, which would not touch the problem at all. Terminology also lets the designer **record** the comment against a criterion accurately, which is what the refinement plan is built from (*4 marks: the function of terminology in delivery + one comment cited; its function in response + one comment cited*).

Q21. On the design constraints, the feedback supports route B decisively. Two independent comments bear on constraints, and both concern route A. Comment 7 reports that the magenta wordmark does not separate from the marsh-grey ground — the two sit within about two per cent of the same tonal value, so in the single black ink the brief requires, route A's wordmark is lost. Comment 2 reports that the flower's petals are about 1 mm wide at marker scale and would close up when routed into hardwood and fill in when printed in one ink. Route B's flat silhouette and reed-green-on-bone pairing survive both tests. A stated constraint shown not to be met is the most serious verdict available, so this alone is a strong case.

On context, the feedback again supports route B. Comment 7's observation was made at the viewing distance the brief specifies, and the same tonal problem that defeats the one-ink requirement also degrades legibility at 2–4 m in full sun, where glare compresses tonal differences further.

On audience, the feedback is silent, and this is where route A's case survives. The brief names two audiences: walkers aged 30–60 new to the town, and existing volunteers aged 65+. Route A's botanical sub-line and finer palette were argued to serve the second group; route B's plain-spoken sub-line serves the first and carries the repositioning. No comment in the record tests either claim, and comment 3 — the only one to prefer route B outright — offers a count of preferences rather than evidence, so it adds nothing. This is a genuine gap, and it is not closed by the record.

On purpose, the feedback is route-neutral. Comment 5 concerns the ranking of the call to action on the sign-up card, which is a hierarchy problem present in either route and must be fixed regardless of which is selected.

∴ the recorded feedback supports moving forward with **route B** to a considerable extent, but on narrower grounds than it first appears: it establishes that route A cannot be produced to the brief as drawn, which is decisive, rather than establishing that route B communicates better. The consequences follow from that distinction. Route B proceeds, and comment 5's hierarchy fix goes with it. Route A's audience argument is not defeated and should be carried across — its botanical sub-line, *Carpobrotus · estuary reserve*, could be set as a secondary line on route B, serving the volunteers aged 65+ without reintroducing the fine petal detail or the tonal collapse. And the question of audience, which no critic tested, should be put to the next critique explicitly, since it is the one criterion on which the record gives the designer nothing (6 marks: *criteria taken one at a time with evidence, a limitation of the evidence identified, a weighted overall judgement, and what follows from it*).