

Textiles: Design briefs and specifications

Design briefs

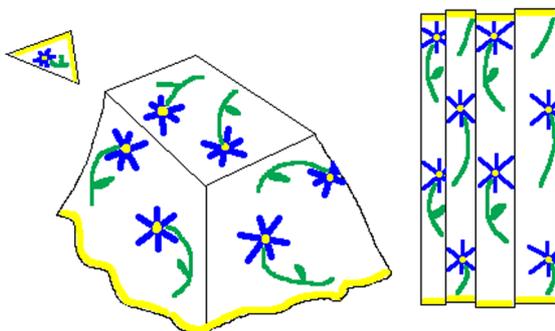
A design brief is a short statement which describes some or all of the following:

- ▲ the product to be made and its purpose;
- ▲ who will use it;
- ▲ where it will be used;
- ▲ where it might be sold.

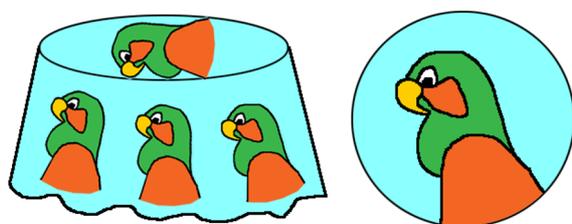
An **open** brief provides general guidelines and offers the opportunity for a wide range of possible outcomes. A **closed** brief is more specific and detailed in its requirements. Here are examples of open and closed briefs for two lines of interest.

Interiors

Open design brief: Design a range of textiles for a new restaurant called the Garden House. It will seat up to 80 people at 20 tables. It has 'country gardens' as its theme and it aims to attract shoppers and families during the day.



Closed design brief: Design a circular tablecloth for a dining table 1.5 m in diameter. It must be machine washable and brightly coloured. It is to be used in a new café, Parrots Unlimited.

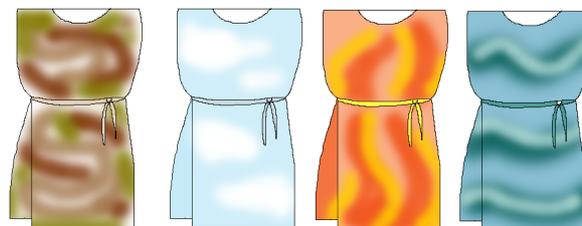


The open brief provides the designer with freedom to explore and create a wide range of possible textile designs.

The closed brief provides the opportunity to produce different solutions, but the nature of the product is clearer so the range of outcomes is limited. A particular use of textiles is required and there are only a few ways this can be achieved.

Theatre

Open design brief: Design a basic costume for use in primary schools. It will be used in dance performances based on natural themes such as earth, wind, fire and water. It will be sold through an educational supplier's catalogue.



Closed design brief: Design an adjustable collar for a child at junior school (aged 7–11) to be worn in a school dance production based on natural themes. The collar has to represent 'fire'. It must allow a quick change, move with the dancer, and be washable and hard-wearing. The school has several rolls of 100% polyester in red, yellow and orange. These should be used.

A range of costumes is possible from the open brief including headdresses, cloaks and flowing robes.



In the closed brief the product and material are specified and the end user is more clearly identified. This provides a more detailed picture of what is required.

Specifying the product

You will need to develop the design brief into a **performance specification**. This will provide a list of criteria against which you can assess your design as it develops.

The performance specification will always;

- ▲ describe what the product has to do;
- ▲ describe what the product should look like;
- ▲ state any other requirements that need to be met.

For example:

- ▲ how it would be used;
- ▲ how much it should cost to manufacture;
- ▲ possible production levels – one-off or batch production;
- ▲ what materials it should be made from;
- ▲ ergonomic requirements related to end user;
- ▲ legal requirements to be met in its development and use;
- ▲ environmental considerations and requirements.

Here are two examples of performance specifications and products that meet their requirements.

Chair cover specification

What it has to do:

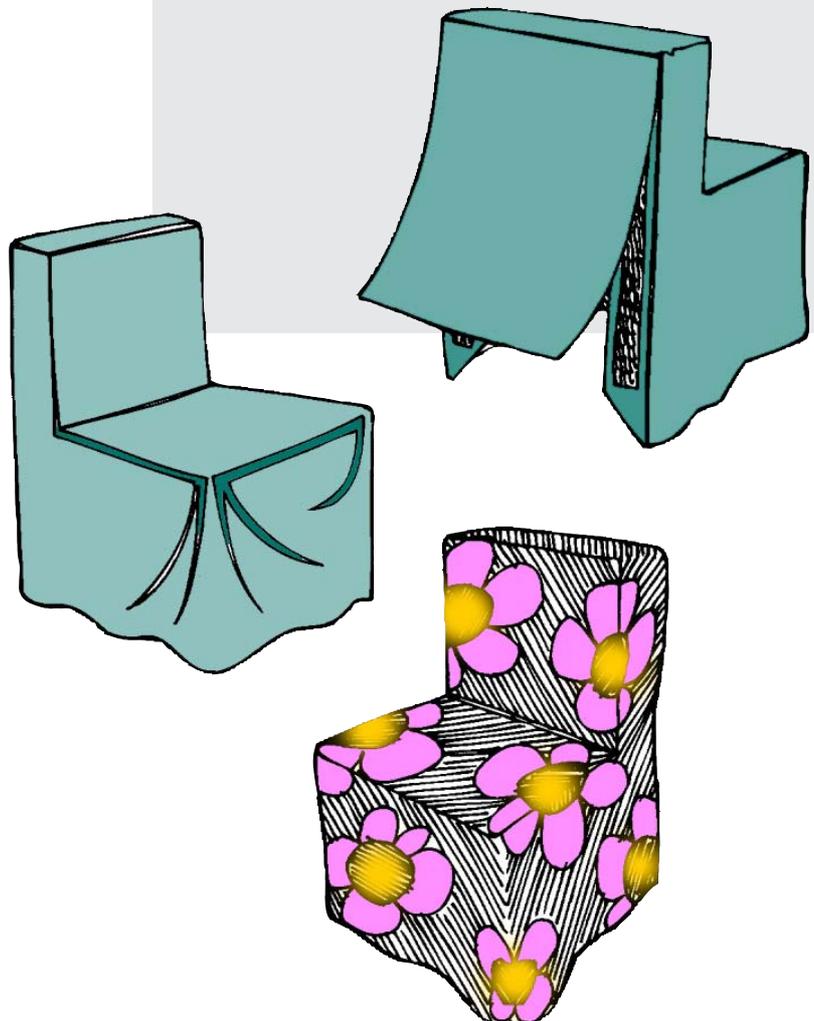
- ▲ be suitable for a range of straight-backed dining chairs;
- ▲ be easy to fasten and unfasten;
- ▲ be part of a range of 'quick' ideas to transform your home on a budget;
- ▲ meet the needs of a student aged 18–21.

What it should look like:

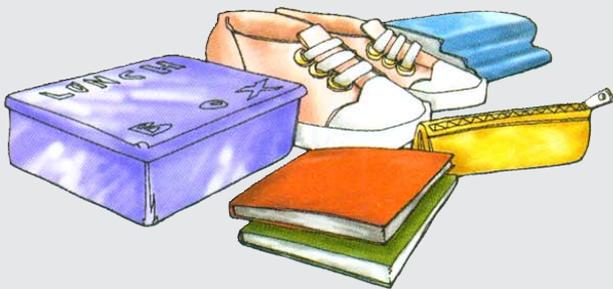
- ▲ a simple slip-on loose cover for the back of a dining chair.

Other requirements:

- ▲ be easy to manufacture cheaply in large numbers;
- ▲ be washable;
- ▲ be able to be stencilled on using fabric paints for customized finish.



Secondary school bag specification



What it has to do:

- ▲ be able to hold the equipment needed at school, e.g. homework books and folders, games/PE kit; lunch box; any extra personal items;
- ▲ be comfortable to carry.

What it should look like:

- ▲ appeal to both boys and girls in the 11–14 age range;
- ▲ be capable of customization to show interests or allegiances.

Other requirements:

- ▲ be easy to undo and do up;
- ▲ be waterproof and easy to keep clean;
- ▲ use recycled materials where possible.

