

MAH AAC CET Design & Composition

Sample Paper – 8 | 2026

Duration: 90 Minutes | Maximum Marks: 50

Instructions

- This paper contains **1 practical question** modelled on the MAH AAC CET Design & Composition pattern.
- Total marks: **50**. There is **no negative marking**.
- Render the design in **POSTER COLOUR** or **WATERCOLOUR** on a drawing sheet of approximately **14" × 19"** (portrait orientation recommended).
- Use a pencil for the initial layout; **pencil lines must not be visible** in the final submission.
- All lettering on the cover must be done **freehand**. Stencils and printed lettering are **strictly not permitted**.
- Write your **seat number and name** clearly on the front of the sheet before beginning work.
- **Mobile phones, calculators, and all electronic gadgets** are strictly prohibited in the examination hall.

Design & Composition Question



Question (50 Marks):

Design a **BOOK COVER** for a fictional book titled “*Colours of India: A Journey Through Traditional Art*” by the author *Meera Krishnamurthy*. The cover should be designed on a 14” × 19” sheet in **portrait orientation** (representing a standard book front cover). Your design must include all of the following:

- (i) The **book title** rendered in a decorative, legible hand-lettered style — the title is the single most dominant piece of text on the cover and must be immediately readable; it may be broken across two lines (e.g. ‘*Colours of India*’ on the first, ‘*A Journey Through Traditional Art*’ on the second in a smaller size);
- (ii) A **central cover illustration** that represents the theme of Indian traditional art — for example, a Madhubani-style peacock, a Warli village scene, a Pattachitra scroll panel, a Gond tree-of-life, or an abstracted Kalamkari motif; the illustration must occupy the largest zone of the cover;
- (iii) The **author’s name** (*Meera Krishnamurthy*) placed at the bottom of the cover in a legible, complementary style — smaller than the title but clear and purposefully designed (not merely written);
- (iv) A **background treatment** — a textured wash, a geometric band, a patterned field, or an atmospheric tone — that unifies the cover and does not compete with the title and illustration.

Maintain a **clear visual hierarchy**: title → illustration → author name, with each element occupying a visually distinct zone of the cover. Choose a colour palette that reflects the vibrancy of Indian traditional art (consider terracotta, indigo, saffron, forest green, or ivory as dominant tones).

Work on a 14” × 19” sheet in portrait orientation. Poster colours or watercolours are both acceptable.

Suggested Composition Layout (Thumbnail)

The thumbnail below suggests one possible arrangement. Candidates are encouraged to develop their own original composition.





Thumbnail: Book Cover — Colours of India — Madhubani Peacock Theme

Evaluation Rubric (50 Marks)



Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptors	Marks
Cover Typography	Title is dominant, legible from a distance, and decoratively rendered in a style appropriate to the book's theme; author name is clearly placed and complementary in scale	12
Central Illustration	Illustration is identifiable and well-executed; style is consistent with the chosen Indian art tradition; motif fills the designated zone purposefully	12
Visual Hierarchy & Layout	Clear reading order (title → illustration → author); each element occupies a distinct zone; composition reads as a unified, professional cover design	10
Colour Palette	Palette reflects the vibrancy of Indian traditional art; foreground-background contrast is strong; no more than 4–5 dominant colours; hues work harmoniously throughout the cover	8
Technical Execution	Clean, confident colour application; no visible pencil guidelines; neat edges; background treatment integrates with the rest of the design; sheet correctly labelled	8
Total		50

Preparation Guidance

- **Cover layout strategy:** a book cover must communicate three things at a glance — title, image, author. Sketch at least three thumbnail layouts (title-dominant, image-dominant, and balanced) before committing to one. The title and author zones must be visually separate from the illustration zone.
- **Choosing an illustration style:** Madhubani uses fine line work, bold flat colour fills, and decorative dot-and-line patterning throughout negative spaces. Warli uses white geometric stick-figure forms on a terracotta/ochre background. Pattachitra uses bold outlines with rich flat colour fills and a formal border. Choose the style you can execute most confidently



and apply it consistently throughout.

- **Title lettering:** the lettering should echo the illustration style — a Madhubani-themed cover suits hand-drawn letters with floral in-fills; a Warli-themed cover suits angular geometric letterforms. Consistency between lettering and illustration style is assessed and rewarded.
- **Background treatment:** avoid large zones of unworked white. A flat dark wash, a repeating micro-pattern (dots, chevrons, diamond lattice), or a colour-gradient tone all work. The background must recede visually — keep it lower in contrast and saturation than the illustration.
- **Colour palette:** limit yourself to 4–5 dominant hues. A classic Indian-art palette might be: deep indigo (ground/background), saffron and golden yellow (title and accents), forest green (illustration foliage and forms), terracotta (base strip), with black or very dark brown for fine outlines. Test on rough paper first.
- **Time management:** approximately 10 min thumbnails, 10 min pencil layout on the final sheet, 15 min lettering (title + author), 40 min illustration and background, 15 min finishing, border details, and corrections.

