



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS2G

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2G

Unit 2G: The Forging of the Italian Nation, 1848–1871

General Comments

The work of most students showed good understanding, careful preparation and engagement with the subject. It was pleasing to note the continuing improvement in knowledge and confidence of the outcomes of unification by 1870–1871. Students generally managed the time available effectively. Answers were mostly well-organised, with sound quality of written communication, although, as usual, there were also many instances of under-achievement due to excessive haste, imprecise definitions or shaky grasp of chronology. Most answers showed direct relevance to the question, rigid factual description for its own sake was rare. The work of the best students was impressive.

Question 1

The responses to this question showed many strengths but also many ingrained weaknesses. Many answers to 01 failed to focus directly on comparing differences and similarities and took a literal and uncritical, line-by-line approach to each source in turn. There was also a tendency to indulge in stock, ‘all-purpose’ speculation about the provenance of the sources. Some attempts to use own knowledge were misdirected because the evidence was not used to develop the comparison of the sources. In *Question 02*, most answers made explicit use of the sources but a substantial minority of less successful responses placed excessive reliance on a descriptive account of the evidence of the three sources, with little own knowledge and only limited and literal links to the question. Better answers were more selective, using evidence from the sources to support a balanced answer to the specific question.

- 01** Answers to this question, comparing the views of the sources on the annexation of Rome in 1870, were generally sound in identifying differences and similarities. There was a worthy intent to use own knowledge of the context but the evidence was too often indirect and was not applied to comparison of the sources. A number of students were led astray by the mistaken assumption that Comte Beaufort, author of Source B in 1874, was a ‘later historian’ rather than a partisan close observer of recent events.
- 02** In this question, on the contribution of Pius IX to the lack of unity in the years 1862 to 1871, most students showed good awareness of the situation of the united Italy by 1871 and offered a balanced assessment of a range of relevant ‘other factors, alongside the Pope. It was pleasing to note the improved knowledge and understanding of the Brigands War. Most answers made effective use of the sources. On the other hand, there was a widespread tendency to indulge in rather rigid descriptive accounts of ‘the state of Italy’ in 1871, ignoring the key developments since 1862.

Question 2

Answers to this question were fewer, less confident and less successful than the response to *Question 3*. It seemed as if students would have been much happier to deal with a question on the failure of the 1848–1849 revolutions, rather than their origins and spread across Italy. This is indeed a topic of crucial importance and should not be neglected.

- 03** In this question, on the outbreak of revolution in Sicily in 1848, a small minority of students supported their explanation with precise, analytical evidence. Most answers offered relevant general assertions but were very thin in knowledge.
- 04** Answers to this question, on the importance of Mazzini for the spread of revolution in 1848, were uneven. Several answers showed good knowledge and understanding of Mazzini's role, balanced against a range of other factors. Other answers were hesitant and rather generalized. One weakness of such answers was insecure grasp of the basic chronology of the spread of revolutions.

Question 3

- 05** Answers to this question, on the reasons why Cavour attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1856, were generally convincing, often based on an excellent understanding of the international context and how it provided Cavour with a vital opportunity. Weaker responses were let down by a misguided concern to describe Cavour's achievements at the conference. Some outstandingly good answers went beyond a list of relevant explanations to make differentiated judgments about how various key factors were interrelated.
- 06** In this question on the role of foreign powers between 1857 and 1861, a small number of weak answers were far too generalized, lacking accurate knowledge of the key developments leading to unification. The large majority of effective answers showed a confident grasp of the impact of Napoleon III on the war against Austria; and of the role played by Britain in 1860. The importance of foreign interventions was balanced against a range of relevant other factors, including Garibaldi, Cavour and the modernization of Piedmont.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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