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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In History (9HI0/2D)

Paper 2: Depth study

Option 2D.1: The unification of Italy, 1830-70

Option 2D.2: The unification of Germany, 1840-71

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this first post-Covid set of exams with A Level paper 2D, which deals with The Unification of Italy, c1830-1870 (2D.1) and The Unification of Germany, c1840-1871 (2D.2).

The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory question which is based on two linked sources. It assesses source analysis and evaluation skills (AO2). Section B comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts - cause, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and significance. Candidates appeared to organise their time effectively and there was very little evidence of candidates being unable to attempt both answers within the time allocated. A minority of scripts posed some problems with the legibility of handwriting; examiners can only give credit for what they can read.

In Section A, the strongest answers were able to develop reasoned and supported inferences based on the sources. Such responses evaluated the sources thoroughly in relation to the demands of the enquiry on the basis of both the contextual knowledge that was on offer and through an awareness of the nature, origin and purpose of the source. The question requires candidates to use the sources 'together', but it is not a requirement to use them 'together' throughout the response. Across the suite of Paper 2 question papers, there was some evidence of some candidates attempting to do this. Depending on the sources, it was not always possible to do this convincingly, and some candidates engaged in some superficial argument and analysis as a result. However, for 2D.1 and 2D.2 there was much scope to use the sources 'together' and there were some excellent answers that benefitted from the direct comparison between Metternich and Cavour as authors in 2D.1 and, particularly, from using the speeches and letter of Frederick William I in 2D.2 to chart his response to revolutionary activity across the months of 1848. Some candidates used their contextual knowledge to describe events in great detail, rather than using it to illuminate and to discuss the sources. This sometimes resulted in candidates not dealing with the sources adequately, but most candidates had sufficient contextual knowledge to deal effectively with the sources in both options.

In section B it was clear that most candidates had a secure knowledge base, but this was not always effectively used to address the specific focus of the questions posed. Stronger answers clearly understood the importance of identifying the appropriate second order concept that was being targeted by the question. Weaker candidates either engaged in a narrative approach that made links to the question in the conclusion or shaped their responses analytically but lacked sufficient substance and accurate contextual knowledge to support the arguments that they were making. Candidates are encouraged to ensure that they take the most appropriate approach to answering a question. Candidates should always aim to show the links between the issues raised, not merely to present a list of factors. Candidates need to be aware of the chronological parameters of questions and to ensure that they write across the chronology. Not all candidates have a secure understanding of what is meant by 'criteria' in terms of bullet point 3 of the mark scheme. Some candidates note in the introduction to the essay that they are naming the criteria that they plan to use, when in actual fact they are referring to the issues or the factors that will be discussed in the response. 'Criteria' in bullet point 3 of the mark scheme refers to the basis on which candidates reach their judgement, not the issues that are discussed in the process of reaching that judgement.

It is advised also to refer to the other Examiner Reports in the Paper 2 suite of papers, where other examples and commentaries can be found.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Commentary on individual questions

Option 2D.1: The unification of Italy, c1830-70

Q1. Candidates were required to evaluate two sources together (Source 1 – letters sent by Metternich & Source 2 – a journal article written by Cavour) in relation to an enquiry into the reasons why there was little progress in challenging the restored order in Italy in the years 1830-47.

Most candidates were able to select evidence from the sources to show that both authors felt that internal divisions within Italy were to blame for the lack of progress and were able to use their own contextual knowledge to support claims and inferences that could be made. The majority referred to the lack of co-operation amongst states in revolution in the 1830-31, the concept of *campanilismo* and/or the North-South divide. However, some candidates referred to differences that were more apparent during the process of Unification than in the 1830s and 40s. There was also some sound evaluation of references to and inferences that could be made about the role of secret societies. Some higher-Level responses suggested that despite the agreements between the two Sources, the motives and understanding of the authors may have been different.

A significant majority of candidates also referred to Cavour's opening statement that 'the political influence of foreign powers' was the actual source of Italy's problems; however, many did not refer to this. Even more candidates suggested that Metternich did not refer to foreign power at all, and that this limited the value of the source because this viewpoint was 'missing'. There was evidence in the Source that could have been used to evidence and/or infer the role of Austria in being an obstacle to change, in particular Metternich's claim 'So, I have not given them such a system.'

Most candidates were aware of Metternich's role in Italian politics of the time, although some just saw him as an 'outsider', and that Cavour's article was written before he became a major political force in Italian politics, although some thought he was Minister of Finance at the time of writing.

Overall, the Source elicited a wide range of responses from Level 1 to Level 5 and the majority of the candidates were able to access the Sources sufficiently to provide an evaluation. The best responses were able to evidence the similarities between the two Sources with regard to internal reasons while acknowledging the role of external factors. These responses often referred to Metternich's apparent contempt for Italian political activity ('many idle layabouts') in comparison to Cavour's apparent wish to educate Italians in what needed to be improved internally before foreign powers could be expelled.

Q3. This was the less popular of the two Italian essay questions but was still answered by a significant number of candidates. The question required candidates to respond to the suggestion that Piedmont was better prepared to lead Italy to unification in 1858 than it had been in 1848. Candidates approached the question in two main ways, both of which were

equally valid. Some candidates compared the situation in 1858 directly to that in 1848 while others determined the extent of change over time. Most candidates agreed that all-in-all the statement was valid but that different aspects of the Piedmontese development were more or less prepared.

There was some impressive knowledge of the reasons for Piedmontese failure to lead successfully in 1848 and the subsequent development of politics, economic and diplomacy through the period (though there was no requirement to use economic developments in the essays). Most candidates were able to respond at Level 3 by explaining the developments in Piedmont. At Level 4 and Level 5, candidates began to explore the statement by showing how the developments made Piedmont stronger in relation to leading unification or directly comparing to Piedmont's position in 1848. A few responses suggested that Piedmont still had some way to go in developing its leadership potential and was still too dependent on the reactions of foreign powers to be guaranteed the leading role. There was some excellent knowledge of the role and development of the National Society during the 1850s.

Q4. This was the more popular of the two Italian essay questions. The question required candidates to determine the accuracy of the statement that it was mainly the actions of Italians themselves that shaped Italian unification in the years 1858-70. Most candidates approached the question by referring to the actions of both individual Italians and the Italian people in relation to external factors shaping Italian unification. Some candidates analysed the actions of the Italian populous in relation to both individual Italian leaders and/or external factors. Both these approaches were equally valid. Those candidates who viewed Piedmont as separate from Italy, however, were not able to produce a sustained logical response.

There were many excellent responses that addressed in detail the role of Italian leaders such as Cavour, Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi in relation to the role of foreign powers, particularly France and Austria but also Britain and Prussia. The best responses were those that were able to analyse the shaping of unification across the majority of the specified time period from 1858-70, encompassing the events surrounding the outbreak of the Second War of Italian Independence, the conquest of the south and the creation of the Italian kingdom and the annexation of Venetia and Rome. It was not expected that candidates would use content that was not included in the Advanced Notice but many responses also dealt with the outcome of the Second War of Italian Independence and Piedmontese expansion in the northern Italy, including the use of plebiscites in the central Duchies. Some responses at Level 4 and Level 5 showed good analysis but did not cover sufficient of the time period to reach the top of the Level. Some candidates spent too long explaining the context of unification in the 1850s and so did not give themselves enough time to cover the time period. However, some development of the context of the Second War of Italian Independence and Cavour's role was appropriate. There was some excellent knowledge of the role of France and the complexities of the role Prussia demonstrated.

Option 2D.2: The unification of Germany, c1840-1871

Q2. Candidates were required to evaluate two sources together (Source 1 – public speeches made by Frederick William IV in March 1848 & Source 2 – a letter written by Frederick William IV in December 1848) in relation to an enquiry into the response of Frederick William IV of Prussia to the 1848-49 revolutions in Germany.

Most candidates were able to select evidence from the sources to show the difference in the response of Frederick William IV during the course of the revolutions in 1848 and, as such, subsequent event in 1849. Almost all candidates referred to the difference between Frederick William's public response in March ('This is a great day.') and his private response in December ('the silliest, most stupid and the wickedest Revolution of the century'). Most candidates also had a strong contextual knowledge and understanding of the course of the revolution in Prussia and Frederick William's relationship with the Frankfurt Assembly. Indeed, there was impressive knowledge that resulted in some excellent high-Level responses.

Candidates used the Sources together to show that Frederick William made public announcements in March that sided with the revolutionaries and most commented on his public response being influenced by the revolution taking place as he spoke. Higher-Level responses were aware of the exact circumstances in which he was speaking and referred to the events which led to the march and speeches taking place. Some were able to select evidence that showed the subtle difference in the language used in speaking to the students ('black, red and gold colours') to that at the Town Hall ('the hears and loyalty of my people'). Most responses also referred to the private nature of the letters and the frankness with which Frederick William was writing. Some candidates were a little confused as to the timeline of events in the offer of the German crown to Frederick William by the Frankfurt Assembly. Many candidates referred to inferences to Frederick William's commitment to the divine right of kings ('such an illegitimate crown') and some put the letter in the context of Frederick William regaining the upper hand in Prussia itself.

Overall, candidates were able to access the Sources across the range of Levels and there were some very good responses showing clear source evaluation and analysis that were enjoyable to read.

Q5. This was the more popular of the two Germany questions. The question required candidates to determine whether the development of the *Zollverein* was the most significant factor in the rise of Prussia in the years 1852-67. The best responses were able to analyse the role of the *Zollverein* in relation to several other factors, such as the role of industrialisation, the growing weakness of Austria, Prussian militarisation, the role of Bismarck, the role of diplomacy and the role of war. Many responses described or explained the factors rather than exploring the relationship of the factors to each other and their specific connection to the rise of Prussia. The best responses were those that explored the rise of Prussia across the whole of the specified time period from 1852-67, so including the Austro-Prussian war.

Most candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of the *Zollverein* and were able to analyse how the development and organisation of the *Zollverein* over time enabled Prussia to make gains economically and politically in Germany at the expense of Austria. However, there were a significant number of candidates who did not really understand the concept of the customs union and a few who thought that the *Zollverein* was a railway network.

There were some excellent responses that were able to show how different factors interlinked in the rise of Prussia and the decline of Austria. Other responses were able to show how the *Zollverein* was the most significant factor in relation to factors or that another factor was more significant by developing criteria related to causation and impact.

Q6. This was the less popular of the two German questions. The question required candidates to determine the accuracy of the statement that France was more responsible than Prussia for the breakdown in relations between the two states in the years 1866-70, from the Austro-Prussian War to the Franco-Prussian War. There was some very impressive knowledge and understanding of events and some excellent analysis of the role of France and Prussia. Many responses showed an appreciation of French culpability even in the face of Bismarckian diplomacy and manipulation. Level 3 responses tended to explain the major events while Level 4 and 5 responses explored the interrelatedness of events to create a sustained analysis. At lower Levels, responses often deployed confused chronology. The best responses were able to analyse events over time exploring the role of each side in the events that led to the complete breakdown in relations that resulted in the Franco-Prussian War.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A

- Candidates should aim to draw out reasoned and developed inferences that go beyond comprehension and summary of the sources
- Candidates should read the caption carefully so that they can make full use of it when evaluating the sources
- Contextual knowledge should be used to illuminate and discuss what is in the source, rather than provide an answer to the enquiry. Long descriptions of linked events are unlikely to gain any credit
- Candidates should make use of the sources together at some point in the answer but are certainly not required to do this all the way through the answer.

Section B

- Candidates should not assume that every question will require a factor/other factors approach
- Candidates must provide precise contextual knowledge as evidence. Weaker responses generally lacked depth and sometimes range
- Candidates should avoid a narrative/descriptive approach; this undermines the analysis that is required for the higher levels
- Candidates need to be aware of key dates as identified in the specification so that they can address the questions with chronological precision
- Candidates should try to explore the links between issues rather than merely present a list of factors.