



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2G

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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Unit HIS2G

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

General Comments

The overall quality of response from candidates was secure and convincing. Most candidates made effective use of the time available and gave appropriate attention to all four questions they attempted. Standards of presentation and the quality of written communication were usually good, although a minority of candidates relied upon loosely-expressed and generalised assertion. Most candidates showed a healthy determination to maintain relevance to the question, avoiding rigid factual description for its own sake. The work of the best candidates was impressively focused and well balanced.

Question 1

Although many candidates dealt with this question well, there were several instances of evident under-achievement. Many answers to Question 1(a) failed to focus directly on comparing differences and similarities and spent too much time on paraphrasing each source in turn. Other answers were rather literal and uncritical in using the evidence of the sources and failed to select evidence appropriately. A number of candidates attempted to use own knowledge but failed to apply their material to the comparison of the sources. There was also a tendency to indulge in stock, 'all-purpose' speculation about the provenance of the sources – such an approach achieved little. In Question 1(b), many promising answers were restricted to Level 2 because they failed to make any explicit use of the sources. Others tried to base their answer on a descriptive account of the evidence of the three sources, with little own knowledge and without convincing links to the question. A selective approach, *using* evidence from the sources and from own knowledge to develop a balanced answer to the specific question, would have been much more productive.

- (a) Answers to Question 1(a), comparing the views of the sources on expectations of success in the revolution of 1848, were generally sound, attempting to balance differences and similarities and, in many cases, to use own knowledge of the context. Too often, however, the use of own knowledge was rather indirect and was not applied to comparison of the sources. A number of candidates also failed to distinguish between the contemporary views of Giuseppe Montanelli, quoted in Source A, as opposed to the author of the source, Christopher Duggan.
- (b) In Question 1(b), on the lessons learned after the revolutions of 1848–1849 ended in failure, most candidates maintained appropriate relevance to the question, though many answers lacked sufficient depth and detail. Some answers argued persuasively that lessons were not learned, pointing to the persistence of internal divisions among nationalists. Several answers took the opposite view, pointing to the more realistic policies of Piedmont under Cavour from the early 1850s.

Question 2

- (a) In Question 2(a), on the formation of the Italian National Society, a small minority of candidates was able to explain the ideas and role of Pallavicini and the founders of the movement; and the importance of Cavour in attracting supporters of unification into Piedmont. Most answers were thin in knowledge and weak in relevance.
- (b) Answers to Question 2(b), on the importance of the internal strength of Piedmont in advancing the cause of unification, were more convincing. Several answers showed good knowledge and understanding of the modernization of Piedmont through railway development and trade reforms and how the economic strength of the state allowed Cavour to take a leading role. One weakness of such answers was a tendency to describe the evidence rather than use it to support an argued case.

Question 3

- (a) Answers to Question 3(a), on the outbreak of war with Austria in 1859, were often let down by an excessively descriptive approach – especially to the events of 1858 such as the Orsini assassination attempt and the agreement at Plombieres. A handful of very good answers kept a direct focus on explanation, pointing to the interlinked motivations of Napoleon III and Cavour.
- (b) In Question 3(b) on the significance of foreign intervention between 1859 and 1866, many answers were far too generalized and lacked accurate knowledge of the key developments in 1866 leading to the acquisition of Venezia. The small number of successful answers showed a confident grasp of the impact of the war between Austria and Prussia in 1866 and how France exploited the outcome of the war. Overall, the response to this question seemed to indicate a lack of secure knowledge about events after 1861. Centres are strongly advised to cover the whole specification.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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