



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

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

There was a generally convincing response to this paper. Most candidates made effective use of the time available and produced answers of the appropriate length to all four questions they attempted. There were few inadequate scripts and many candidates produced work that was well organized and with a sound relevance to the questions set. Several scripts were impressive, showing substantial knowledge, analytical depth and concise expression.

Question 1

- 01** Most answers to this question, on Charles Albert in 1848, were based on a direct comparison of the views in the sources, dealing with tone and emphasis as well as the literal wording of the sources (although a number of weaker answers provided merely stock, all-purpose speculation about the difference between a primary and a secondary source). There was clear understanding of the tendency towards self-justification in Charles Albert's proclamation and of the contrast with Mack Smith's critical objectivity in Source B. Analysis of the specific textual evidence was not always precise, however, and many candidates failed to make an accurate 'match' of evidence to support the comparison they were attempting. Many candidates included material from their own knowledge but were not always successful in applying this knowledge to an effective comparison.
- 02** In this question, on the strength of Austria as a cause of the failure of the 1848/49 revolutions in Italy, most candidates were able to write extensively on a range of other factors but only a minority dealt well with the issue of Austrian strengths. Such answers tended to settle into a rigid, prepared approach to the topic and, by the end, had rather lost sight of the key words of the question. It was pleasing that the great majority of candidates made determined efforts to include relevant material from the sources. There were few outstanding answers but the overall response was sound.

Question 2

Only a minority of candidates chose to answer this question and the quality of responses was less convincing than in Question 3.

- 03** Answers to the question on Cavour and the modernization of Piedmont, were mostly sound in terms of identifying a range of factors such as transport, commerce and influencing foreign powers, but the supporting evidence often lacked depth and detail.
- 04** In this question, on the prospects of success for Italian unification in the 1850s, answers were generally sound on the lessons learned from the failures of 1848/49 and showed sound knowledge of the role of Cavour in 1856 and 1858. It was disappointing, however, that so few candidates were able to define precisely who the supporters of Italian unification actually were; there was a surprising absence, for example, of references to the National Society, or to leading personalities other than Cavour.

Question 3

- 05** Answers to this question, on Garibaldi's success in Sicily and Naples in 1860, were often direct and effective, based on confident knowledge and understanding of factors such as Garibaldi's charismatic leadership, the internal weaknesses of Bourbon rule and the influence of foreign powers. A number of high-quality answers showed sharp understanding of Cavour's failed attempts to block Garibaldi's progress from behind the scenes. Weaker answers tended to be much too descriptive, or to rely on rather uncritical assertions about Garibaldi's leadership.
- 06** This question, on the contribution of Napoleon III to Italian unification by 1871, was generally answered well. The best answers were impressive, showing detailed and wide-ranging knowledge about the key developments between 1858 and 1870. The ambivalence of Napoleon's motives and actions was well understood and provided the basis for balanced arguments that were often explained with analytical depth and differentiation. Less successful answers either relied on relevant but generalized assertions, or were very unbalanced, obsessed with 1858/59 and offering little on the 1860s.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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