



**General Certificate of Education  
January 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 quality of response from students was mostly good. Students used the time available sensibly, producing relevant answers of appropriate length to all questions. Standards of organization and presentation were good. Few students neglected to use the sources in *Question 1.02*. Most answers addressed the demands of the question and avoided rigid narrative description. The work of many students was built around balanced arguments supported by well-chosen evidence.

### Question 1

- 01** There were many convincing answers to *Question 1.01*, comparing the views of warlike nationalists and of Pope Pius IX in relation to war against Austria. Many answers recognized accurately the differences between the sources, not only in literal meaning but also in tone and emphasis. Students were less confident in dealing with similarities; but many were able to identify the shared belief in the enormous moral authority of the Papacy. Some superior answers made skilful use of own knowledge to explain the Pope's changed attitude of attitude in the Allocution of 1848 after his earlier apparent support for the revolution – or showed insight into the fact that Source B was in many ways a direct rebuttal of the claims asserted in Source A. Weaker answers were obsessed with an over-literal approach, trying to paraphrase each source in turn, line by line. Such answers failed to make any valid comparison and relied on inappropriate evidence.
- 02** In *Question 1.02*, on the importance of internal divisions in explaining the failure of the 1848–1849 revolutions, most students were able to balance internal divisions against a range of other factors. Most answers also made appropriate reference to the sources. Sometimes, the arguments presented were rather formulaic and pre-packaged, not consistently linked back to the question. There was also a tendency to generalize about the 'internal divisions' without defining them precisely enough. Weaker answers often placed excessive reliance upon literal paraphrase of the sources, lacking sufficient own knowledge to provide the necessary context.

### Question 2

- 03** Answers to *Question 2.03*, on the reasons why Cavour made the agreement at Plombières in 1858, were often convincing, based on solid knowledge of Cavour's actions and the motives behind them. Many students made effective use of the longer-term background, such as Cavour's diplomacy at the Peace of Paris in 1856. It was disappointing, however, to see a substantial minority of answers fall short through lack of relevance. Many well-informed students wasted much time and effort describing the motives of Napoleon III, or of the outcomes of the agreement afterwards.
- 04** Answers to *Question 2.04*, on the role of Garibaldi in the achievement of unification between 1859 and 1861, were of mixed quality. Weaker responses tended to be generalized and descriptive. A number of more convincing answers produced balanced

evaluation – both of Garibaldi’s failings as well as his strengths; and of the importance of other factors, such as Cavour’s political skill or the actions of foreign powers.

### **Question 3**

It was pleasing that a large number of students was attracted to *Question 3*, showing a good grasp of the final years of unification after 1861 a topic too often neglected in previous years.

- 05** Many students were well-informed about the role of France in protecting the Papacy from 1849 onwards. Several high-quality answers explained skilfully the contradictory motives of Napoleon III in sometimes blocking, rather than advancing, the cause of Italian unification – and the extent to which these contradictory motives arose from domestic political considerations within France. One common failing, however, was lengthy description of the eventual French withdrawal due to the Franco-Prussian War. Such evidence *could* be made relevant to the question but all too often it was not.
- 06** In *Question 3.06*, on the extent to which “national unity” was achieved between 1862 and 1871 most answers were based on a balanced assessment, often supported by convincing evidence. Many answers, however, were wholly focused on a retrospective view from 1870–1871 and did not deal sufficiently with the key events since 1861, such as the acquisition of Venetia in 1866 and the way the actions of the Papacy, such as the promulgation of the *Syllabus of Errors*, deepened divisions between Church and State.

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