

**Question 2:** With reference to the origin and purpose, assess the value and limitations of **SOURCE 2** for anybody studying the unification of Italy.

**SOURCE 2:** Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_unification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_unification) (Visited December 1st, 2020 13:30)

The Second War of Italian Independence began in April 1859 when the Sardinian Prime Minister Count Cavour found an ally in Napoleon III. Napoleon III signed a secret alliance and Cavour provoked Austria with military maneuvers and eventually led to the war in April 1859. Cavour called for volunteers to enlist in the Italian liberation. The Austrians planned to use their army to beat the Sardinians before the French could come to their aid. Austria had an army of 140,000 men, while the Sardinians had a mere 70,000 men by comparison. However, the Austrians' numerical strength was outweighed by an ineffectual leadership appointed by the Emperor on the basis of noble lineage, rather than military competency. Their army was slow to enter the capital of Sardinia, taking almost ten days to travel the 80 kilometers (50 mi). By this time, the French had reinforced the Sardinians, so the Austrians retreated.

The Austrians were defeated at the Battle of Magenta on 4 June and pushed back to Lombardy. Napoleon III's plans worked and at the Battle of Solferino, France and Sardinia defeated Austria and forced negotiations; at the same time, in the northern part of Lombardy, the Italian volunteers known as the Hunters of the Alps, led by Giuseppe Garibaldi, defeated the Austrians at Varese and Como. On 12 July, the Armistice of Villafranca was signed. The settlement, by which Lombardy was annexed to Sardinia, left Austria in control of Venice.

Sardinia eventually won the Second War of Italian Unification through statesmanship rather than armies or popular election. The final arrangement was ironed out by "back-room" deals instead of in the battlefield. This was because neither France, Austria, nor Sardinia wanted to risk another battle and could not handle further fighting. All of the sides were eventually unhappy with the final outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> War of Italian Unification and expected another conflict in the future.<sup>37</sup>

Sardinia annexed Lombardy from Austria; it later occupied and annexed the United Provinces of Central Italy, consisting of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchy of Parma, the Duchy of Modena and Reggio and the Papal Legations on 22 March 1860. Sardinia handed Savoy and Nice over to France at the Treaty of Turin on 24 March 1860.

37. Avery, Robert. "The Victorian Web". Retrieved 27 March 2015.

### What do you need to do?

This question can give you six points. The answer consists of three different parts – a presentation of the origin and purpose of the selected text (source); a review of the text (source) according to the source-critical criteria historians use (authenticity / time / dependence / tendency) and finally a discussion of the value of the selected text (source) - value and limitations. To get a full score, all the parts must be included! For each missing part, there will be a points deduction. The last part - a discussion of the source value is so important that you lose several points if this part is not included (or is incorrect).

### Example answer:

**ORIGIN:** Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_unification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_unification) (Visited December 1st, 2020 13:30)

**Who** wrote it = "Wikipedia" – unknown author(s)

**When** did the person write it = We don't know, but this was the information given December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 at 13:30

**Where** did the person write it = We don't know

**What** is the source = It's an article in a net-based encyclopedia (a tertiary source)

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this text in the digital encyclopedia Wikipedia is to inform the public about the unification of Italy. Wikipedia is an encyclopedia that is constantly changing because it is a so-called "*Open Source*". This means that the article has several authors with an unknown background to us. Their purpose may be more than informing the public about the event itself. They may want to influence the information in a certain direction (political, religious, socio-economic, etc.). This may be worth mentioning, but the main purpose of this article in Wikipedia must be considered the same as for other encyclopedias - to inform the public about the unification of Italy from available sources.

For **whom** did the person write it = To the general public that's interested in the unification of Italy

**Authentic:** When it comes to Wikipedia, we can turn on the computer and search for the article using the web address. On the page – in the right corner we can find the publishing history of the article ("*View history*"). There we can look up the date that is closest to the date and time mentioned in the source ("*Visited December 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 at 13:30*") and see if the text matches Wikipedia's text.

**Time:** This is a **non-contemporary source**. It was written many years after the unification of Italy, which is a limitation. Another problem with the time criterion in this article is that we do not know when it was written (Wikipedia started in 2001 so the article might be that old, but this is a popular topic of research so it is not very likely that the article is that old – but without dates we do not know). The advantage is that several works by professional historians have been written and the results of these works are often included in various encyclopedias (such as Wikipedia).

**Dependence:** This is a **tertiary source**. In other words, the source has been influenced by various works written about Italy's unification. The article has also been influenced by various authors who wrote the article. So, the dependency criterion is something that must be emphasized in this particular source. The fact that we do not know the authors, that there is only one reference (Robert Avery – footnote) and that it is only part of a larger text means that we find it difficult to control the dependence of other sources.

**Tendency:** The language is relatively neutral, and the authors do not clearly give any indications of supporting certain political, religious, etc... ideas. In other words, it is a fairly typical encyclopedia text, which gives the source a certain credibility.

**VALUE:** This is a tertiary source written long after the unification of Italy. This is an advantage because the authors have been able to study the reasons for Italy's unification in more detail as several sources have been published since the unification (advantage of hindsight). Wikipedia is a digital encyclopedia that is read by many. If there were major errors in the article, a warning text would appear stating that the article could be questioned. This is also an advantage.

**LIMITATION:** We know very little about the various authors (it only says "Wikipedia" as a source). There is only one source mentioned in the article (Robert Avery). This text is part of a larger article and we do not know what is said in the rest of the article. In addition, no date for the publication of this information is mentioned. All this - unknown author; only one referenced source; that it is only a small part of a larger article and that there is no publication date limits this source.