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# Document-Based Activities on 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Nationalism

*Using Primary Sources and the Internet*

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## The Unification of Germany and Italy

### Teacher Page

#### Overview:

After the Congress of Vienna, the Holy Roman Empire was reorganized into a grouping of 39 states called the German confederation. Prussia dominated the confederation politically and militarily. The revolutions of 1848 forced constitutional reforms, but tensions in Germany continued. The priorities of Prussian Junkers (land-holding aristocrats) clashed with those of the working class and bourgeoisie. Prussians clashed with Saxons, while Protestants clashed with Catholics. Finally, German success in the Franco-Prussian War enabled Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and King Wilhelm I to effect German unification, which was proclaimed in 1871.

Meanwhile, after the Congress of Vienna territories in Italy were ruled by Austria and the Spanish Bourbons. Under the leadership of Giuseppe Mazzini, the members of the Young Italy organization pressed for a united, republican Italy. Later, under the leadership of Camillo di Cavour, Italy was united in 1870.

#### Objectives: students will be able to

- identify Mazzini and Young Italy as important forces in Italian unification
- explain the influence of nationalist beliefs in Mazzini's Young Italy
- sequence the events that led to German unification
- evaluate the importance of international struggle in achieving national freedom

#### Web Sites Used in this Lesson:

Giuseppe Mazzini—Instructions for the Members of Young Italy  
[http://www.dickinson.edu/~rhyne/232/Four/Mazzini\\_instructions.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/~rhyne/232/Four/Mazzini_instructions.html)

Documents of German Unification, 1848-1871  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/germanunification.html>

#### Strategies:

Introduce the lesson with an overview of the geography of Germany and Italy prior to unification. The Web page at <http://www.roangelo.net/valente/garibaldi.html> offers a map and timeline of Italian unification. The page at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wggerman/map/vienna1815.htm> illustrates the relative locations of Prussia and Austria after 1815, while <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wggerman/map/germanconf.htm> offers an overview of the German confederation after 1815.

Ask students to speculate about factors that might have motivated these independent principalities or kingdoms to unite into modern nations.

Wrap-Up:

Review student responses to question 14. Have students read selected letters out loud, and post student timelines. Discuss the following question: How might a united Germany and Italy have changed the balance of power in Europe?

Extension Activity:

Have students study the German and/or Italian national anthems:

- <http://www.brandenburghistorica.com/page5.html>
- <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/deutschl.html>
- <http://www.copcity.com/anthems/italy.html>

Have students respond either orally or in writing to the following question: In what ways did the lyrics and music of these anthems reflect the spirit of nationalism that motivated the unification of Germany and Italy?



3. How does Mazzini criticize aristocracy? How does he criticize monarchy as a form of government?

Scroll down to the paragraph beginning “Young Italy is Unitarian.”

4. According to Mazzini, why should Italy be united?

Read the paragraph that begins “Both initiators and initiated...”

5. Why was virtue important to Mazzini and Young Italy?

### **Documents of German Unification, 1848–1871**

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/germanunification.html>

This collection of documents tells the story of the transition in Germany from revolutionary upheavals (1848) to political unification (1871).

Read the first document, “Speech to the Frankfurt Assembly,” in which Johann Gustav Droysen contrasts Prussia and Austria.

6. What positive remarks does the author make about Prussia?

7. What negative remarks does the author make about Austria?

Read the next document, the proclamation of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, King of Prussia.

8. What two reasons did Friedrich Wilhelm give for rejecting the crown of the national assembly in Frankfurt?

Read the next document, Bismarck's "Letter to Minister von Manteuffel."

9. What developments did Bismarck anticipate in the relationship between Austria and Germany?

Read the next document from Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke. "Hegemony" means dominance.

10. What happened in 1866? What did Germany win?

Read the next document from Otto von Bismarck.

11. Why did Germany avoid "wounding Austria too severely"?

Read "The Imperial Proclamation, January 18, 1871."

12. Who called for King Wilhelm to assume the crown of Emperor? What "adequate arrangements" were made that enabled King Wilhelm to accept the title?

13. What were two “duties” King Wilhelm accepted in this proclamation? What hope did he express?

14. Choose ONE of the following options:

- Imagine that it is 1831 and you have decided to join Mazzini’s Young Italy. Write a persuasive letter to your boyfriend or girlfriend trying to convince him or her to join up with you.
- Make a timeline. Label points on the timeline to correspond with the documents on German unification you studied in this lesson. Include the significance of each document, or the event it describes. In your opinion, what was the most decisive event that led to German unification? Explain your point of view.