**Activity 2 – Step 1**

**Introduction**

The present text wants to be a summary of a collective work of reading, comprehension and textual analysis of documents concerning the key figure of David Railton, the man who had the idea of the cult of the Unknown Soldier. Probably, without his contribute, this ritual would not exist today.

**Summary**

**Some hints of his life**

David Railton was a priest and a soldier born on 13 November 1884 at Leytonstone, London. When he was young, he received a private education at Macclesfield Grammar School. Subsequently, he attended the Oxford University, with a strong High Church tradition. David was ordained deacon in 1908 and priest in 1909 by the Bishop of Liverpool. During the 1914-18 war, he became a chaplain to the second Battalion of the Hon. Artillery Company on the Western Front. He received the Military Cross in 1916 for saving an officer and two men under heavy fire. After the war, he became Vicar of St John's church at Margate in Kent. He was killed in an accidental fall from a train in Scotland in June 1955.

**Why he is so relevant**

The Reverend David Railton inspired the concept of the Grave of the Unknown Warrior.

The legend says that during his service as a chaplain to British forces at the front in France, more specifically in a garden at *Armentières*, the Reverend noticed a grave marked by a rough cross on which was written "An Unknown British Soldier". The churchman did not forget the episode. After the war, Railton became the vicar of St. John the Baptist Church at Margate.

In August 1920, he wrote to Herbert Ryle, Dean of Westminster, suggesting the creation of permanent national memorial to the fallen of the Great War who had no known grave and his burial in the Nave of Westminster Abbey "amongst the kings" to represent the many hundreds of thousands of dead. The idea was strongly supported by the Dean of Westminster, the Prime Minister David Lloyd George and then by King George V.

Maybe, without this man, today the rite of the Unknown Soldier would not exist.

**Use of language**

Kind of text – The texts are biographical historical texts. The texts are organized following an organic structure, necessary to communicate the information fully and accurately. Their subject is the Reverend David Railton.

Linguistic register – The majority of the texts does not present a particularly high linguistic register, except the ones of the site of Westminster Abbey.

Figure of speech - Due to the typology of the text, that must be as objective as possible, there are not relevant figures of speech.

Syntax - The sentences are simple, short, often paratactic or hypothetical relative.

**Message**

The texts have the objective to create a profile of who had the initiative of the cult of the Unknown Soldier and how this cult came true.

**Ideal reader**

The texts did not present any syntactical or morphological problems, except for the ones of the site of Westminster Abbey, which requires a higher level of textual understanding. to understand the text from a historical and biographical level, basic skills are needed. If you intend to read the documents with an anthropological approach, you need something more.

Textual references:

1. Reverend David Railton (The inspirator) at:

<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/david-railton>

<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/unknown-warrior>

1. David Railton and the Unknown Warrior at:

<http://www.stjohnschurchmargate.org.uk/sjcmdrupal/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/David-Railton-and-the-Unknown-Warrior2.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Railton>

<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/david-railton>