**ACTIVITY I**

**The history of the unknown soldier**

The text is the result of eight documents’ synthesis about the history of the unknown soldier. The ideal reader expects to get information about how the idea of the unknown soldier tomb was born, its main events and its importance nowadays. The ideal reader must be one that is interested in the topic and that approximately knows about the Great War and the cult of the Unknown soldier: therefore he expects the text’s use of language to be formal, informative and free from any comments made by the author.

The creation of the British unknown soldier’s tomb was suggested by the Reverend David Railton, after he had seen a makeshift grave on the Western Front during the WW1. The grave bore the inscription “An Unknown British Soldier”. Railton was pushed by the sensibility towards the people who lost their parents and friends at the front and proposed the idea of building a symbolic burial that could represent all the men who died in the first World War. His proposal was accepted by the Dean of Westminster in 1920 and then encouraged by the Prime Minister Lloyd George. The Army resumed the bodies of four British unknown soldiers(although some documents assert there were six) in the main battlefields of the WW1, Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres. Then the Brigadier general L. J. Wyatt randomly chose one, that became the Unknown Soldier, the others were reinterred at a nearby military cemetery. The coffin of the soldier was brought to Boulogne and, after a ceremony, it was taken to Dover, in England, by the HMS Verdun, where it was placed on a train headed to Victoria Station. On the on the 11 November 1920 the burial ceremony was held. All the Royal Family and the Ministers of State participated to it. The coffin of the Unknown Soldier was drawn by six black horses through London’s crowd-lines streets. The Soldier’s coffin was then placed in the west end Nave of Westminster Abbey and the tomb was sealed(after a period of temporary coverage by a stone) with a slab of black Belgian marble. The grave bore the inscription: "A British Warrior Who Fell in the Great War 1914-1918 for King and Country.  Greater Love Hath No Man Than This." The American General John J. Pershing assigned the Medal of Honor to the Unknown Soldier of Great Britain. This medal can now be seen in a frame on a nearby pillar.

The unknown soldier’s tomb became very important because it was the first monument of his kind. Following this practice, several nations erected their own memorials (France and Italy for example) with the intent of commemorating their fallen. Indeed, in the following years people’s perception about the war changed and memorials, rather than glorifying war, focused on denouncing it. It is important to highlight that the remains of the soldiers buried in these tombs are unidentifiable, so that the buried one could be anyone who fell in service for his nation.

Through the reading of these documents the intelligent reader can understand the importance of war memorials (especially the ones related to the unknown soldier), their meaning, how they were born and developed.

The eight documents have a very similar use of language, which results to be simple, informative and explanatory. This because all the text share the aim to inform the reader about the history of the British Unknown Soldier and also make him understand the symbolic and commemorative significance related to the tomb of the Unknown Soldiers.