ACTIVITY I

The history of the unknown soldier

In this text I am going to summarize the most important information of eight documents about the unknown soldier and its history.

The documents are organized into paragraphs, each of them tells about a particular step of the Unknown Soldier’s history or about a theme, they are informative text.

The ideal reader expects to get information about how the idea of the unknown soldier was born, its main events and its importance nowadays so 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.

The tomb of the Unknown warrior is a War Memorial, Railton, a man who fought in the IWW proposed the idea to build a tomb that represented all the men who died in the first World War. He proposed his idea to the king, by he didn’t accept at first.

One of six bodies with no name of dead soldiers found in France was chosen by the Brigadier Wyatt and then placed in a coffin, The body was transported by the HMS Verdun from Italy to Dover. When the coffin arrived in London a ceremony took place, with the presence of the royal family and choirs which sang hymns on the anniversary of the armistice in 1920.

It was an effective a procession from the Cenotaph to Westminster Abbey which received an impressive visit by people from all parts of Great Britain, so it is one of the most important war memorials in the world. It ends with an interesting text: “They buried him among the kings, because he had done good toward God and toward his house”.

General Pershing assigned the Congressional Medal of Honour to the British Unknown Soldier on 17th October 1921. It was a political strategy to reinforce the existing alliance between “her majesty’s government” and the American Congress. For years a Union Jack covered the coffin in Westminster Abbey.

As these documents have to explain the reason why these events took place, the language is formal, direct and simple and free from any comment made by the author. The definitive message that the ideal reader can get from these documents is the importance of rituals and the need we have not to forget the events that took place in the last century.

The language isn’t formal and It is suitable for all types of readers especially those interested in the past history.

ACTIVITY II

Key FIGURES IN THE HISORY AND RITUAL OF THE BRITISH UNKNOWN SOLDIER

These documents deals with David Railton and the rules that he followed during his whole life, especially during the First World War.

David Railton was a Church of England clergyman, a Military chaplain and the originator of the idea of the Tomb of The Unknown Warrior, he was born on 13 November 1884 in London and got educated at Oxford and Liverpool

He became a temporary chaplain to the Forces in 1910. He became a chaplain of the 2nd Battalion of the Hon on the Western Front during the 1914-18.

David Railton is remembered to have received the Military Cross in 1916 for saving an officer and two men under heavy fire. Always in 1916 in France, he found a makeshift grave that bring a particular inscription on a wooden cross: An Unknown British Soldier.

So that Railton had the idea to build a symbolic burial in England to commemorate the men who died in the WWI: they couldn’t have a real funeral because their bodies weren’t always found; to make his project he was able to convince the main authorities of that time.

In 1920 Railton wrote a letter to the Dean of Westminster Ryle and his proposal was accepted with enthusiasm by the first minister. In 1920 king George V, the Parliament and the government approved the idea, so the dream of Railton became real.

He died in 1955 in a military fort.