CAPITOLO

6

Songs of a Nation: Whitman, Dickinson and the Civil War

"Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes.)" — Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself", section 51 (Leaves of Grass, 1891–92)

OBIETTIVI

1. I can explain the causes, the main events and the consequences of the American Civil War and of the end of slavery.
2. I can present the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson and the novel of Twain, and define free verse, slant rhyme and local colour.
3. I can analyse a poem by Dickinson, sections of "Song of Myself" and the rhetoric of the Gettysburg Address.
4. I can recognise British and American spelling, grammar and vocabulary and use one variety consistently.
5. I can paraphrase and explain a difficult text to a classmate and write a neutral encyclopedia entry with sources.

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English 5 · Parte II · America and Empire · versione 1.0
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On 19 November 1863 a crowd of perhaps fifteen thousand people stood on a hillside in southern Pennsylvania, where four and a half months earlier two armies had fought the bloodiest battle of the American Civil War. The main speaker, the orator Edward Everett, talked for about two hours. Then the President of the United States stood up and spoke for about two minutes. Few people present thought that the short speech was the event of the day; today it is one of the most quoted texts in the English language, and it is printed complete in this chapter.

This chapter follows the United States from the 1840s to the end of Reconstruction in 1877: the conflict over slavery, the war that ended it, and the writers who tried to say what the nation was and could be. Walt Whitman sang a democratic "I" in long, unrhymed lines; Emily Dickinson, in a house in a small Massachusetts town, wrote almost eighteen hundred short poems about death, eternity and the mind, and published hardly any of them; Mark Twain gave the novel the voice of a boy from the Mississippi. Around them runs a technological revolution, the electric telegraph, which made news travel faster than any horse or ship. In the Language section you will compare British and American English, the two great standards of the language you write.

6.1 History and Society: Slavery, War and Union, 1845–1877

In chapter 5 you followed the young republic westwards. By the 1840s the United States stretched to the Pacific, and every new territory raised the same question: would it allow slavery or not? The answer divided the country more deeply than any other issue, because it set two economies and two ideas of freedom against each other.

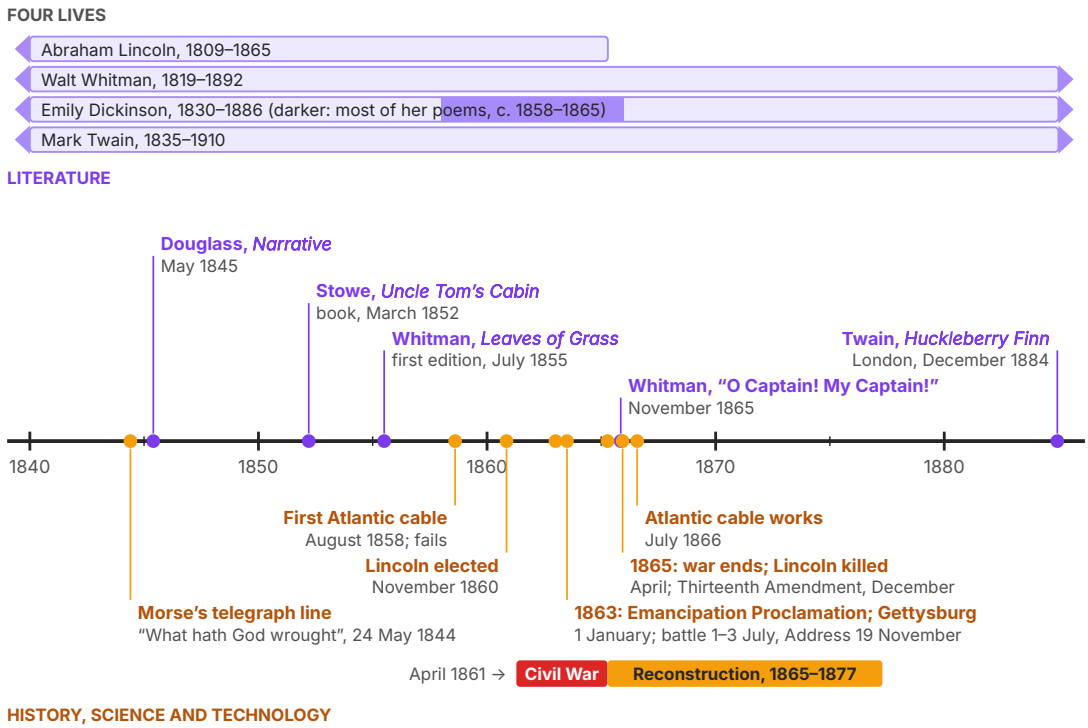

Figura 6.1 The United States, 1840–1885: four lives (top), literary works (above the axis, violet), and events in history, science and technology (below, amber), on a proportional axis (ticks every 5 years, labels every 10). The Civil War and Reconstruction are shown as periods at the bottom.

6.1.1 A nation half slave and half free

In 1860 about four million people were enslaved in the United States, almost all of them in the South, where cotton, tobacco, rice and sugar were grown on plantations worked by enslaved labour. Cotton was the country's most valuable export, and much of it was spun in the mills of Lancashire (chapter 1). The Northern states had abolished slavery, immediately or gradually, between the 1780s and the 1820s; their economy rested on small farms, trade and growing industries, and on a wave of immigrants from Ireland and Germany. Each new state admitted to the Union upset the balance in Congress, and a series of compromises tried to keep it: the most famous, the Compromise of 1850, included a harsh **Fugitive Slave Act** that obliged citizens of free states to help return people who had escaped from slavery.

Against slavery stood the movement called **abolitionism** (*abolizionismo*): the demand that slavery should be ended at once and everywhere, not merely kept out of new territories. Some of its strongest voices were people who had escaped from it. Frederick Douglass, who escaped from Maryland in 1838, published his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* in 1845, a slave narrative (English 4, chapter 9) that turns on one sentence: "You have seen how

a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man." Thousands of people escaped northwards, or to Canada, with the help of a secret network of routes and safe houses known as the **Underground Railroad** (*"ferrovia sotterranea"*), which was neither underground nor a railway. In 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, first serialised in an anti-slavery weekly, made millions of readers in America and Britain feel what slavery meant for a family; in the South it was attacked as slander.

6.1.2 From words to war

In the 1850s the compromises broke down. Violence flared in Kansas over whether it would be a slave state; in 1857 the Supreme Court declared, in the Dred Scott case, that Black Americans could not be citizens; in 1859 the abolitionist John Brown tried to start an armed rising by seizing the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, in Virginia, and was hanged. A lawyer from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, had already warned in 1858 that "A house divided against itself cannot stand." In November 1860 Lincoln, the candidate of the new Republican Party, which opposed the spread of slavery, was elected president without winning a single Southern state.

Within weeks South Carolina voted for **secession** (*secessione*), the formal withdrawal of a state from the Union. Six more states followed before Lincoln took office in March 1861, and together they formed the **Confederacy** (the Confederate States of America), with Jefferson Davis as president. The war began on 12 April 1861, when Confederate guns fired on Fort Sumter, a federal fort in the harbour of Charleston. Four more states then joined the Confederacy, which moved its capital to Richmond, Virginia, barely 160 kilometres from Washington. Four slave states — Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri — stayed in the Union: these **border states** (*stati di confine*) were vital to Lincoln, who for this reason at first presented the war as a fight to save the Union rather than to end slavery. The western counties of Virginia, which refused secession, became the separate state of West Virginia in 1863. Figura 6.2 shows the two sides.

6.1.3 The Civil War, 1861–1865

The Union had more than twice the Confederacy's population, most of the factories and most of the railways; the Confederacy fought on its own ground, with skilled commanders such as Robert E. Lee. The war lasted four years and killed more soldiers than any other war in American history: about 620,000 by the traditional estimate, and perhaps 750,000 by a more recent one, most of them from disease rather than wounds. It was one of the first wars of the industrial age, fought with railways, rifled weapons, ironclad ships — and the telegraph.

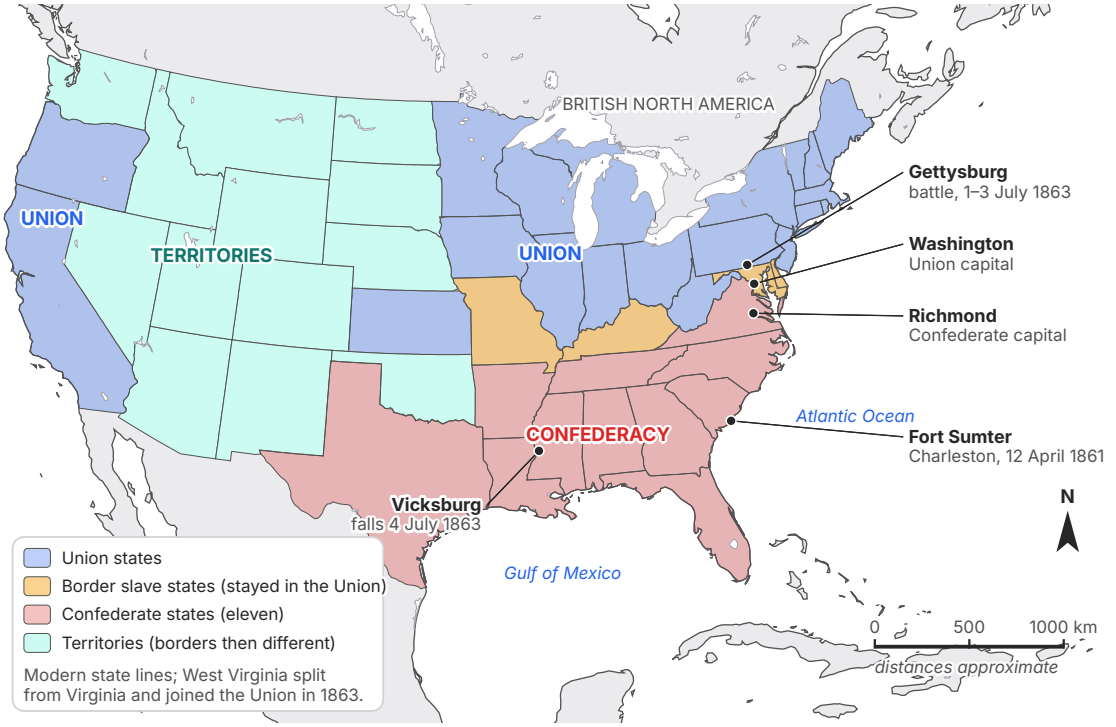

Figura 6.2 The Union and the Confederacy in 1861, drawn on modern state lines (approximate). The territories of the West had different borders then; Kansas became a state in January 1861. Albers equal-area projection; outlines from Natural Earth.

On 1 January 1863 Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** (*Proclama di emancipazione*), which declared free all enslaved people in the areas still in rebellion against the Union. It could not be enforced where the Confederacy was in control, and it did not apply to the border states, but it changed the meaning of the war: from then on a Union victory would mean the end of slavery, and about 180,000 Black soldiers served in the Union army before the war ended. In July 1863 the Union won two decisive victories: at Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania (1–3 July), where Lee's invasion of the North was stopped at the cost of about 50,000 men killed, wounded or missing, and at Vicksburg, on the Mississippi, which surrendered on 4 July. Four months later Lincoln dedicated a national cemetery for the Union dead at Gettysburg with the speech you will read in the Texts section.

Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on 9 April 1865. Five days later, on 14 April, Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth, an actor who supported the Confederacy, and he died the next morning. In December 1865 the **Thirteenth Amendment** to the Constitution abolished slavery throughout the United States. The years that followed, known as **Reconstruction** (*Ricostruzione*, 1865–1877), brought citizenship and, for men, the vote to the formerly enslaved, and Black Americans were elected to Congress for the

first time; but when federal troops left the South in 1877, white governments returned and imposed segregation laws that lasted for almost a century (chapter 14).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *La Proclamazione di emancipazione liberò tutti gli schiavi degli Stati Uniti.*

✓ La Proclamazione (1° gennaio 1863) riguardava solo i territori ancora in rivolta, dove l'Unione non poteva farla applicare, e non i quattro stati schiavisti fedeli all'Unione. Fu la sua applicazione man mano che l'esercito avanzava, e poi il **Tredicesimo emendamento** (dicembre 1865), a mettere fine alla schiavitù in tutto il paese. Allo stesso modo: ✗ *la guerra cominciò per abolire la schiavitù* → ✓ la schiavitù fu la causa profonda della secessione, ma Lincoln presentò la guerra, all'inizio, come difesa dell'Unione.

6.1.4 The war by wire

On 24 May 1844, in a room of the Capitol in Washington, Samuel Morse tapped out a message to his assistant Alfred Vail in Baltimore, about 60 kilometres away: "What hath God wrought", words from the Book of Numbers. The **telegraph** (*telegrafo*), a system that sends messages along a wire as pulses of electric current, needed only a battery, a switch and an electromagnet (see Connections), and messages were coded in **Morse code**: letters represented by combinations of short and long signals, the dots and dashes. By 1861 a line crossed the continent to California, and in the war Lincoln spent hours in the telegraph office of the War Department, reading reports from his generals and sending orders. Newspapers printed news of battles the next morning, and the war became the first in America to be photographed on a large scale (see Connections).

6.2 Literature: Two Poets and a Boy on a Raft

In chapter 5 you met Emerson's call for an American literature that would stop imitating Europe. In the generation of the Civil War three writers answered it in completely different ways: a poet who wanted to contain the whole nation in his book, a poet who wrote for almost no one, and a humorist who let a boy without education tell a great novel.

6.2.1 Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

Walt Whitman was born on Long Island, New York, and worked as a printer, a teacher and a journalist in Brooklyn and New York. In July 1855 he published at his own expense a thin book of twelve untitled poems, *Leaves of Grass*. His name did not appear on the title page: there was only an engraved portrait of a bearded man in shirtsleeves, with his hat on, and the name appeared inside a poem — "Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos". Emerson, to whom he sent a copy, replied with a famous letter: "I greet you at the beginning of a great ca-

reer". For the rest of his life Whitman revised and expanded the same book, edition after edition, until the "deathbed" edition of 1891–92, with nearly four hundred poems.

Whitman's great formal choice is **free verse** (*verso libero*): lines of irregular length, with no fixed metre and no rhyme, whose rhythm comes from the phrase and the breath, from repetition and from parallel structures. Free verse is not blank verse (English 3): blank verse has no rhyme, but it keeps a regular metre, the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare and Milton. Whitman's model was partly the English Bible, with its long parallel verses. His favourite device is the **catalogue** (*catalogo, elenco*): a long list of people, places, trades and objects, often with each line beginning in the same way (anaphora, English 4, chapter 11), which tries to include everything and everyone — the carpenter, the pilot, the farmer, the enslaved man and the president — in one democratic embrace.

At the centre stands the "I" of "Song of Myself", the longest poem of the book. It is Whitman and more than Whitman: a voice that speaks for every American and every human body, that contradicts itself and does not mind, and that addresses the reader directly as an equal. To many readers of 1855 the frankness about the body was shocking; to later poets, in America and abroad, the book was a liberation.

The war changed Whitman's life. In December 1862 he went to Virginia to find his brother George, who had been wounded, and he stayed in Washington for years as a volunteer in the military hospitals, sitting with thousands of wounded soldiers, writing letters for them and bringing small gifts. His war poems, *Drum-Taps* (1865), are among the most direct poems of the war. After Lincoln's death he wrote two elegies: the long "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" and the short "O Captain! My Captain!" (1865), in which the president is a captain who dies as his ship reaches port. With its rhymes and regular stanzas it is an exception in Whitman's work, and it became his most popular poem.

> **ERRORE FREQUENTE**
>
> ✗ *Whitman scrive in versi sciolti.* → ✓ *Whitman scrive in versi liberi.*
>
> Il **verso sciolto** (*blank verse*) non ha rima ma ha un metro regolare: in inglese il pentametro giambico di Shakespeare e Milton, in italiano l'endecasillabo sciolto del Foscolo dei *Sepolcri*. Il **verso libero** (*free verse*) non ha né rima né metro fisso. Attenzione anche al falso amico: in inglese *free verse*, mai ✗ *blank verse* per Whitman.

6.2.2 Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Emily Dickinson spent almost all her life in Amherst, Massachusetts, in her family's house, the Homestead. She studied for a year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, read widely — the Bible, Shakespeare, the Brontës, the Brownings — and after her thirties rarely left home, keeping in touch with friends through hundreds of letters. In April 1862 she sent four poems to the critic Thomas Wentworth Higginson, asking whether her verse was "alive"; he admired them, advi-

sed her not to publish yet, and became a lifelong correspondent. Only about ten of her poems appeared in print during her lifetime, anonymously and often altered. After her death her sister Lavinia found nearly eighteen hundred poems, many copied by hand into about forty small booklets that Dickinson had sewn together herself, now called the *fascicles*.

Dickinson's poems are short, without titles (they are known by their first lines, or by an editor's number) and compressed: a whole drama of the mind in eight or sixteen lines. Most use the simplest form available to her, the **common metre** of the hymns she sang in church — lines of eight and six syllables, a regular, counted form of the ballad stanza of English 3, chapter 5 (four and three stresses) — and then disturb it from within. Her lines are broken by **dashes**, which slow the reader down and leave the connections between ideas open; she capitalises common nouns as if they were names; and she prefers **slant rhyme** (*rima imperfetta, rima obliqua*), the name usually given in Dickinson's case to the half-rhyme of English 4, chapter 13: a pair of words whose sounds are close but not identical, such as *me* and *Immortality*, or *soul* and *all*. Her great subjects are death and what may come after it, faith and doubt, nature seen at very close range — a bee, a fly, a snake in the grass — and the strange territory of her own consciousness.

Her poems first reached the public in 1890, four years after her death, in *Poems*, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Higginson. The editors gave the poems titles, regularised the punctuation, replaced many dashes with commas, and "corrected" some rhymes and words. Only in 1955 did Thomas H. Johnson publish all the poems as she had written them, numbered in an approximate chronological order; Ralph W. Franklin's edition of 1998 numbered them again. This is why the same poem may be printed in two quite different ways (see the Texts section).

IN SINTESI

Tabella 6.1 Whitman and Dickinson: two founders of American poetry

	Walt Whitman	Emily Dickinson
publication	self-published, 1855; revised for 37 years	about ten poems in her lifetime; *Poems*, 1890
form	free verse, long lines, the catalogue	common metre, short stanzas, dashes, slant rhyme
voice	a public "I" that speaks for everyone	a private "I" that speaks to itself, or to one reader
themes	democracy, the body, America, comradeship, the war	death, eternity, faith and doubt, nature, the mind
scale	expansive: everything is included	compressed: everything is left out but the essential

6.2.3 Mark Twain (1835–1910)

Samuel Langhorne Clemens grew up in Hannibal, Missouri, a small town on the Mississippi, in a slave state. He worked as a printer and then, from 1859, as a pilot of river steamboats, until the war closed the river to traffic. His pen name comes from the river: "mark twain" was the boatmen's call for a depth of two fathoms, about 3.7 metres, just enough water for a steamboat. He became famous as a humorist and a travel writer — *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) mocks a group of American tourists in Europe, Italy included (see Connections) — and as the author of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876).

Its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (published in London in December 1884 and in New York in February 1885), is narrated by Huck himself, a poor, half-educated boy who runs away from his violent father and floats down the Mississippi on a raft with Jim, a man escaping from slavery. Twain makes Huck tell the whole novel in his own spoken language — the vernacular (English 3, chapter 1) in a new sense: not a modern language against Latin, but the everyday speech of a region and a class, with its own grammar (*I knowed*, *they was*, *warn't*). An explanatory note at the start even lists the different dialects used by the characters. Twain belongs to the wider current of **local colour** (*colore locale*): fiction that records the speech, customs and landscape of a particular region.

The novel's moral centre is Huck's choice in chapter 31. Everything he has been taught says that helping Jim to escape is a sin, and he writes a letter to tell Jim's owner where he is. Then he remembers the journey and Jim's friendship, tears up the letter, and decides: "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell". The reader understands what Huck cannot: that the conscience his society gave him is wrong and his heart is right. The novel uses the racist language of its time and place, and its portrayal of Jim is still debated; some American schools have removed it from reading lists, while many critics defend it as a satire of the very society it portrays.

> **DA RICORDARE**
>
> **Three new terms. free verse** — no regular metre, no rhyme (Whitman) · **slant rhyme** — near rhyme, sounds close but not identical (Dickinson) · **local colour** — fiction that records the speech and customs of a region (Twain). Not to be confused: **blank verse** = metre without rhyme; **common metre** = 8·6·8·6 syllables, the hymn and ballad stanza.

6.3 Texts: the Self, Death and the Nation

Three texts from the years of the war: the opening and the close of Whitman's "Song of Myself", Dickinson's best-known poem about death, and Lincoln's address at Gettysburg. American texts keep their American spelling.

6.3.1 T1 · Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself”, sections 1 and 52

Context. “Song of Myself” opened the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, without a title; in the final text it has its title and is divided into 52 numbered sections. Section 1 is the poet’s first gesture; section 52 is his farewell.

Tabella 6.2 T1 — Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself”, section 1, ll. 1–5, and section 52, complete. Text of the 1891–92 edition of *Leaves of Grass* (Project Gutenberg eBook #1322); line numbers within each section.

1	
I celebrate myself, and sing myself,	
And what I assume you shall assume,	
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.	
I loafe and invite my soul,	
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.	5
52	
The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.	
I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,	
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.	
The last scud of day holds back for me,	
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow’d wilds,	5
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.	
I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,	
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.	
I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,	
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.	10
You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,	
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,	
And filter and fibre your blood.	
Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,	
Missing me one place search another,	15
I stop somewhere waiting for you.	

Glosses. *assume*: take on, believe · *loafe*: (= *loaf*) idle, do nothing · *a spear of grass*: a blade of grass · *gab*: chatter · *loitering*: lingering without purpose · *tamed*: domesticated · *yawp*: a loud, harsh cry (a rare word Whitman made famous) · *scud*: low clouds driven by the wind · *likeness*: image · *shadow'd wilds*: dark wild land · *coaxes*: gently persuades · *effuse*: pour out · *eddies*: small whirls of air or water · *lacy jags*: torn pieces like lace · *bequeath*: leave in a will · *fibre*: give strength to · *fetch*: reach, find.

Analysis

The democratic "I". The first line sounds like pure egotism: the poet celebrates and sings himself, as epic poets sang heroes (the *invocation* of English 4). The second and third lines change everything: what he believes, the reader will believe, because "every atom" of his body is equally the reader's. The "I" is not a ruler but a sample of humanity, equal to everyone. The image that closes section 1 is the humblest possible: a man leaning at his ease, looking at a single blade — the "leaf of grass" of the title, which is everywhere, common and alive.

Free verse. No two lines have the same length, and there is no rhyme. The rhythm comes from parallel structures (*I celebrate… and sing*; *I loafe… I lean and loafe*; *I too am… I too am*) and from the pause at the end of each line, which is almost always the end of a phrase. Read the lines aloud: they follow the speaker's breath, not a metre.

A farewell that is a promise. In section 52 the speaker leaves as evening falls. He becomes air, mist and dirt; he will grow again in the grass, and the reader must look for him "under your boot-soles". Death is not an end but a return into the cycle of nature, and the poem itself is the place where the reader can still meet him. The poem ends with a full stop, but its last line is about waiting, not closing: the poet *stops*, and he is still *waiting for you*.

- Which words in section 1 show that the speaker considers himself equal to the reader?
- Find two examples of parallel structure and one of repetition in T1. What effect do they have when you read aloud?
- Why does the speaker call his voice a "barbaric yawp"? What kind of poetry is he rejecting?
- List what the speaker becomes in lines 7–10 of section 52. What idea of death do these images suggest?
- Who is "you" in the last three lines? Why is it significant that the poem ends with the word *you*?

6.3.2 T2 · Emily Dickinson, "Because I could not stop for Death"

Context. Written around 1862–63 and copied into one of the fascicles (Johnson 712, Franklin 479), the poem was first printed in *Poems* (1890), where the editors gave it the title "The Chariot". The text below is that first printed version, as its readers in the 1890s knew it; the Approfondimento box explains how it differs from the manuscript.

Tabella 6.3 T2 — Emily Dickinson, “Because I could not stop for Death”, complete as first printed in *Poems*, ed. M. L. Todd and T. W. Higginson (Boston, 1890), IV.XXVII, “The Chariot” (Project Gutenberg eBook #12242).

Because I could not stop for Death,	
He kindly stopped for me;	
The carriage held but just ourselves	
And Immortality.	
We slowly drove, he knew no haste,	5
And I had put away	
My labor, and my leisure too,	
For his civility.	
We passed the school where children played,	
Their lessons scarcely done;	10
We passed the fields of gazing grain,	
We passed the setting sun.	
We paused before a house that seemed	
A swelling of the ground;	
The roof was scarcely visible,	15
The cornice but a mound.	
Since then ’t is centuries; but each	
Feels shorter than the day	
I first surmised the horses’ heads	
Were toward eternity.	20

Glosses. *kindly*: politely, kindly · *held but just*: held only · *knew no haste*: was in no hurry · *civility*: courtesy, good manners · *scarcely*: hardly · *gazing grain*: ripe corn that seems to stare · *a swelling of the ground*: a small rise in the earth (a grave) · *cornice*: the decorated top edge of a wall · *mound*: a small heap of earth · *’t is*: it is · *surmised*: guessed · *toward*: (AmE) towards.

Analysis

Death as a gentleman. Death is personified (English 3) not as a skeleton with a scythe but as a polite gentleman caller who takes a lady for a drive in his carriage — a respectable courtship ritual of Dickinson's New England. The tone is calm, almost social: he "kindly" stops, she puts away work and leisure "for his civility". The third passenger is Immortality, a chaperone who guarantees that the drive is proper — and a hint of where it leads.

A journey through a life. The third stanza passes three images in three lines that begin with the same words: children at school (childhood), ripe grain (maturity), the setting sun (old age and death). The fourth stanza arrives at a strange "house" that is hardly visible: only at the end of the stanza do we understand that it is a grave. The last stanza jumps forward: it has been "centuries" since that day, yet they feel shorter than the day itself. The speaker is already dead and speaks from eternity, and the journey has no end.

Form. The poem is in common metre: lines of eight and six syllables, rhyming only in lines 2 and 4. Figura 6.3 analyses the first stanza. Several rhymes are slant (*me / Immortality*, *away / civility*, *day / eternity*); others are full (*done / sun*, *ground / mound*). Even in this regularised version the music of a hymn carries a thought that no hymn would allow: the speaker never tells us whether eternity is heaven.

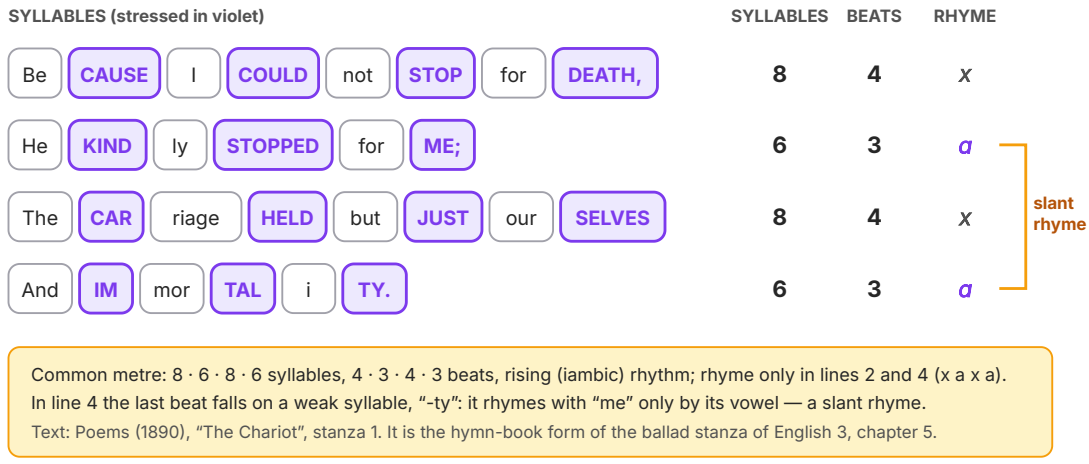

Figura 6.3 The first stanza of T2 in common metre: syllables, beats and rhyme. Stressed syllables are in capitals and violet; "Immortality" rhymes with "me" only on its weak last syllable (slant rhyme).

- How is Death personified in the first two stanzas? Find three words that make him seem polite or respectable.
- Why might the speaker "not stop" for Death? What does the first line suggest about her life?
- What does each image of stanza 3 represent? Why are the three lines built in the same way?

- Which word in stanza 4 tells you that the "house" is a grave? Why does the speaker not say so directly?
- Explain the paradox of the last stanza: how can centuries feel shorter than a day?

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Writing a PEE paragraph on a poem (T2, stanza 3). The question: *How does Dickinson represent the passing of a life in stanza 3?*

1. **Point** — answer the question in one sentence: *In the third stanza Dickinson compresses a whole life into three images seen from a moving carriage.*
2. **Evidence** — quote briefly, with line numbers: *The carriage passes "the school where children played" (l. 9), "the fields of gazing grain" (l. 11) and "the setting sun" (l. 12).*
3. **Explanation** — say what the evidence shows, and how: *The three images move from childhood to maturity to the end of the day, the oldest metaphor for death. The anaphora "We passed… We passed… We passed" imitates the steady rhythm of the drive, so that the stages of life go by as calmly and as inevitably as fields seen from a window. The grain is "gazing", as if nature were watching the speaker pass for the last time.*

Notice the tenses: the literary present for what the poem *does* (*Dickinson compresses*), the past only inside the quotations (chapter 1).

APPROFONDIMENTO

Which Dickinson? The manuscript of this poem, in Dickinson's hand, differs from the 1890 text in several ways. It has **six** stanzas: the editors left out the fourth, in which the speaker suddenly feels the cold ("Or rather — He passed Us —") because she is dressed only in a gown of thin "Gossamer" — a dress for a wedding, or for a grave. In the third stanza the children do not simply play: they "strove / At Recess — in the Ring —". The grave's cornice is not "but a mound" but "in the Ground", and the last stanza begins "Since then — 'tis Centuries — and yet". Above all, the manuscript is punctuated with dashes, which the editors turned into commas and semicolons.

The editors wanted to make an unknown poet acceptable to readers who expected tidy rhymes and grammar, but the changes are not neutral: "The Cornice — in the Ground —" makes the house sink into the earth, while "The cornice but a mound" only describes it. Today scholars read the poems from the manuscripts, which can be seen online.

6.3.3 T3 · Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address (19 November 1863)

Context. Lincoln was invited to say "a few appropriate remarks" at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg, where thousands of Union soldiers had been buried. Five copies of the speech in Lincoln's hand survive, and they differ slightly; they are named

after the people who received them (Nicolay, Hay, Everett, Bancroft and Bliss). The text below is the **Bliss copy**, written in 1864 for a book sold to raise money for soldiers: it is the only one that Lincoln signed and dated, and it is the version usually quoted.

Tabella 6.4 T3 — Abraham Lincoln, "Address delivered at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg", complete: the Bliss copy (1864), signed and dated by Lincoln. Transcription of the manuscript in Wikisource; spelling and dashes as written.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Glosses. *Four score and seven years ago*: 87 years ago (a *score* is twenty), i.e. 1776 · *brought forth*: created, gave birth to · *conceived in Liberty*: born from the idea of freedom · *proposition*: principle to be proved · *endure*: last, survive · *consecrate, hallow*: make holy · *detract*: take away · *the last full measure of devotion*: everything they could give, their lives · *resolve*: decide firmly · *in vain*: for nothing · *perish*: die, disappear.

Analysis

Past, present, future. The speech has three short paragraphs and three times. The first goes back to 1776 and to the Declaration of Independence (English 4, chapter 9): the nation was born from the "proposition that all men are created equal". The second is the present of the war, a test of whether such a nation "can long endure". The third turns to the future and to the living, who must finish "the unfinished work" of the dead.

Rhetoric. Lincoln uses the devices of the Bible and of classical oratory in very little space: the biblical *four score and seven*; the image of birth (*brought forth, conceived*) that returns at the end in "a new birth of freedom"; the triple negative *we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow*, in which each verb is stronger than the last; the antithesis between what "we say here" and what "they did here"; and the final triad, "of the people, by the people, for the people". Notice what the speech does **not** contain: no names of generals, no mention of the

South, of the enemy or of slavery. By leaving out the particulars, Lincoln turns a war cemetery into a statement about democracy itself.

- Which event in the history of the nation does the first sentence recall, and why does Lincoln quote its principle?
- Why, according to Lincoln, can the speakers not "dedicate" the ground? Who has already done it?
- Find the image of birth at the beginning and at the end of the speech. What does "a new birth of freedom" mean in 1863?
- Find one antithesis and one triad. Why are they easy to remember?
- The speech never mentions slavery or the Confederacy. Why might Lincoln have made this choice?

6.4 Language: British and American English

Look again at the texts of this chapter: Lincoln writes *honored*, Dickinson's editors print *labor*, Whitman's *vapor* has no *u*. They are not mistakes: they are American spellings, and this book prints them as they appear in the editions used. English has two great written standards, British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), and since the nineteenth century they have differed in spelling, in some points of grammar and in part of the vocabulary. In English 1 and 2 you met a few differences one by one (*first floor*, *subway*); this section puts them in order, so that you can recognise them in what you read and be consistent in what you write.

Many American spellings go back to one man. Noah Webster, a teacher and lexicographer, wanted a language for the new republic that would be simpler and independent of Britain; his *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) fixed spellings such as *color*, *center* and *traveler*. Some of his other proposals never caught on.

6.4.1 Spelling

Tabella 6.5 British and American spelling: the main patterns

Pattern	British English	American English
-our / -or	*colour, honour, labour, neighbour*	*color, honor, labor, neighbor*
-re / -er	*centre, theatre, metre, fibre*	*center, theater, meter, fiber*
-ise / -ize	*organise* or *organize*; always *analyse*	always *organize*, *analyze*
doubled -l-	*travelled, cancelled, traveller*	*traveled, canceled, traveler*
single -l-	*fulfil, enrol, skilful*	*fulfill, enroll, skillful*
-ce / -se	*defence, licence* (noun); *practice* (n.) / *practise* (v.)	*defense, license*; *practice* (n. and v.)
-ogue / -og	*catalogue, analogue*	*catalog, analog* (*dialogue* is usual in both)
single words	*programme, grey, cheque, tyre, aluminium*	*program, gray, check, tire, aluminum*

Two warnings. The *-ize* spelling is also British: Oxford University Press and many scientific journals use it, so *organize* is never wrong. And BrE uses *program* for computer software: *a TV programme*, but *a computer program*.

6.4.2 Grammar

The grammar of the two standards is almost the same; the differences are mostly of preference and frequency, not of right and wrong.

Tabella 6.6 British and American grammar: the main differences

Point	British English (usual)	American English (usual)
present perfect with *just, already, yet*	*Have you eaten yet? I've just seen him.*	also *Did you eat yet? I just saw him.*
possession	*Have you got a pen? / Do you have…?*	*Do you have a pen?*
past participle of *get*	*got*: *It's got worse.*	*gotten* = obtained, become: *It's gotten worse.* (but *I've got* = I have)
collective nouns	*The team is / are winning.*	*The team is winning.* (chapter 13)
prepositions	*at the weekend · different from / to · Monday to Friday · in hospital · write to me*	*on the weekend · different from / than · Monday through Friday · in the hospital · write me*
shall	*Shall I open the window?*	*Should I open the window?* (*shall* is rare, formal or legal)
subjunctive after *insist, suggest*	*…that he should be present / that he is present*	*…that he be present* (English 4, chapter 7)

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Inglese britannico e americano. L'inglese è una lingua **pluricentrica**: ha più varietà standard, tutte corrette. Le differenze tra britannico (BrE) e americano (AmE) riguardano soprattutto l'**ortografia** (*colour / color*, *centre / center*, *travelled / traveled*), il **lessico** (*flat / apartment*, *autumn / fall*) e alcune **preferenze grammaticali**: l'AmE usa più spesso il *past simple* con *just, already, yet*; ha il participio *gotten*; preferisce *Do you have…?* a *Have you got…?*; tratta i nomi collettivi come singolari; usa il congiuntivo dopo *insist, suggest, demand*.

Confronto con l'italiano. Anche l'italiano conosce varietà nazionali: nell'italiano della Svizzera un'*azione* è un'offerta speciale e il cellulare si chiama spesso *natel*. La regola d'oro per chi scrive è la stessa nelle due lingue: **scegliere una varietà e mantenerla** in tutto il testo. In questo libro si usa l'ortografia britannica; nei vostri testi l'americana è accettata, purché coerente.

6.4.3 Vocabulary

Some everyday words differ completely; a few are false friends between the two varieties, which can cause real misunderstandings.

Tabella 6.7 Everyday vocabulary: British and American English

British English	American English	British English	American English
autumn	*fall*	*underground*	*subway*
flat	*apartment*	*queue*	*line*
lift	*elevator*	*rubbish*	*garbage, trash*
petrol	*gas, gasoline*	*mobile (phone)*	*cell phone*
pavement	*sidewalk*	*timetable*	*schedule*
motorway	*highway, freeway*	*CV*	*résumé*
maths	*math*	*holiday*	*vacation*
trousers	*pants* (BrE *pants* = underwear!)	*chips / crisps*	*fries / chips*

6.4.4 Which one should you use?

Both standards are correct, and an examiner will accept either. What matters is **consistency**: choose one variety and keep it for spelling and vocabulary throughout a text. Set your word processor's spell-checker to the variety you have chosen, or it will "correct" half of your words. When you quote, never change the spelling of the original: Lincoln's *honored* stays *honored*. This book follows British spelling, as English 1–4 did.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *I organized a trip to the theatre, but we traveled by bus and the color of the program was gray.*

✓ (BrE) *I organised a trip to the theatre, but we travelled by bus and the colour of the programme was grey.* · ✓ (AmE) *I organized a trip to the theater, but we traveled by bus and the color of the program was gray.*

L'errore non è usare l'americano, ma **mescolare** le due ortografie nello stesso testo. Attenzione anche a: ✗ *Things have gotten worse.* in un testo britannico → ✓ *Things have got worse.* · ✗ *I have gotten a sister.* → ✓ *I have got a sister.* (anche in AmE: *have got* = possedere; *have gotten* = avere ottenuto).

6.5 Skills: Explaining and Informing

6.5.1 Vocabulary: freedom, war and nation

Tabella 6.8 Freedom, war and nation: key words

Word	Meaning	Example
abolition (n.) · *abolish* (v.)	the official ending of a law or system	*The abolition of slavery came with the Thirteenth Amendment.*
emancipation (n.) · *emancipate* (v.)	the act of freeing people from legal or social control	*Emancipation became a war aim in 1863.*
secession (n.) · *secede* (v.)	formal withdrawal from a federation	*Eleven states seceded from the Union.*
the Union	the United States as one nation; in the war, the North	*Lincoln's first aim was to save the Union.*
slavery (n.) · *enslaved* (adj.)	the system in which people are owned by others	*Historians now often prefer "enslaved people" to "slaves".*
civil rights (n. pl.)	the rights of every citizen to equal treatment	*Reconstruction gave formerly enslaved men civil rights, for a time.*
amendment (n.) · *amend* (v.)	a formal change to a law or a constitution	*The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified in December 1865.*
nation (n.) · *national* (adj.)	a people with a shared state, territory or identity	*Lincoln spoke of "a new nation, conceived in Liberty".*
democracy (n.) · *democratic* (adj.)	government by the people, through elected representatives	*Whitman wanted a poetry for democracy.*

Word formation: blends

A **blend** (*parola macedonia*) is a new word made by joining the beginning of one word to the end of another, so that both meanings survive in a single word. English has produced blends since the nineteenth century, and the internet has multiplied them. Do not confuse them with compounds, which keep both words whole (*railway*, *telegraph pole*), or with words built from Greek or Latin roots: *telegram* (1852) is not a blend but *tele-* "far" + *-gram* "something written".

Tabella 6.9 Some English blends

Blend	From	Notes
brunch	*breakfast + lunch*	British student slang of the 1890s
smog	*smoke + fog*	early twentieth century, from the polluted fogs of British cities
motel	*motor + hotel*	American, 1920s: a hotel for motorists
emoticon	*emotion + icon*	a face made of keyboard characters, :-)
podcast	*iPod + broadcast*	proposed in 2004, before podcasts needed iPods at all

6.5.2 Reading: Two Shores, One Wire

Before you read. How long does a message take today to go from Galway to Newfoundland? How long do you think it took in 1850? Aoife, now in her first year of marine science in Galway, wrote this article for the "Science Corner" of *The Link, Year Five*, the blog the group shares, after Giulia's class asked for something on communication for their CLIL project.

Tabella 6.10 Reading text — Aoife's article for *The Link, Year Five*

Two Shores, One Wire: the First Transatlantic Telegraph Cables

In the 1850s a letter from Ireland to America travelled by steamship and took about ten days, sometimes more. By then telegraph lines already linked many cities on land, and short cables lay under the sea, the first lasting one across the English Channel in 1851. The obvious next step was the boldest: a cable across the Atlantic, from Valentia Island, on the coast of County Kerry, to Newfoundland, about 3,000 kilometres away. Between them lies a sea floor that in places is more than three kilometres deep. Soundings in the 1850s had shown that it was fairly smooth, and it was nicknamed the "Telegraph Plateau".

The project was driven by an American businessman, Cyrus Field, and financed mostly in Britain. The cable itself was a core of copper wires, insulated with gutta-percha, a natural latex from a tree of South-East Asia, and protected by iron wires twisted around it. In 1857 the first attempt failed when the cable broke and was lost. In the summer of 1858 two warships, the British *Agamemnon* and the American *Niagara*, met in mid-ocean, joined their two halves of the cable and sailed in opposite directions, paying it out as they went. On 5 August 1858 both ends were landed, and less than two weeks later Queen Victoria and President Buchanan exchanged messages of congratulation. The celebrations on both sides of the ocean were enormous.

They did not last. The signals that reached the far end were extremely weak and slow, and the company's electrician tried to push them through by applying much higher voltages. The insulation, which was probably faulty already, broke down, and within a few weeks the cable fell silent. Many people decided that the whole thing had been a fraud.

The scientist who understood what had gone wrong was William Thomson, a professor at Glasgow, later Lord Kelvin. A long cable under the sea, he showed, behaves a little like a long thin pipe that must fill up before anything comes out of the other end: each pulse of current spreads out and gets weaker on the way. The answer was not more power but a more sensitive receiver. His mirror galvanometer used a tiny magnet with a mirror attached; even a very small current turned it slightly, and a beam of light reflected by the mirror moved along a scale where an operator could read it.

The Civil War delayed everything. When work began again, there was a ship big enough to carry an entire cable at once: the *Great Eastern*, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and for years the largest ship in the world. In 1865 the cable broke again and the end sank. In 1866 the *Great Eastern* tried once more, and on 27 July 1866 the cable was landed at Heart's Content, a fishing village in Newfoundland. Then the crew did something that still amazes marine scientists: they went back, found the lost cable of 1865 on the ocean floor, lifted it with grappling hooks, joined it to new cable and completed it. By September there were two working lines.

After 1866 news crossed the ocean in minutes rather than days, and cables soon linked every continent. The station on Valentia went on working for about a century. Today the cables under the oceans are made of optical fibre, and they still carry most of the data that travels between continents — including, probably, the video call we had last week.

After reading. a) Find three passive verbs in the article and say why the writer chose the passive. b) Find a comparison that the writer uses to explain a scientific idea. Is it useful?

6.5.3 Speaking: paraphrasing and explaining a difficult text

To **paraphrase** (English 2) is to say the same thing in other words. At this level you also need to *explain*: to make a difficult text — a poem, a speech, a page of physics — clear for someone else, without making it false. Start from the overall meaning, then go through the details; use simpler words but keep the key terms; check that your listener has understood; and say honestly when something is ambiguous.

Tabella 6.11 Useful language — paraphrasing and explaining

Function	Phrases
introducing a paraphrase	*In other words… · What she's getting at is… · Put simply… · Basically, he's saying that…*
explaining a word or image	*Here "gazing" means… · The image of the carriage stands for… · Think of it as…*
going step by step	*Let's take it one line at a time. · First of all… · The key point is…*
checking understanding	*Does that make sense? · Is that clearer? · Shall I put it another way?*
admitting ambiguity	*It could mean either… or… · Critics don't agree on this. · It's deliberately vague.*
asking for clarification	*Sorry, what do you mean by…? · Could you give me an example? · So are you saying that…?*

- **Task 1 (pairs).** Student A explains the last paragraph of T3 to Student B, who has not read it, in about one minute, using phrases from Tabella 6.11. Student B asks at least two questions for clarification. Then swap with the last stanza of T2.
- **Task 2 (pairs).** Using Figura 6.4, explain to a twelve-year-old how a telegraph sends a message. Use no more than three technical words, and explain each one.

6.5.4 Writing: an encyclopedia entry

An encyclopedia entry, in print or on a wiki, gives reliable information in a **neutral register**: no opinions, no "I", no emotional adjectives. It opens with a **lead**, one or two sentences that define the subject and say why it matters; it then divides the information into short sections with headings; and it supports every fact with a source, so that the reader can check it. Read the model.

Tabella 6.12 Model text — an encyclopedia entry (208 words, sources excluded)

Pony Express
The **Pony Express** was a mail service that carried letters on horseback between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, from April 1860 to October 1861. It was run by the freight company Russell, Majors and Waddell. It is remembered as a symbol of the American West, although it lasted only about eighteen months. [1]
Organisation. The route was about 3,000 kilometres long and crossed the plains, the Rocky Mountains and the deserts of Nevada. Riders carried the mail in a leather cover over the saddle and changed to fresh horses at relay stations along the way; each rider covered one section of the route before handing the mail to the next. A letter usually took about ten days from one end to the other, less than half the time taken by stagecoach. [1][2]
End of the service. The service was expensive and never made a profit. It was made unnecessary by the first telegraph line across the continent, completed on 24 October 1861; the Pony Express closed two days later. [2]
Legacy. The Pony Express soon became the subject of novels, shows and, later, films, and several museums along the old route tell its history. Many stories about individual riders, however, cannot be confirmed from records of the time. [2]
Sources. [1] National Park Service, Pony Express National Historic Trail, "History & Culture" (nps.gov). [2] C. Corbett, *Orphans Preferred: The Twisted Truth and Lasting Legend of the Pony Express* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003).

Analysis. The lead defines the subject (*a mail service that…*) and gives the dates and the reason for its fame. Each section answers one question: how did it work, why did it end, how is it remembered. The register is impersonal (*is remembered*, *was made unnecessary*), the verbs are in the past for history and in the present for what is true now, and the last section separates what is documented from what is legend.

Checklist. ✓ a lead that defines and explains why the subject matters · ✓ two to four short sections with headings · ✓ neutral, impersonal register: no *I*, no *amazing* · ✓ dates, places and numbers given precisely · ✓ every important fact linked to a source · ✓ facts separated from legends or opinions · ✓ one variety of English throughout.

Task. Write an encyclopedia entry (200–260 words) on ONE of these: a) the Underground Railroad; b) the Gettysburg Address; c) Morse code; d) a scientist, inventor or invention from your region. Give at least two sources. **Checking sources online.** Prefer primary sources and institutions (the Library of Congress, the National Archives, museum and university websites);

compare at least two sites; check who wrote a page and when; never copy a sentence from a wiki — a wiki is a place to find sources, not a source to cite.

LEARNING TO LEARN

Building a *percorso* from one keyword. For the colloquio you will need to move from a starting point to several subjects. Practise with a keyword such as **freedom**, and build a map with four branches:

- **one English text** — Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" (T3), or Huck's choice in chapter 31;
- **one Italian text** — Verga's "Libertà" (1882), about the revolt at Bronte in 1860, or Pascoli's poetry of the small and the near (Connections);
- **one history fact** — 1861: the Civil War begins in America, and the Kingdom of Italy is proclaimed (17 March);
- **one science link** — the telegraph, which freed communication from the speed of horses and ships.

Write each branch on a card with a date, a short quotation and one sentence that links it to the next card. The same method works for Italian and Latin: in Latin, start from a word such as *libertas* and look for it in Cicero or Livy.

6.6 Connections: Dickinson and Pascoli; Spirituals and the Telegraph

6.6.1 The small, the near and the dead: Dickinson and Pascoli

Giovanni Pascoli (1855–1912) and Emily Dickinson never knew of each other, and they wrote in different worlds. Yet a reader who knows *Myricae* (1891) recognises something familiar in Dickinson's poems: a poet who looks at the smallest things — a bird, a hedge, a fly, the light on a winter afternoon — as if seeing them for the first time, and who returns again and again to the dead of the family and to the house as a refuge. In *Il fanciullino* (1897), Pascoli explained where this way of seeing comes from:

> *È dentro noi un fanciullino che non solo ha brividi, come credeva Cebes Tebano che primo in sè lo scoperse, ma lagrime ancora e tripudi suoi.*
>
> Pascoli, *Il fanciullino*, I (text of *Pensieri e discorsi*, 1907)

"Inside us there is a little child who has not only shivers, as Cebes of Thebes believed, who first discovered him in himself, but also tears and joys of his own" (translation by the editors). For Pascoli the poet is the one who keeps listening to this child when the adult has stopped: the child "resta piccolo" while we grow up, and keeps his ancient wonder. Poetry is a way of seeing, not a set of rules.

The comparison shows differences as clearly as similarities. Pascoli's child names things with wonder, often with sounds and onomatopoeia; Dickinson's speaker looks at them with a sharp, ironic intelligence that turns a fly or a carriage ride into a question about God and eternity. Both renew traditional metres from within — Pascoli the Italian lines he loved, Dickinson the hymn stanza — and both were long read in edited, "tidied" versions. And both write about death with a strange intimacy: Pascoli's murdered father returns in "X Agosto", Dickinson's speaker narrates her own funeral drive.

6.6.2 Twain in Italy

In 1867 Mark Twain joined a group of American tourists on a cruise to Europe and the Holy Land, and his reports became *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). Italy gets some of the funniest pages. Exhausted by guides who attribute every monument to Michelangelo, one of Twain's companions finally explodes: "Lump the whole thing! say that the Creator made Italy from designs by Michael Angelo!" (ch. XXVII). Twain makes fun of the guides, but even more of the Americans who travel to admire what they have been told to admire.

6.6.3 Screen, music and art: spirituals and the camera

The **spirituals** (*spiritual*) were religious songs created by enslaved African Americans, using the stories of the Bible — Moses leading his people out of Egypt, the crossing of the River Jordan — to speak of suffering, faith and freedom; some may have carried coded messages about escape, though historians are cautious about how many. They became known to the world through the Fisk Jubilee Singers, a choir of students from Fisk University in Nashville, a college for freed people, who from 1871 toured the United States and then Britain to raise money for their school, singing in 1873 for Queen Victoria. Songs such as "Go Down, Moses", with its refrain from the Book of Exodus, "Let my people go", entered the repertoire of concert singers. From the music of the Black South, around 1900, grew the **blues**, with its three-line stanzas, its call and response between voice and instrument, and its "blue" notes; W. C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" (1914) carried it into popular music, and from it came jazz (chapter 11), rhythm and blues and rock.

Look at a Civil War photograph from Brady's studio, as you can in the online collections of the Library of Congress: a field after a battle, with bodies lying in the grass; a ruined street in Richmond; officers sitting stiffly in front of a tent. Nobody moves, because nobody could: the wet collodion process of the time needed exposures of several seconds, and the glass plates had to be developed at once, in the darkroom wagon. Ask of every image what you ask of a text: who made it, for whom, and what was left outside the frame. Some famous scenes were later shown to have been arranged by the photographers, who moved bodies for a better composition.

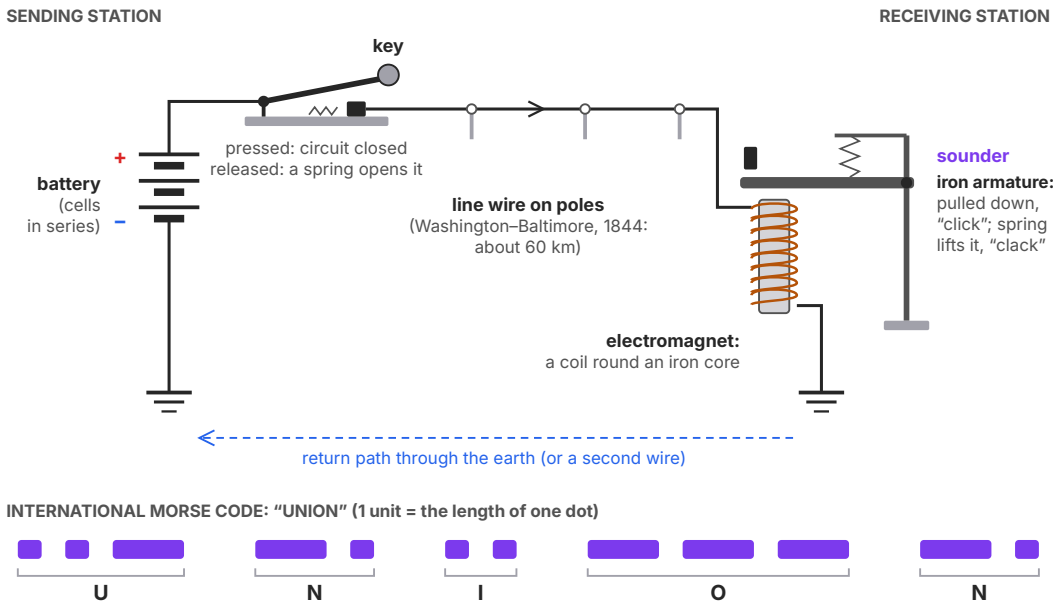

Figura 6.4 A simplified telegraph circuit (above) and the word "UNION" in International Morse code (below), drawn to scale in time units. Battery, key, line, electromagnet and sounder are the parts named in the text; real instruments had more adjustments.

COLLEGAMENTI

Physics: how the telegraph works. In 1820 Hans Christian Ørsted discovered that an electric current deflects a compass needle: a current produces a magnetic field. Wind an insulated wire into a coil, put a bar of soft iron inside it, and you have an **electromagnet** (*elettromagnete*): a magnet that works only while current flows. The field inside a long coil is proportional to the current and to the number of turns per metre, and the iron core makes it hundreds of times stronger. In the telegraph (Figura 6.4) the operator's key closes the circuit; current flows along the line, the electromagnet at the far end pulls down an iron armature with a click, and when the key is released a spring pulls it back. A short press is a dot, a long one a dash.

The difficulty is the length of the line. A long wire has a large resistance, so by Ohm's law ($I = V/R$) the current reaching the far end is small. The American physicist Joseph Henry, who improved the electromagnet around 1830, showed that coils with many turns of fine wire respond to weak currents; long lines used **relays**, in which the weak incoming current operates a switch that starts a fresh, strong current in the next section of the line.

COLLEGAMENTI

Two kinds of dash (a playful comparison). Dickinson's dashes and Morse's dashes belong to the same years, and both make meaning out of length and silence. But they work in opposite ways. In Morse code a dash means exactly one thing: three units of current, part of a letter that cannot be confused with any other — the code is designed to remove ambiguity, because a misread telegram can lose a battle. A Dickinson dash can be a pause, a breath, a link, a hesitation or a cut, and the reader must decide: it is designed to keep meanings open. There is no evidence that the telegraph influenced Dickinson; the comparison is ours, and it is a good way to see what poetry does that a code cannot do.

DA RICORDARE

For the exam. Starting point: Lincoln's words "a new birth of freedom" (Gettysburg, 19 November 1863).

- **Another English-language author:** Twain — Huck's choice to help Jim escape, against everything his society has taught him (chapter 31); or Douglass's *Narrative* (1845).
- **An Italian author:** Verga, "Libertà" (1882): the freedom promised in Sicily in 1860 and the violence and disillusion that followed at Bronte.
- **Another subject:** history — 1861, the year in which the Civil War began and the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed: two nations remade by war in the same decade.

SINTESI

- By 1860 about four million people were enslaved in the United States, almost all in the South; abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass demanded an immediate end to slavery, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) moved millions of readers.
- Lincoln's election (November 1860) led eleven Southern states to secede and form the Confederacy; four border slave states stayed in the Union. The war began at Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861.
- The Emancipation Proclamation (1 January 1863) freed the enslaved in the rebel areas; the Union won at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863; Lee surrendered in April 1865, and Lincoln was assassinated days later.
- The Thirteenth Amendment (December 1865) abolished slavery; Reconstruction (1865–1877) gave civil rights that were largely taken away when it ended.
- The telegraph (Morse, 1844) and photography made the Civil War the first American war followed by wire and by camera.
- Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855–1892) speaks with a democratic "I" in free verse, using the catalogue and parallel structures.
- Emily Dickinson wrote nearly 1,800 short, untitled poems in common metre, with dashes and slant rhyme; about ten were printed in her lifetime, and the first editions (1890) altered them.
- Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884–85) is narrated by Huck in the vernacular of the Mississippi; in chapter 31 he chooses friendship with Jim over the morality of a slaveholding society.
- The Gettysburg Address (Bliss copy) moves from 1776 to the war to the future, and turns a cemetery dedication into a definition of democracy: "government of the people, by the people, for the people".
- British and American English differ in spelling (*colour / color*), some grammar (*gotten*, *Did you eat yet?*) and vocabulary (*flat / apartment*): both are correct, but a text must be consistent.
- A blend joins parts of two words (*smog, brunch, podcast*); an encyclopedia entry has a lead, sections, a neutral register and sources.
- Dickinson and Pascoli both look at small things with wonder and write about death with intimacy; the telegraph's dash is unambiguous, Dickinson's is open.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● Which event began the fighting of the American Civil War?
   - **A.** the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, April 1861
   - **B.** Lincoln's election, November 1860
   - **C.** John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, 1859
   - **D.** the battle of Gettysburg, July 1863

2. ● The Emancipation Proclamation…
   - **A.** abolished slavery throughout the United States
   - **B.** applied only to the four border states
   - **C.** declared free the enslaved people in the areas still in rebellion
   - **D.** was the text of the Thirteenth Amendment

3. ● Which statement about Emily Dickinson is true?
   - **A.** She published "Because I could not stop for Death" in 1863.
   - **B.** She wrote mainly in free verse.
   - **C.** She gave a title to each of her poems.
   - **D.** Only about ten of her poems were printed in her lifetime.

4. ● True or false? Correct the false statements. a The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* had Whitman's name on the title page. b Whitman worked as a volunteer in the military hospitals of Washington. c "O Captain! My Captain!" is written in free verse. d Twain's pen name comes from a call used by boatmen on the Mississippi. e *Huckleberry Finn* has an omniscient narrator. f The Underground Railroad was a secret railway line built by abolitionists.

5. ●● Match each work with its author and its date. Works: *Narrative of the Life* · *Uncle Tom's Cabin* · *Leaves of Grass* (first edition) · *Poems* (first edition) · *The Innocents Abroad* · *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Authors: Douglass · Stowe · Whitman · Dickinson · Twain (twice). Dates: 1845 · 1852 · 1855 · 1869 · 1884–85 · 1890.

6. ●●● Short answer (10–12 lines, 100–130 words): *What is free verse, and how does Whitman use it?* Give a definition, an example from T1 and a link to another author or text.

Text Analysis

7. ● In T2, the "house" of stanza 4 is…
   - **A.** a church
   - **B.** a grave
   - **C.** Death's palace
   - **D.** the speaker's childhood home

8. ● T1. Answer briefly. a What is the speaker doing at the end of section 1? b Why does the hawk "accuse" him? c Where should the reader look for him after his death? d What will he be to the reader "nevertheless"?

9. ●● T2. Find in the poem an example of each device and give the line: a personification · b anaphora · c slant rhyme · d paradox.

10. ●● T3. Paraphrase in simple modern English: a "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth… a new nation" b "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here" c "that these dead shall not have died in vain".

11. ●● T1 and T2 both imagine the speaker's death. Compare them in about 80 words: where does the speaker go, what is the tone, and what is the relation with the reader?

12. ●●● Write a PEE paragraph (100–120 words): *How does Lincoln turn the dedication of a cemetery into a statement about democracy?*

Language

13. ● Which sentence uses British spelling consistently?

    A. I organized the program at the theater.
    B. We travelled to the centre and analysed the data.
    C. The colour of the center is gray.
    D. She practised every day at the theater.

14. ● In American English, "I've ___ a new job" means "I have obtained a new job".

    A. get
    B. getting
    C. had
    D. gotten

15. ● Write the British spelling: a color · b center · c traveler · d analyze · e defense · f catalog · g (TV) program · h gray · i fulfill · j tire (of a car).

16. ●● British or American? Say which variety each sentence is typical of, then rewrite it in the other. a Did you finish your homework yet? b Have you got any brothers or sisters? c The team are playing well this season. d I'll see you on the weekend. e The school insisted that every student be on time. f Shall we start?

17. ●● Error correction. Each sentence has one problem of variety or usage: find it and correct it. a ✗ *I have gotten two brothers.* b ✗ *Our programme was cancelled because the theater was closed.* (British text) c ✗ *In formal British English, his method is different than mine.* d ✗ *She has travelled to the center of the city.* (British text) e ✗ *The data were analyzed and the colour chart was printed.* (American text)

18. ●● Rewrite this American text in British English (vocabulary and spelling): *In the fall we rented an apartment near the subway. Every morning I took the elevator, walked along the sidewalk and waited in line for the bus with my cell phone in my pants pocket.*

19. ●●● Translate into English, using British spelling consistently. a Nel 1863 Lincoln tenne un discorso di circa due minuti in un cimitero militare. b Hai già analizzato i dati dell'esperimento? c Il centro della città è chiuso al traffico durante il fine settimana.

Vocabulary

20. ● Complete with a word from Tabella 6.8 in the correct form. a South Carolina was the first state to ___ from the Union. b The Thirteenth ___ was ratified in December 1865. c Douglass fought all his life for the ___ of slavery. d The war began as a fight to save the ___. e After Reconstruction many Black Americans lost the ___ ___ they had won.

21. ●● Complete the word families. a abolish (v.) → ___ (n.) · b ___ (v.) → emancipation (n.) · c secede (v.) → ___ (n.) · d amend (v.) → ___ (n.) · e democracy (n.) → ___ (adj.) · f nation (n.) → ___ (adj.) → ___ (n., the feeling of loyalty to a nation).

22. ●● Blends. a Which two words make each blend? *brunch · smog · motel · emoticon · podcast · Brexit · spork · staycation*. b Which of these is NOT a blend, and why? *telegram · smog · motel*

Writing and Speaking

23. ●● Writing. Write an encyclopedia entry (200–260 words) on one of the topics in the Writing section (the Underground Railroad · the Gettysburg Address · Morse code · an invention or a scientist from your region). Use the checklist and give at least two sources.

24. ●● Speaking. Explain the last stanza of T2 to a classmate who finds it confusing (about one minute). Use at least four phrases from Tabella 6.11.

Towards INVALSI

25. ● (B1) Reading text. Why did the 1858 cable stop working?

    A. Its insulation broke down after very high voltages were applied.
    B. A ship cut it by accident.
    C. It was destroyed during the Civil War.
    D. William Thomson decided to switch it off.

26. ● (B2) Reading text. "Many people decided that the whole thing had been a fraud" means that some people…

    A. thought the cable had cost too much
    B. accused Cyrus Field of stealing money
    C. believed the messages of 1858 had never really crossed the ocean
    D. thought the Queen's message was a forgery

27. ●● (B1) Reading text. Answer in no more than four words. a Where was the cable's eastern end? b What material insulated the copper core? c Which two ships laid the 1858 cable? d Who invented the mirror galvanometer? e Where was the 1866 cable landed in Newfoundland?

28. ●● (B2) Reading text. True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG)? a In the 1850s there were already undersea cables. b The ocean floor between Ireland and Newfoundland was found to be very rough. c The 1858 cable was laid by one ship sailing from Ireland. d Thomson thought the answer was a more sensitive receiver. e The *Great Eastern* was the largest ship ever built in Ireland. f The crew of 1866 repaired the cable lost in 1865.

Towards the Exam

29. ●●● Colloquio. Starting point: *a photograph of 1862 from Mathew Brady's studio, described in words: an empty field after a battle, a broken fence, bodies lying in the grass; nobody is moving.* Talk for 3 minutes and link it to two other subjects.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [NAA] *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*: the selections from Douglass, Whitman, Dickinson and Twain, with the editors' introductions to the years 1820–1865 and 1865–1914.
- [GRA] R. Gray, *A History of American Literature*: the chapters on the Civil War and on Whitman, Dickinson and Twain.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries "free verse", "meter" (common metre) and "rhyme" (slant rhyme).
- [CRY] D. Crystal, *English as a Global Language*: the chapters on the spread of English and on American English.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entry on American and British English.

Glossario del capitolo

Abolitionism
abolizionismo — the movement that demanded the immediate and complete end of slavery.

Blend
parola macedonia — a word made from the beginning of one word and the end of another: *smog*, *brunch*.

Border states
stati di confine — the four slave states (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri) that stayed in the Union in the Civil War.

Catalogue
catalogo, elenco — in poetry, a long list of people, places or things, often in parallel lines, typical of Whitman.

Confederacy
Confederazione (sudista) — the Confederate States of America, the eleven Southern states that seceded in 1860–61.

Electromagnet
elettromagnete — a coil of wire, usually round an iron core, that becomes a magnet only while a current flows.

Emancipation Proclamation
Proclama di emancipazione — Lincoln's order of 1 January 1863 freeing the enslaved in the areas in rebellion.

Free verse
verso libero — poetry without regular metre or rhyme; not the same as blank verse.

Local colour
colore locale — fiction that records the speech, customs and landscape of a particular region.

Morse code
alfabeto Morse — a code in which letters and numbers are represented by short and long signals (dots and dashes).

Reconstruction
Ricostruzione — the period 1865–1877, when the defeated South was reorganised and the formerly enslaved gained civil rights.

Secession
secessione — the formal withdrawal of a state from a federation, as in the Southern states in 1860–61.

Slant rhyme
rima imperfetta — a near rhyme, with similar but not identical sounds (*me / Immortality*); Dickinson's favourite.

Spiritual
spiritual — a religious song created by enslaved African Americans, often on biblical stories of freedom.

Telegraph
telegrafo — a system that sends messages along a wire as pulses of electric current.

Thirteenth Amendment
Tredicesimo emendamento — the change to the US Constitution that abolished slavery (December 1865).

Underground Railroad
"ferrovia sotterranea" — the secret network of routes and safe houses that helped enslaved people escape to the North or Canada.

Soluzioni

1. A (12 April 1861; the election and John Brown's raid came before the war, Gettysburg in its third year).

2. C (it did not apply to the border states; slavery was abolished everywhere only by the Thirteenth Amendment, December 1865).

3. D (the poem was first printed in 1890; she wrote mostly in common metre; titles were added by editors).

4. a F — there was only a portrait; the name appeared inside "Song of Myself". b T. c F — it has regular rhymed stanzas, an exception in Whitman's work. d T ("mark twain" = two fathoms deep). e F — it is narrated in the first person by Huck. f F — it was a network of secret routes and safe houses, neither underground nor a railway.

5. *Narrative of the Life* — Douglass — 1845 · *Uncle Tom's Cabin* — Stowe — 1852 · *Leaves of Grass* — Whitman — 1855 · *The Innocents Abroad* — Twain — 1869 · *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* — Twain — 1884–85 · *Poems* — Dickinson — 1890 (posthumous, four years after her death).

6. Model answer: Free verse is poetry without a regular metre and without rhyme: the length of the line and its rhythm follow the phrase and the speaker's breath. It must not be confused with blank verse, which has no rhyme but keeps the iambic pentameter. Whitman uses free verse to give poetry the openness of democracy: his lines can be long or short, and their unity comes from repetition and parallel structures, as in "I celebrate myself, and sing myself" or "I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable". He also uses the catalogue, long lists that include every kind of American. His model was partly the parallel verses of the English Bible; in the twentieth century free verse became the normal form of modern poetry, in English and in Italian. (≈ 125 words)

7. B ("a swelling of the ground", a roof "scarcely visible", a cornice that is "but a mound").

8. a He is leaning and loafing at his ease, observing a single blade ("spear") of summer grass. b Because he talks too much ("gab") and is idle ("loitering") — and because, like the hawk, he is wild and untamed. c "under your boot-soles", in the grass that grows from the earth. d "good health": he will strengthen ("filter and fibre") the reader's blood.

9. a Death (and Immortality) personified as a gentleman driver and a passenger, ll. 1–4. b "We passed… / We passed… / We passed…", ll. 9, 11, 12. c *me / Immortality* (ll. 2, 4), or *away / civility* (ll. 6, 8), or *day / eternity* (ll. 18, 20). d centuries that feel "shorter than the day" (ll. 17–18).

10. a Eighty-seven years ago, in 1776, the founders of our country created a new nation. b People will not pay much attention to our words, and they will soon forget them. c that the soldiers' deaths will have had a purpose and a result.

11. Model answer: Whitman's speaker dissolves into nature: he becomes air, mist and dirt, and grows again in the grass, so death is part of a cycle of life. His tone is confident and joyful, and he speaks directly to the reader, promising to wait for "you". Dickinson's speaker is driven calmly to her grave and then speaks from eternity, where time has lost its meaning. Her tone is polite, quiet and unsettling, and the reader is never told what eternity contains. (≈ 80 words)

12. Model answer: Lincoln turns a local ceremony into a definition of the nation's purpose (Point). He begins not with the battle but with 1776 and the "proposition that all men are created equal", and he ends with "government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Evidence). Between these two principles the war appears as a test of whether such a nation "can long endure", and the dead become

soldiers of an idea rather than of one side. The triple negative "we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow" moves the duty from the speakers to the living audience, who must complete "the unfinished work", so that remembering the dead becomes a democratic task (Explanation). (≈ 120 words)

13. B (A is consistently American; C and D mix the two varieties: *colour* + *center*, *gray*; *practised* + *theater*).

14. D (*gotten* = obtained, become; BrE *I've got a new job*).

15. a colour · b centre · c traveller · d analyse · e defence · f catalogue · g programme · h grey · i fulfil · j tyre.

16. a AmE → BrE *Have you finished your homework yet?* b BrE → AmE *Do you have any brothers or sisters?* c BrE → AmE *The team is playing well this season.* d AmE → BrE *I'll see you at the weekend.* e AmE (more common) → BrE *…insisted that every student should be on time* (or *was on time*). f BrE → AmE *Should we start?* (or *Let's start.*)

17. a *I have got two brothers* (possession; *gotten* = obtained). b *theatre*. c *different from* (or *to*). d *centre*. e *color* (*data were* is correct in both varieties).

18. *In the autumn we rented a flat near the Underground. Every morning I took the lift, walked along the pavement and queued (waited in a queue) for the bus with my mobile in my trouser pocket.*

19. a *In 1863 Lincoln gave a speech of about two minutes in a military cemetery.* b *Have you analysed the data from the experiment yet?* (AmE also *Did you analyze…?*) c *The city centre is closed to traffic at the weekend.*

20. a secede · b Amendment · c abolition · d Union · e civil rights.

21. a abolition · b emancipate · c secession · d amendment · e democratic · f national → nationalism (or patriotism).

22. a breakfast + lunch · smoke + fog · motor + hotel · emotion + icon · iPod + broadcast · Britain + exit · spoon + fork · stay + vacation. b *telegram*: it is formed from the Greek elements *tele-* (far) + *-gram* (something written), not from two existing English words.

23. Guidance: a lead that defines the subject and says why it matters (e.g. *The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses that helped enslaved people escape from the Southern states in the decades before the Civil War*); two to four sections with headings (e.g. Organisation · People · Legacy); dates and places precise; impersonal register; facts separated from legend; sources such as the Library of Congress or a museum website, with title and date. Assess: content and accuracy, organisation, register, sources, consistent spelling.

24. Model answer: *Let's take it one line at a time. The speaker says "Since then 't is centuries" — in other words, she has been dead for hundreds of years. But each century "feels shorter than the day" she first guessed that the horses were going towards eternity. Put simply, she is saying that the moment she understood she was dying was longer and more intense than all the time that has passed since. It could mean either that time does not exist in eternity, or that the shock of that discovery never ended — critics don't agree on this. Does that make sense?*

25. A (paragraph 3: the electrician applied "much higher voltages" and the insulation "broke down").

26. C (after the failure, people doubted that the cable had ever worked).

27. a (on) Valentia Island · b gutta-percha · c the *Agamemnon* and the *Niagara* (*Agamemnon* and *Niagara*) · d William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) · e (at) Heart's Content.

28. a T (the Channel cable, 1851). b F (it was "fairly smooth"). c F (two ships met in mid-ocean and sailed in opposite directions). d T. e NG (the text says it was the largest ship in the world, not where it was built). f T.

29. Traccia: describe the image and its context (the Civil War, Antietam, the first war photographed on a large scale; Brady's 1862 exhibition). Explain why nothing moves (long exposures of the wet collodion process: **physics / chemistry** — light-sensitive sil-

ver salts). Link to literature: Whitman's *Drum-Taps* and his work in the hospitals, or Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and the "honored dead". Link to **history**: 1861–65, the Emancipation Proclamation, and, for Italy, the wars of the Risorgimento in the same years. Close with a reflection: the photograph as evidence and as construction (some scenes were arranged).