

A.P. Literature,  
Homestead High School  
Mrs. Padilla

## Theme Topics--Heart of Darkness

Select one of the following topics. Develop it in a composition of between 400-600 words. All statements, assertions, arguments, etc., must be substantiated by specific reference to the novel.

1. Analyze the mood/s of the novel. How, specifically, does Conrad create mood? Isolate and evaluate specific instances of intense mood development. Relate mood to the theme of the novel.
2. Evaluate Marlow's contribution to the novel as you see him. Be certain to defend your analysis with specific references. Make value judgments as to his effectiveness.
3. Analyze and interpret selected symbols in the novel. For example, consider the river, the fog, the dense jungle, Kurtz himself, the heads on the fence posts, the native woman, or the geographic penetration of Africa or other symbols of your choice.
4. Compare and contrast Conrad to Achebe. Treat their methods of narration, of developing mood, of developing theme, of reaction to social conditions, of using vocabulary, etc. Make value judgments based on specific references to the two novels we have read.
5. Identify and analyze Conrad's belief in transcendental evil. Make specific references to the novel. Evaluate the power and importance of evil as Conrad sees it.
6. How well does Conrad develop character? Select four or five minor characters (omit Marlow and Kurtz) and analyze Conrad's method and proficiency of developing them. Make value judgments in comparing and contrasting these characters.
7. Select instances of the strange, the puzzling, the odd, the peculiar, etc..., in the novel. Attempt to analyze them and relate them to the theme or purpose of the novel.
8. Examine and discuss Conrad's use of subtle and sarcastic humor in *Heart of Darkness*. Why does he use it? What are the subjects of his humor?
9. Examine and discuss Conrad's emphasis of detail in *Heart of Darkness*. What kinds of detail does he use and why?
10. Examine and discuss Conrad's use of foreshadowing in Part I of *Heart of Darkness*. What purpose does Conrad make it serve?