



Heart of Darkness

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While reading

Chapter 1

1 Discuss with your partner which person or people can be related to the things below and write down why.

- a A chicken and a spear
- b Maps and exploration
- c Wool
- d A cup of tea
- e A rope
- f Big stones
- g Candles
- h Rivets

2 Work in pairs and complete the table. Discuss how London is described by Marlow during Roman times and compare it to what you know or what you think London is like now.

London during the Roman times	London now

3 Who is talking? When? What was going on?

- a 'I always ask for permission to measure the heads of the men who are going out there.'
- b 'The noise of this sick person upsets my concentration.'
- c 'Kill one of them! Teach them all a lesson.'
- d 'Men who come out here should have no stomachs.'
- e 'When Mr Kurtz is General Manager you won't have that opportunity again.'

4 How are the natives referred to by the following people?

- a Marlow
- b Marlow's aunt
- c Someone on the boat travelling to the Outer Station
- d The accountant at the Central Station

5 Answer the following questions.

- a How long will it take Marlow to repair the boat?

- b What will the manager say about Kurtz's future in the Company?
- c How healthy will the manager, the agents and Marlow be?
- d Who will Marlow travel with after his boat is repaired?
- e What problems will Marlow and his crew have before actually meeting Kurtz?

Chapter 2

6 Now that you have read chapter two, check your answers to exercise 5. Be as specific as possible.

- a How long will it take Marlow to repair the boat?
- b What will the manager say about Kurtz's future in the Company?
- c How healthy will the manager, the agents and Marlow be?
- d Who will Marlow travel with once his boat is repaired?
- e What problems will Marlow and his crew have before actually meeting Kurtz?

7 What happens first in Marlow's journey from the Central Station into the Inner Station? Put these in the right order. Write the numbers 1-5.

- a Before reaching the Inner Station, the crew members were surprised to see a grass hut with a message written on a piece of board.
- b The only thing that scared the natives away was the screech of the steam-whistle.
- c Marlow was very busy watching the steam pipes and keeping them working and, above all, guiding the steamboat and his fireman.
- d Marlow had to wait until the fog lifted in order to reach Kurtz's station.
- e The steamboat was attacked by the natives and some of the crew members died aboard.

8 Marlow writes about all the things that worry and upset him in his diary but some information is missing. Finish the sentences.

- a My steamer is not floating properly. Luckily, today I got help when
- b Everything is threatening. The water is dangerous and shallow and the engine seems



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- c When I woke up today, I couldn't believe my eyes! Everything was and I couldn't see anything!
- d When we were stuck in the fog today we heard some voices and one of the cannibals shouted,
- e Poor men! Now that the hippo meat is gone they are starving. I can't believe how they can survive on

9 Match the incomplete sentences a–e with their endings 1–5.

- a Marlow's steamboat couldn't advance because it was getting dark and the river got more dangerous upwards so ...
- b The Society for the Control of Savage Customs had hired Kurtz because ...
- c Marlow couldn't understand why Kurtz had added the shocking message ...
- d After the pilot died, ...
- e When Marlow realised that the cannibals wanted to eat the dead pilot, ...
- 1 ... they put the anchor down before sunset.
 - 2 he threw the body into the river.
 - 3 'Exterminate all the savages'
 - 4 Marlow realised that there had been a connection between them.
 - 5 he was half-English and half-French.

Chapter 3

10 Are these true (T) or false (F) about Kurtz's ivory hunts and methods?

- a In his trips, Kurtz discovered no villages.
- b Kurtz was so powerful that the natives had different ceremonies to honour him.
- c Kurtz could be frightening and shoot anyone who interfered with what he wanted.
- d Kurtz was ambitious but he never forgot his original ideas.
- e Kurtz was treated like a king by the natives around his post and used that power to get more ivory.

11 What happens first on the day Kurtz's arrives at his post? Put these in the right order. Write numbers 1–5.

- a The manager and his agents spoke to Kurtz.
- b Kurtz read Marlow's letters of recommendation.

- c The beautiful woman came towards the steamer but she didn't talk with Kurtz.
- d Kurtz tried to escape by crawling back into the jungle.
- e Kurtz was carried on a rough bed to his hut by some natives.

12 Who might have said these sentences and when?

- a 'They think I'll never return but they are wrong. This place is mine!'
- b 'Oh, heavens! Stop him from leaving! What am I going to do without him? What are we going to do?'
- c 'I'd better do things right or I'll end up like those men.'
- d 'If he dies, there will be no more trouble.'
- e 'I don't want to be hanged! I have to leave now!'

13 Match the names with the descriptions.

- Kurtz's cousin the journalist the Intended
the beautiful woman the Company officer
- a was the lady in handsome pieces of cloth and savage jewellery who was Kurtz's mistress in Africa.
- b was the pale and fragile woman who had been waiting for Kurtz to come back to Europe so that they could marry.
- c was a neat man who was only interested in Kurtz's knowledge of unexplored African regions.
- d was an old gentleman who wanted to know about Kurtz's last moments.
- e was a man with a short moustache who thought that Kurtz was a rebel.

After reading

- 14 Imagine that late at night the beautiful woman silently approaches the steamer and gives Marlow five things that he should give Kurtz once that they have left. What would these things be?
- 15 We are told that Kurtz was a good painter. Imagine that he had painted his favourite village. What would it be like?
- 16 **The naked truth about Kurtz.**
Among the things Kurtz gives Marlow is his own diary telling the truth about how he became the god of the tribes around his post and the man collecting the most ivory. What would he say? Write it out.



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Chapter 1

1 The men on the *Nellie* write everything they see in their log book. Find three mistakes in each of the extracts below. Change the wrong words.

- a Our sailing ship is big and it is too windy so we drop the anchor for safety and we wait in the stormy weather of the River Thames.
- b Everything is pitch dark. It is impossible to see the mouth of the Thames and there are no ships around.
- c Sunny London is very far away to the east. It would take days to get there.
- d Charles Marlow is the captain of the *Nellie*. There is also a crew of three members. Everything is full of clear light, except for the inviting darkness in the west.
- e The Director found that the boat would move. The riverbanks were foggy. Everything became more and more uncomfortable.

2 Marlow starts telling his story to the men. Say true (T), false (F) or it does not say (?).

- a Meeting Kurtz helped Marlow learn and rediscover the things around him.
- b Before going to Africa Marlow had never been to the East.
- c It was easy for Marlow to find the job he wanted on the River Congo.
- d The Freslaven affair shows that there was lack of understanding and violence between white and native people.
- e Marlow's aunt had lots of connections in Europe because of her relatives.

3 Marlow sets off. Choose the right answers 1 or 2.

- a The French steamboat entered every little port in the west coast of Africa because ...
 - 1 they had to leave agents there.
 - 2 they were trading slaves.
- b Marlow was soon really shocked to see that ...
 - 1 nobody was friendly to the natives.
 - 2 white men thought of the natives as 'enemies' and fired their guns at their land quite frequently.
- c The Swedish captain of the second steamboat that Marlow joined ...
 - 1 did not have full command of English.
 - 2 told him that a man had killed himself on board.

d Marlow stood still in horror ...

- 1 when he saw how natives were treated by the men in the company that he was now part of.
 - 2 when he saw the men carrying guns.
- e The first time that Marlow hears Kurtz's name he finds ...
- 1 he is a strange man.
 - 2 that nobody sends as much ivory as he does.

4 Marlow starts his 300-kilometre journey on foot as far as his steamboat. Put the events in order. Write the numbers 1–5.

- a The first time that Marlow met the manager, he felt quite uneasy.
- b The fat white man got a fever and had to be carried by the natives.
- c When they arrived at the Central Station, Marlow met many white agents and he felt and thought that the place was a disaster.
- d Marlow learnt that his boat had to be repaired.
- e Marlow travelled with sixty natives and a fat white man who was used to fainting.

5 Complete the sentences with the right words.

- candles horrific agent blindfold jungle
- a Marlow felt that the time he spent at the Central Station was
 - b Marlow was shocked to see that sick natives walked into the and never returned.
 - c Everybody believed that the young with a pointed little beard and a long nose was a spy.
 - d Marlow was interested in the painting that showed a woman wearing a
 - e There were only two people in the Station who had to themselves: the manager and his favourite.

Chapter 2

6 Marlow is stuck at the Central Station.

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F).

- a Marlow hears the manager complaining to his uncle that Kurtz did not have good manners or a nice attitude towards him.
- b The manager agreed to let Kurtz leave a native in charge of all the ivory.
- c The manager and his uncle thought wandering traders were competitors.
- d The manager thought it was crazy that Kurtz wanted to be a manager and help the natives at the same time.



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- e When the two men realised that Marlow had been listening to what they were saying, they got angry.
- 7 Marlow starts up the River Congo. Circle the right words.**
 - a When Marlow's boat did not float, *the cannibals/ the white crew* on board had to push it along.
 - b On board Marlow's steamer there were the manager and three or four *agents / sailors*.
 - c Marlow said that they were explorers in an unknown place and that they were the ones to suffer to *discover / conquer* it.
 - d According to Marlow the white men on his boat were accustomed to the idea of a conquered *slave / monster* in chains.
 - e When they realised that they would have to wait for one more day to reach the Inner Station, Marlow was *annoyed / surprised* at the delay.
- 8 Complete the sentences with the right words.**
despair horrified savages genius Intended
 - a Marlow believed that Kurtz was a
 - b Kurtz sometimes spoke of his
 - c After such a long and troubled journey, the men were feeling
 - d The became screaming and shouting behind the bushes as if they were going to attack them.
 - e When Marlow's steamboat was attacked by the natives with arrows and his pilot died, they all felt
- 9 Say true (T), false (F) or it does not say (?).**
 - a When Marlow's steamboat finally reached the Inner Station, they were welcomed by a white man.
 - b The white man was not English.
 - c The Russian had never been on an English ship before.
 - d The Russian was amazed to have his book back.
 - e Kurtz thought the Russian was his best man.

Chapter 3

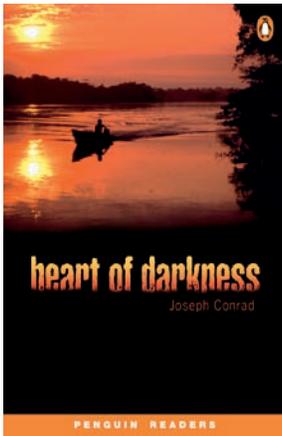
- 10 Find the mistake in each sentence below. Change the wrong words.**
 - a The Russian nursed Kurtz during several illnesses.
 - b The natives in the tribe around Kurtz's outpost hated him.
 - c Kurtz pointed his gun at the Russian and fired it.
 - d Mr Kurtz's methods had helped further trade.

- 11 Marlow sees Kurtz for the first time. Put the sentences in order. Write the numbers 1-5.**
 - a Kurtz talked to the manager and told him that he would return.
 - b The Russian told Marlow that Kurtz had planned the attack on the steamer so that he could stay there.
 - c Kurtz was so ill that he had to be carried by a group of natives to his hut.
 - d A wild beautiful woman stared at the men and then she opened her arms and threw them up.
 - e The Russian decided to run away so as not to be hanged.
- 12 Marlow's steamer leaves. Choose the right answer, 1 or 2.**
 - a When Marlow's steamer had some trouble ...
 - 1 he knew that the boat would be stuck again.
 - 2 they had to stop near the island.
 - b Kurtz gave Marlow some papers ...
 - 1 so that the manager did not find them.
 - 2 for Marlow to spread his word.
 - c Kurtz's last words were ...
 - 1 'It's my duty.'
 - 2 'The horror! The horror!'
 - d Marlow would never forget ...
 - 1 his tough journey up River Congo.
 - 2 Kurtz's final cry.
 - e Marlow could not hand the papers to Kurtz's mother because ...
 - 1 she had moved.
 - 2 she had died.
- 13 Say true (T) false (F) or it does not say (?).**
 - a The Company man insisted that Marlow's gives him the papers and Kurtz left, saying that they belonged to the company.
 - b Kurtz's cousin told Marlow that Kurtz had been a great painter.
 - c The journalist told Marlow that Kurtz could never have been a good leader.
 - d Kurtz's Intended did not travel with him because she was sick.
 - e When Marlow visited Kurtz's Intended a year later, she had stopped mourning him.



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Joseph Conrad



About the author

Joseph Teodor Konrad Korseniovsky, better known by his pen name, Joseph Conrad, was born in Poland in the 1850s. At the age of 17, he joined the French Navy and some years later, the British one even though he barely spoke English. In the following years, he travelled all over the world as a seaman, visiting and exploring what he considered the most exotic places he had ever been to. In the 1890s, he went on a journey up the River Congo in Africa and this was a turning point in his life. He was appalled by the European venture there, its methods and the treatment given to native Africans. As a writer, Joseph Conrad would later draw on this particular experience. *Heart of Darkness*, which was first published in the early 1900s, somewhat reflects what the author saw, felt and thought as a European in Africa during the colonial times.

Summary

Heart of Darkness is a story within a story. Five men on board the *Nellie* are anchored in the Thames Estuary at dusk. One of them narrates what happened aboard but mainly retells the story told by another crew member, Charlie Marlow, about his journey to Africa and up the River Congo as a representative of a trading company. Marlow shares his experiences as a steamboat captain transporting ivory downriver but particularly focuses on the lack of efficiency of white trading agents and how they mistreated the natives. However, the centre of his story is his search for the mysterious Kurtz, an ivory trader, who gathers huge quantities of ivory through very peculiar and secret methods and who has raised himself as the god of the tribes surrounding his station. It is through Kurtz that Marlow discovers the various forms of darkness in Congo and this throws light on himself.

Chapter 1: Waiting for the tide to turn, the men listen to Marlow's story. He tells them how he has always been interested in Africa and how he used his aunt's contacts in Belgium to find a job in a colonial trading post up the River Congo. Marlow starts a thirty-day journey on a French steamboat up to the mouth of the river and then joins another steamboat until they get to the Company's Outer Station. He stands in horror when faced with the living condition of the native people there and the way in which they are treated. Marlow spends ten days at the station which is run by a white chief accountant and, for the first time, he hears about the extraordinary, best ivory-trading agent, Kurtz. Marlow begins a three-hundred-kilometre journey on foot to his steamboat together with another white man and learns more about Kurtz. Marlow arrives at the Central Station and finds that his steamboat is stuck at the bottom of the river and that it will take some months to have it repaired. He meets the Station Manager and is told a lot more about the unique Kurtz, who appears to be presently ill. As time goes by, Marlow is increasingly discouraged and upset by white men's rules and behaviour and interested in Kurtz's ideas, principles and success.

Chapter 2: Marlow repairs his boat and prepares to start his journey up the River Congo with a big crew, the Manager, his assistants, some agents and a group of natives, towards the Inner Station to meet Kurtz. By now, finding Kurtz, and learning from him, has become his only purpose. When Marlow's steamboat is getting closer to Kurtz's station, they are stranded in a thick blanket of fog and they can't keep moving upwards. When the fog lifts and they are about to get to the Inner Station, they are attacked by several natives and the pilot dies. Marlow starts feeling that he will never get to see Kurtz, since he must have been killed. Yet, Marlow manages to edge the steamer towards the riverbank and he sees Kurtz's hut through his telescope, but not him. Instead, Marlow meets a Russian seaman who has been assisting Kurtz and who worships him as much as all the other men around him. The Russian tells Marlow the story of his life and all about his relationship with Kurtz, but he particularly focuses on the mysterious Kurtz, his endeavours and achievements. He also tells Marlow that the natives have attacked his steamer because Kurtz was with them and they didn't want him to leave the heart of the continent.

Chapter 3: The Russian speaks about how he nursed Kurtz through two illnesses and confesses to Marlow that



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It was Kurtz who ordered the attack on his steamboat because he didn't want to leave. He also describes Kurtz's frightening ivory hunt and his peculiar methods, which ruined further trade in the region, and his madness, which together with his desires and blind greed, took control over him and even governed him. Kurtz arrives at his hut lying on a rough bed carried by some natives and followed by several more, among which is his mistress, a beautiful mysterious woman. The manager tells Marlow that Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company due to his forceful action and faulty methods. Marlow tells the Russian that the manager and his assistants were plotting to have him hanged, since they believed that he was stealing from the Company. Therefore, he decides to run away. Before doing so, he tells Marlow that he knows many secrets that could damage Kurtz's good name. However, Marlow decides to remain loyal to Kurtz. All the men, including Kurtz, get on board and this time Marlow's steamboat moves quickly downstream. Kurtz opens up to Marlow and gives him some secret papers. As Kurtz lies dying his last words are 'The horror! The horror!' Back in Brussels, Marlow is visited by many people, a Company agent, Kurtz's cousin and a journalist, who want to know more about Kurtz's death. Finally Marlow visits Kurtz's Intended and lies to her, telling her that his last words were her name.

Background, themes and symbols

The abuse and hypocrisy of colonialists: The book explores issues related with the colonial rule in Africa. Marlow is faced with a harsh picture of colonial trade: the inefficiency and hypocrisy of white agents, the greedy impulses and harsh methods of the traders, the destruction of the land, and the exploitation of and brutality towards the African tribes surrounding the stations astound him and make him challenge his ideas and values. However, what particularly shocks him is the true nature of the so-called extraordinary Kurtz, who actually rules through violence and oppression and ends up wanting to 'exterminate the savages'.

Good vs evil: *Heart of Darkness* can be seen as the individual's inner conflict between good and evil. Just like Kurtz, or even Marlow, people struggle with their moral ideas, strength and values, and fight with the dark forces inside them, their hidden repressed drives. Yet, when they finally see their own 'heart of darkness' they are left with no words but 'The horror! The horror!'

The change in Kurtz's ideas and purposes from educating and guiding the natives towards a better life, to his exploiting them and seizing their land and ivory, reflects how he broke away from his initial beliefs, as his greed for power and control, his darkest side, took over him.

The river, the fog and darkness: Natural elements in the book set the scenario for the journeys and discoveries that individuals will go through, since they symbolically represent moods, feelings and thoughts.

The Congo River is the threshold that divides outside and inside and it is the access to the centre of the continent. It is described as a 'snake that charms', and thus, it both attracts and scares away. Marlow struggles to travel upstream towards the Inner Station to meet Kurtz at the very 'heart of darkness', but he smoothly flows downstream back to 'civilisation'.

The fog anticipates darkness. It creates obscurity and confusion and it clouds perception. Marlow's boat is lost and stranded in the fog, and this makes it impossible for him to see, and even understand, what lies ahead in his troubled journey, beneath the men around him, and even inside Kurtz, the man he is fascinated with.

Darkness is everywhere: in London, in the Congo and in the innermost part of the individual. Darkness stands for the mysterious, the unknown, the savage, the unrepressed. It is at the heart of the continent and it appears to be opposed to the 'light of civilisation'. Yet it also reflects the evil purposes, the faulty methods and the moral obscurity of the colonial project.

Discussion activities

Before reading

- 1 Discuss:** Have students talk about the book and the cover. Write 'Heart of Darkness' on the board. Divide the class into groups and tell them to imagine what the Reader is about. Write their answers in spider-webs.
- 2 Discuss:** Have students talk about the colonial rule in Africa or anywhere else in the world.
What was the purpose of establishing colonies? How did colonies work? What did the British want from the colonies? What did they offer the colonies? What did the British think of the native people there?
- 3 Read:** Have students to read aloud pages v and vi.
 - a** Divide the class into two. Have Group A underline all the dates and the places (countries and states) mentioned and Group B underline the phrases that describe the relation between white colonisers and natives.



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- b Bring a world map to the classroom and have students mark each of the places underlined by Group A.
 - c Based on what Group B underlined, discuss how the Africans were affected by colonisation.
- 4 **Research:** Tell students to form groups and go to the library or surf internet sites for more information on the colonial rule in Africa and to answer the questions you asked in exercise 3 in further detail. Ask them to prepare presentations to share with the other students.

Chapter 1

While Reading

- 5 **Pairwork and Role-play:** Have students choose between any of the two situations below.
- a *You are Marlow and his aunt having tea and celebrating Marlow's getting the job at the Company.*
Student A: You are the aunt. Talk about the new ideas that you have read in the papers. Tell Marlow how proud you are of him and why.
Student B: You are Marlow. Tell your aunt how you always liked exploring and why this journey is so important to you.
 - b *You are Marlow and an agent at the Company's office in Brussels during Marlow's job interview.*
Student A: You are one of the Company's representatives. You have to interview Marlow. Tell him about the company's projects, expectations and methods. Ask him all the necessary questions.
Student B: You are Marlow. Make sure you make a good impression on the Company. Tell them why you are the right person for the job.

Choose three to five pairs to act out their interviews in front of the class.

- 6 **Discuss:** Have students look at the picture opposite page 1 that reads: 'Would this land and this river control us or would we control them?'
- a Ask: *What impression does the picture give you? What is suggested in the question below it? How do they both relate to what you have read in the chapter?*
 - b Write the heading above on the board and brainstorm ideas. Tell students:
Some of the natural elements in the book seem to be personified, or given human qualities; others are compared to animals; and others are given magical or supernatural powers. Why is this so? Do you remember reading any of these? What view of nature is presented in the story?
- 7 **Group work:** After the discussion, tell students to form groups and to choose one of the following activities:
- a Read from 'The Thames was confident in its power' until the end of the paragraph (p. 2). *How is the River Thames described? Which qualities is it given? Why?*
 - b Read from 'I found myself on a street in London looking at a map of Africa' until the end of the

paragraph (p. 5) *How is the River Congo described? Which qualities is it given? Why?*

- c Read from 'I left a French steamboat' until the end of the paragraph (p. 10). *How is the coast described? Which qualities is it given? Why?*
 - d Read from 'I felt alone among these passengers and the crew' until the end of the paragraph (p. 9). *How is the sea described? Which qualities is it given? Why?*
 - e Read from 'We continued along the coast' until the end of the paragraph (p. 10). *How are the waves described? Which qualities are they given? Why?*
- 8 **Discuss:** After students have finished the exercise above ask:
What does water seem to do? What does it divide? What problems does it bring about? Why? What is water preventing men from doing? Why?

After reading

- 9 **Guess:** Ask students how they think the Africans see Marlow.
You are one of the African natives in Congo. What do you think about all the white men in your land collecting your ivory? What are they like? What is strange about them? What are they doing here? What do you think of their customs and methods?
- 10 **Discuss:** Ask students to look back at exercise 4 in chapter 1 in the Activity Worksheet.
Discuss with your partner why African people are described in so many different ways. What does each of them suggest? What does this show about people's assumptions about African people? Discuss how things or even people change depending on who is looking at them.
- 11 **Write:** Have students imagine what would have happened:
If Marlow's aunt hadn't spoken so highly about her nephew, people would have had a different perception of Marlow and he would have been given a different job. Surely the manager and his agents would have treated him differently. How? What would have happened?
- 12 **Discuss:** Have students look back at exercise 2 in chapter 1 in the Activity Worksheet.
Look at the chart you completed about England now and during the Roman times. Why do you think Marlow mentions this? What does he want to show about England? How different was England in the past from present Africa?
Have the whole class share their opinions.
- 13 **Write:** Give students these instructions:
There are many parts in the book in which nature seems to suggest what is happening to men or to anticipate what will happen to them. Choose one of the following situations and write a short paragraph in which nature suggests or predicts what men go through.
- a *As Marlow is leaving Brussels in the French boat he looks back.*



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- b** Marlow walks towards his steamboat stuck at the bottom of the river and stares at it.
- c** It is very hot and late at night. Marlow is on the deck of his steamboat. As he is falling asleep, he starts thinking of Kurtz.

14 Read and write: Have students do the following:
On page 6, Marlow describes Freslaven's fight with the chief of the village using irony, i.e., he says other than what he means, and uses a bit of humour for the situation not to be so shocking to the listener.
Re-read the paragraph with your partner and choose any other situation in the chapter that could be retold using irony with the same effect.

Chapter 2

While Reading

- 15 Read and Discuss:** Have students discuss how the setting and characters are presented.
Re-read from 'We entered deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness' up to 'the noise and activities of these wild creatures' (p. 30) and discuss how Congo and the African people are shown in this chapter.
- 16 Role-play:** Have students write a dialogue that could have been in the story and perform it.
On pages 25–28, the Manager of the Central Station and his uncle talk about the Company, trade and Kurtz without knowing that Marlow is listening to them. Imagine that Marlow talks to them. Decide when he will interrupt them and what each of them will say. Decide how the conversation will change.
- 17 Pairwork:** Have students work in pairs and imagine they are two of the cannibals on Marlow's boat.
You are travelling on Marlow's boat. How do you feel? What do you think about your people? What do you think about all the white men around you? What do you expect from the journey?
- 18 Write:** Have students write the following:
You are Marlow. Everyday you write in your logbook what has happened, what the weather is like, how the tide changes, how the crew behaves, etc.
- 19 Pairwork:** Have students analyse what the fog means in the book. Give students these instructions:
With your partner re-read pages 34 and 35 trying to keep in mind what we have already said about the role of nature in the book. Then answer these questions: Why does the fog appear now? What does it suggest? What does it prevent men from doing?

After reading

- 20 Pairwork:** Have students do this activity.
Imagine one of you is Marlow and the other is the Manager. You are trapped in the fog at night and you start wondering whether you'll ever see Kurtz.
Student A: You are Marlow. As you fall asleep you start hearing Kurtz's voice. What does it say?

Student B: You are the Manager. As you fall asleep you start hearing Kurtz's voice. What does it say?

Compare your writings.

- 21 Write:** Give students these instructions.
Nobody knows what happened to Kurtz and why he changed his ideas so much and ended up writing 'exterminate the savages!' Imagine you are Kurtz and write down what was going on in his mind at the time
- 22 Read and discuss:** Have students re-read pages 42 and 43 paying special attention to what Marlow says about women and about people who live in the city. Discuss the two issues below using these questions:
- a** Why is it that there are practically no women in the story? Why does Marlow say that women 'should be out of it'? What view of women does he have?
- b** Why does Marlow tell the European men listening to his story that 'they can't understand what he is talking about'? Do you agree? Do you have to live like Kurtz in order to understand?
- 23 Write:** Have students do the following activity.
You are the Russian. You have just met Marlow and his crew. Write your thoughts and feelings in your diary.

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- 24 Read and discuss:** Tell students to re-read pages 53–55 where Marlow describes a different Kurtz. What view of Kurtz is shown in these pages? How different is this Kurtz from the one presented by Marlow before? Which Kurtz is the true one? Why?
- 25 Discuss:** Have students read the following quotation (p. 56) out loud then ask these questions:
'I think this knowledge came to Kurtz at last – but only at the end. However, the jungle and the river had discovered his greedy secrets early and had punished him for his terrible attack on them'.
How has nature been affected by Kurtz? In how many ways was Kurtz punished by nature? Why?
- 26 Guess:** Have students imagine a different arrival.
Kurtz arrives at the station being carried and followed by the natives. Even though they shout and complain, they are pacific. Imagine a scenario in which they react differently. Write or draw what happens.
- 27 Guess:** Have students do the following activity.
We are told by the Russian that Kurtz and the beautiful woman used to argue a lot. Imagine what they could fight about and write down what they both say.
- 28 Group work:** Have students do this activity.
On his death bed, Kurtz gives a packet of papers to Marlow. Everybody seems to be interested in them, but we never know what they say. With your partners plan what is in the packet. What each paper says. Write them down in Kurtz's style.



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After reading

- 29 Read and discuss:** Tell students to re-read page 73 where Marlow talks about Kurtz's final cry (The horror) and his journey into the heart of darkness. *Do you agree with Marlow's view of Kurtz? Why do you think Kurtz cries 'the horror'? How do you understand the title of the book, Heart of Darkness after this dramatic moment?*
- 30 Predict:** Ask students what happens next? *Imagine you are all fortune-tellers, who will predict the future of the Company, Marlow, the Manager, the natives, the beautiful woman and the Intended after Kurtz's death. Take turns to talk about them.*
- 31 Role-play:** Give students the following instructions. *Imagine that Kurtz and the Company have to stand trial in an African court because of what they have done. Play the roles of the judge, the members of the jury, the lawyers, Kurtz and the Company men.*
- 32 Write:** Have students write about Kurtz's memoirs after 'The horror! The horror' *Imagine that after 'the horror' Kurtz survives and sees the light. Imagine what he would write in the central chapter of his autobiography.*

After reading

- 33 Discuss:** Guide students with questions about Europeans and Africans. *Has the reading of the book changed your views about Europeans, Africans and colonial trade?*
- 34 Discuss:** Have students discuss good and evil. The book shows that Kurtz, Marlow, and all people are good and evil and that they have a savage and an evil side as well as a civilised side. Do you agree? How do these show in the book?
- 35 Discuss:** Have students discuss 'The horror!' *On page 12 Marlow stands in horror and on page 71 Kurtz stares in horror. What are these men horrified about? What does Joseph Conrad suggest by this?*
- 36 Discuss:** Guide students with questions about women. *There are four different types of women in the book: the aunt, the blindfolded woman, the beautiful woman and the Intended. What is each of them like? Are these stereotypes representative of women in general? Why?*
- 37 Find:** Get students to find examples of Kurtz an idol and a monster. *Throughout the book, Marlow has mixed feelings about Kurtz. He sees him as both an idol and a monster. Look for examples of both.*

Projects

- 38 Discuss:** if you have access to films on video or DVD, you can discuss scenes in *Apocalypse Now*.
- 39 Group work:** Have students do these activities.
- Divide the students into groups. Have each draw a chart and compare one of the following

in the book and the film: Marlow and Willard, Mr Kurtz and Colonel Kurtz, the African and the Cambodian jungles, African and Cambodian tribes. Then have students share their findings.

- Watch the scene in which Willard and one of his crew members, Chef, end up venturing into the jungle to fetch some fruit. Ask students to do the following:
Analyse how the two men are shown as two small beings against a background of huge trees in the immensity of the jungle. Discuss this and write down your thoughts.
Look for passages in Joseph Conrad's book in which nature dwarfs men. Then share your writings and findings.
 - Watch the scene in which Willard, played by Martin Sheen, enters Colonel Kurtz's compound. Ask students to do the following:
Write down what this scene shows and suggests about Kurtz and his relationship with the natives.
Also discuss whether the images show the outpost as you imagined it.
- 40 Listen:** Get students listen to the song *The End* by The Doors, which is played in the opening and closing soundtrack of *Apocalypse Now*. Ask these questions:
Why has this song been chosen? How does it relate to the book? And to the film?
- 41 Read:** Have students read the poem 'The Hollow Men' by TS Eliot. Ask students to do these activities:
- Identify which lines are spoken by Colonel Kurtz (at the end of the film) when he expresses what he has discovered.*
 - Discuss why the poem makes reference to Conrad's Kurtz in its opening lines.*
- 42 Discuss:** Talk about the effects of colonial trade and war. Ask students to do these activities:
- Discuss how Mr Kurtz in the book and Colonel Kurtz in the film are transformed and how they change their original ideas and morals due to colonial trade and war.*
 - Discuss which view of the British venture in Africa and the American venture in Cambodia are presented in the book and the film. Analyse what these views have in common.*
- 43 Write:** Get students in groups. Tell them to choose their favourite newspaper or magazine and to write a film review of *Apocalypse Now* to be published in the film section.

Vocabulary activities

For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to www.penguinreaders.com.



Heart of Darkness

Book key

1–4 Open answers

- 5 a telescope
b screech
c exterminate
d trade
e rivet
f blindfold
g intended
h despair

6 Open answers

- 7 a Charlie Marlow
b Romans
c Marlow's aunt
d Freslaven
e Belgium
f Belgian doctor
g a Swedish agent
h dying black natives
i Company's chief accountant
j Kurtz
k manager of the Central Station
l ambitious agents
m manager and brick-maker at the Central Station
n Kurtz
o mechanic
p manager's uncle
- 8 Open answers
- 9 a 3 b 2 c 5 d 1 e 6 f 4 g 7
- 10 a Bad example: they fire their guns for no reason and do not hit anything.
b Bad examples: both stations are in a mess, with machinery in poor condition, workers badly treated and little or no work being done.
c Good example: the accountant works hard and keeps the financial records very well.
d Bad example: his workers obey him, not because he is intelligent or efficient but because he makes them nervous and because he is never ill.
e Bad example: his job is to make bricks, but he has not made any since he has been at the station.
- 11 a These five men are all sailors, men who have 'followed the sea'; they are old friends.
b Marlow needs rivets to fix his steamboat and the brick-maker needs supplies to make bricks. Neither of them is sent the things they need – examples of inefficiency.

- c The brick-maker tells a story about hippopotamuses. He says they belong in the Congo and have a special magic that protects them. He contrasts them with the agents who do not belong in the Congo and therefore have no magic to protect them.
d They are uncle and nephew.
e Both are great rivers that take men to adventure and mystery.

- 12 The Company's chief accountant describes him as an extraordinary person who sends in more ivory than all the other agents together and will rise very far in the Company. He says that Kurtz will be an important person in management very soon, and that the people above him have big plans for him.

The Manager of the Central Station says that Kurtz is his best agent, but is ill. He is an extraordinary man, of very great importance to the Company.

The brick-maker says that Kurtz is chief of the Inner Station (the best station) and an ambassador of pity, science and progress. He is a special man who understands the purpose in being in the Congo. Next year, he will be assistant manager. He needs the right tools and intelligent men around him.

Marlow says that Kurtz is as unknown and mysterious as a man from Mars, and that he came to the Congo with big moral ideas.

13–14 Open answers

- 15 a Kurtz's power
b the climate
c illness
d objects under the surface
e hunger
f a spear
g a screech from the steamboat's whistle
- 16 a from all over Europe
b report
c pushes the pilot's body into the river
d in colourful clothes
e Russian
f Kurtz to stay
- 17 a At the Central Station: Marlow hears a private conversation between the Manager and his uncle and learns about their attitude towards Kurtz and about some of Kurtz's activities.



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- b** On the steamboat at the beginning of the journey to the Inner Station: Marlow observes the natural world around him, worries about the dangers to the boat, also worries about the hidden truth, talks about the crew and passengers, thinks about the people behind the bushes and their relationship to modern man, talks about his fireman.
- c** Eighty kilometres below the Inner Station and Kurtz: Marlow finds a grass hut that has belonged to a white man and leaves with a pile of wood, a book and a warning.
- d** Twelve kilometres from the Inner Station: the steamboat stops and waits until morning before continuing; there is thick fog the next morning; sound of screaming seems to come out of the fog; Marlow thinks about the cannibals' lack of food.
- e** Three kilometres from the Inner Station: the steamboat has to go around a tiny island; Marlow and company are attacked by the natives with arrows; the agents shoot back with guns; Marlow's pilot is killed by a native's spear and thrown into the river by Marlow.
- f** At the Inner Station: they see the station which looks like it has not been used for a long time; Marlow meets the Russian, hears his story and learns of his admiration of Kurtz.
- 18 a** The Central Station manager's uncle is talking to his nephew about Kurtz. Perhaps the climate will kill Kurtz and so deal with the problem of him having too much power.
- b** An agent is talking to Marlow as they hear the sound of native screams coming out of the fog, just before the steamer is attacked.
- c** The headman of the cannibal crew is talking to the white men on the ship. The cannibals are very hungry and want to eat their native attackers.
- d** Marlow is talking to the pilot as arrows rain down on the steamer.
- 19 a** T **b** F **c** T **d** F **e** F **f** T **g** T **h** F
- 20–21** Open answers
- 22 a** R **b** R **c** M **d** R **e** R **f** M **g** M **h** M
i R **j** M **k** R
- 23 a** Kurtz
b The native woman
c the Russian
d Marlow
e Kurtz
f The agents

- g** Kurtz's cousin
h The Intended
i Marlow
- 24 a** (1) physically sick
(2) mentally ill
(3) purposeful
(4) remarkable
(5) a genius
(6) ambitious
(7) confident
(8) intelligent
(9) a rebel
(10) greedy
- b** (1) beautiful
(2) uneducated
(3) wild
(4) proud
(5) queenly
(6) decorated
(7) strong
- c** (1) truthful
(2) generous
(3) loyal
(4) pale
(5) deserving
(6) tragic
(7) kind

25–27 Open answers

28 a second

b third

c first

29–38 Open answers

Discussion activities

1–43 Open answers

Activity worksheets key

- 1 a** A Danish Captain, Freslaven, who was killed with a spear by the Chief of the village because of a disagreement involving chicken.
- b** When Marlow was a young boy, he was very interested in maps and excited about exploration.
- c** The two women at the outer room of the Company's office in Brussels were knitting while Marlow was interviewed for the position on the River Congo.
- d** Marlow and his aunt celebrated her success at finding him a job at her house over tea.
- e** get to his next post hanged himself.



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- f The manager of the Central Station and his agents had hurriedly started up river and they hit some big stones that tore the bottom of the ship.
- g The manager of the Central Station and the young agent with the pointed little beard were the only two to have candles.
- h Marlow needed rivets to repair his boat, which was stuck in the Station for months, but they never came.

2 Suggested answer

London during Roman times	London now
Darkness was everywhere	Open answers
The sea, the sky and the river were grey	Open answers
Wild men were everywhere	Open answers
There were no drinks or food for men of culture	Open answers
There was cruelty everywhere	Open answers
Men died like flies	Open answers
Their land and wealth were seized by force by Romans	Open answers
They were conquered	Open answers

- 3 a The doctor who checked Marlow before his trip to Congo.
- b The accountant in his office at the Outer Station when a bed for a dying person was placed there.
- c The fat white agent travelling on foot with Marlow to the Central Station.
- d The Manager, who he stayed healthy when a bad tropical disease hit almost all the white men.
- e Marlow to the fat agent, who wanted to become assistant manager.
- 4 a Marlow: black natives, black people, black men (p. 11); neither enemies nor criminals but black shadows of disease and sadness, bunches of bones under black skin (p. 13);
- b Marlow's aunt: uneducated natives with savage ways (p. 8);
- c Someone on the boat travelling to the Outer Station: enemies. (p. 10)
- d The accountant at the Central Station: you begin to hate those natives. Hate them to death (p. 15)
- 5 Open answers.
- 6 a Many months and weeks.
- b The manager believes that he is a fool and will never become a manager because of his ideas.

- c The managers and Marlow will be well and all the agents will be sick.
- d He will travel with the Manager, three or four agents from the Central Station, many natives and more than twenty cannibals.
- e They will be delayed by a thick blanket of fog and they will be attacked by the tribes around Kurtz's outpost.

7 a 2 b 5 c 1 d 3 e 4

8 Suggested answers

- a twenty of the crew members got into the water and pushed it.
- b to have an angry devil inside of it.
- c surrounded with fog.
- d eat them!
- e that strange mixture of flour and water.

9 a 1 b 5 c 3 d 4 e 2

10 a F b T c T d F e T

11 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 1

- 12 a Kurtz when taken to Europe on Marlow's steamboat.
- b The beautiful woman as Kurtz is taken into the hut.
- c Marlow when he realized that the round balls on the hut were actually human heads.
- d The manager realizing that Kurtz's health is very poor.
- e The Russian when Marlow tells him what the manager and his agents said about traders who stole from the country.
- 13 a The beautiful woman.
- b The Intended.
- c The Company officer.
- d Kurtz's cousin.
- e The journalist.

14–16 Open answers

Progress test key

- 1 a Sailing ship is big; small; it is too windy: there is no wind; wait in the stormy weather: rest on the calm waters.
- b Pitch dark: there is a brilliant light; it is impossible possible to see the mouth of the Thames; there are no ships: other boats.
- c Sunny London: there is a grey cloud; very far away: forty kilometres; to the east: to the west.
- d Charles Marlow is the captain: the Director; a crew of three members: four members: the lawyer, the accountant, Marlow and the narrator; the darkness in the west is inviting: a threat.



Heart of Darkness

- e The boat would not move riverbanks were foggy:
misty; more and more uncomfortable: peace and
quiet became deeper.
- 2 a T b F c F d F e ?
- 3 a 1 b 2 c 2 d 1 e 2
- 4 a 5 b 2 c 3 d 4 e 1
- 5 a horrific b jungle c agent d blindfold
e candles
- 6 a T b F c F d T e F
- 7 a the cannibals b agents c conquer d monster
e annoyed
- 8 a genius b Intended c despair d savages
e horrified
- 9 a T b T c F d T e ?
- 10 a several: two b hated: love c fired: he didn't fire
d helped: ruined
- 11 a 3 b 5 c 1 d 2 e 4
- 12 a 2 b 1 c 2 d 2 e 2
- 13 a T b F c F d ? e F