

Introduce the author to the students. It's very important they know some facts about his life and style to understand the text.

Some ideas you can use:

Joseph Conrad was born in 1857 in the Polish Ukraine. Conrad's family, belonged to a high social class but his father was arrested on suspicions of involvement with revolutionary activities. From then on, the family was thrown into exile and unsettled. At age of eleven, Joseph was an orphan. Conrad left Poland in 1874. He became an observer on pilot boats. Conrad took voyages for a long period, and then received a rest time on shore. He began writing.

A journey to the Congo in 1890 was Joseph's real inspiration to write Heart of Darkness. His condemnation of colonialism was well-documented in the journal he kept during his visit.

His prose is very descriptive. The images and symbols are effectively used to describe places, people or feelings. Also, he uses foreshadowing and suspense. This novel is about the dark heart of mankind. Conrad believes man evils are only masked by civilization. The journey is a symbol itself. Marlow travels to three main settings : Thames River, Central station and Inner station. A physical and spiritual journey into wilderness, cruelty, greed and darkness.

1) WORKING WITH THE TEXT:

Tell the students that the text are some fragments from the beginning of the book. The first narrator introduces Marlow , one of the men on the ship , to the readers. Two parallel settings: The Thames where Marlow tells the story , and The Congo where the story happens.

Read the text once to get the general idea and underline the words below in column A

Matching

KEY: glowing: shining ; dull: not bright; gloom: darkness ; profound: deep; broad: wide ; unruffled: not disturbed ; uttermost : remotest ; abiding: enduring ; brooding: nursing ; lurid: pale ; glare: dazzle.

Tell the students to read the text again .

2) JUMBLED TEXT

Divide the class into 6 groups. Each group will be given a paragraph .

They will look up all the new words and explain them to the whole group.

Reorder the text.

KEY: c , e , d , b , f , a

Full text :

The narrator introduces a group of men on a ship sitting on the Thames. One of them, Marlow , begins to speak about a life experience in Africa which gave him a terrible glance of colonization. Then Marlow becomes the main narrator. He explains how his aunt gets him a job as a captain of a steamboat of an ivory company. In a few days he travels to Africa and arrives at the Central Station where he meets the accountant who keeps track of the funds in a company run by a mythic man named Kurtz. Marlow considers the accountant interesting because he has spent three years in the Congo , but he is still clean and smart. On the other hand Marlow describes how badly the blacks are treated by the whites. Then Marlow continues down the river on his steamboat with a crew of several whites and about 30 cannibal blacks. As he travels down the river ,he discovers a hut where he picks up wood, and finds a note warning him to be careful. He goes on in the dark fog and eventually they are surrounded by savages. They don't attack till the fog rises. And then , neither the savages' arrows hurt Marlow's men nor the guns of the crew have any effect on the others. Meanwhile, Marlow and his men are really scared , but mysteriously everything changes when Marlow blows the whistle. Now the savages retreat in fear. Soon afterwards, Marlow reaches the Inner Station where he meets a Russian man who looks like a harlequin. The Russian Fool tells him that Kurtz is ill. Then he meets Kurtz himself and Marlow realizes he needs to be taken to England. But Kurtz has become part of the tribe and doesn't want to

leave. Kurtz entrusts Marlow with his papers and letters and tries to escape. However, Marlow manages to catch him and takes him to the steamboat. While still on the river, Kurtz dies. A year later, Marlow returns to England and visits Kurtz's sweetheart who is still in mourning. She reminds Kurtz as the great man he was before he left, and Marlow doesn't feel like telling her the truth. He gives her Kurtz's letters and leave.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES:

- Where does Marlow's adventures take place?.....the African Congo
- Who got the job in the Company to Marlow?.....his aunt.
- How are natives treated in the story?.....really bad, like animals.
- Why does Marlow admire the accountant in Central Station?because he's impossibly dressed.
- Why do you think Kurtz says “..each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a center for trade of course but also for humanizing, improving, instructing.”?
- Why do you think Marlow says “..this also...has been one of the dark places of the earth...” when sitting on the Thames at the beginning of the book?

3) WRITING NARRATIVES.

It would be a great idea to revise word order in sentences, paying special attention to adjectives and adverbs.