

# HEART OF DARKNESS

## JOSEPH CONRAD

STAGE 6  
C2  
YOUNG ADULT READERS

### ACTIVITIES

Choose the correct word from the box for each space.

aft - amidships - boiler - boilerman - bow - dug out  
forward - helmsman - lookout - pilot - port  
skipper - steamboat - steamer - woodcutter - stern  
starboard - whistle

I am the 1 \_\_\_\_\_ of a small 2 \_\_\_\_\_, travelling up a big river in Africa. One day, I was standing as 3 \_\_\_\_\_ in the centre of the 4 \_\_\_\_\_ steamer, nervously watching the banks on either side of us, while trying to navigate, for not only was I the 5 \_\_\_\_\_ of this tin boat, I was also the 6 \_\_\_\_\_.

I shouted at the 7 \_\_\_\_\_ to put more wood on the fire so we could move faster, he shouted at the 8 \_\_\_\_\_ to prepare more wood. Soon the 9 \_\_\_\_\_ was making a noise as if the devil himself was inside. First I looked right to the impenetrable forest where nothing moved. Satisfied, I turned to 10 \_\_\_\_\_. Here, something in the movement of the leaves made me worried. I walked 11 \_\_\_\_\_ from my place 12 \_\_\_\_\_, right up into the 13 \_\_\_\_\_ bow of the boat. Nothing. Then I heard a shout from behind me. I ran back towards the 14 \_\_\_\_\_ of the boat. The crew had gathered round a man who was lying bleeding on the 15 \_\_\_\_\_ deck. I looked at the wheel, there was no one there. The man on the ground had to be my 16 \_\_\_\_\_. I pushed past the crew. I was too late, the man was dead. There was a spear in his side. It had been thrown from the 17 \_\_\_\_\_ bank where I had seen no danger. Now, when I looked, there were a half dozen 18 \_\_\_\_\_ with native men sitting and standing in them, not coming too close. I pulled the chain on the 19 \_\_\_\_\_. They seemed frightened and disappeared with their boats into the forest.

18 dug out; 19 whistle.  
1 skipper; 2 steamboat/steamer; 3 lookout; 4 steamboat/steamer; 5 skipper; 6 pilot; 7 boilerman; 8 woodcutter; 9 boiler; 10 starboard; 11 forward; 12 amidships; 13 bow; 14 stern; 15 aft; 16 helmsman; 17 port;



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### TEST YOURSELF

Look back at Part II. Are the following statements True or False?

- |  | T                        | F                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Kurtz and his clerk had been delivering a load of ivory by canoe, when the former had suddenly turned round and decided to go three hundred miles back up the river alone in a dug-out canoe and four paddlers.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 It took two months for the El Dorado steamboat to travel up the river from the creek to arrive at Kurtz's station.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 The river is silent and inscrutable. Marlow thinks it is a brooding and vengeful force, he got used to it, he didn't have time to notice it - he was too busy making sure the steamboat arrived in one piece. But it was still there in the background. The stillness is mysterious. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 The only signs of human life as they moved towards the heart of darkness were white men in occasional trading stations and the sound of drums behind the wall of trees and then a village of native tribes.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Fifty miles from the Inner Station where they will find Kurtz, Marlow finds a book about how to improve your seamanship including notes in Russian in the margins.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 As they approach the station, the manager becomes more and more agitated, while Marlow appears calm.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



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**7** The morning before they arrive at Kurtz's station, there is thick fog. There are sudden loud howls of grief from native voices when the fog lifts for a moment and the native people see the steamboat. The Europeans react with fear, the Africans are simply alert, ready.

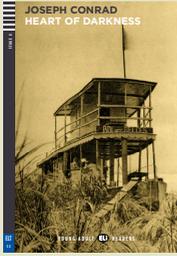
T F

**8** The African men on Marlow's boat eat human flesh (according to Marlow) but they had been eating rotting hippo meat. As they approach the Inner Station, Marlow thinks they are looking at the 'Pilgrims' hungrily.

ANSWERS:

1T; 2F (two months); 3 F (he never got used to it; it was always there); 4 T; 5 T; 6 F (The manager displayed a beautiful resignation. I fretted and fumed and took to arguing with myself whether or no I would talk openly with Kurtz); 7 T; 8 F (Marlow wonders at their restraint and asks why, when there are 50 of them and they don't over power the Europeans)





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FOCUS ON...

### *Apocalypse Now through Heart of Darkness*

“Belabored, muddled” but also “able to show a powerful examination not only of America’s military involvement in Vietnam, a disturbing treatment of the darkness potentially inherent in all human hearts”, these are the definitions that critics gave about *Apocalypse Now*. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola, the film is based on *Heart of Darkness* but set in the jungles of Vietnam instead of Congo. “Apocalypse” means the end of the world, as when the earth is destroyed by fire in the Bible. As the film’s title suggests, Coppola explores the ways in which the metaphorical “darkness” of Vietnam causes an apocalypse in the hearts of those sent there to fight. The director used the basic structure of Conrad’s novel for his movie. As *Heart of Darkness* follows Marlow’s journey through the different Company stations and finally upriver to Kurtz, Coppola’s film moves in a similar way. The main character is an Army Captain (Willard) who receives his orders, gathers his crew, and creeps up the Nung River until he meets and murders a renegade soldier (Col. Walter Kurtz). Enjoy the show!

