

*Vocabulary From Literature for...*

# *Heart of Darkness*

*by Joseph Conrad*

written by Kelley Stewart McConathy

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*Vocabulary From Literature*

**Activity I**  
**Matching Definitions**  
**Chapter 1**

**Directions:** Match each of the words below with its definition based on the context in which the word appears in the book. Use the page numbers in parentheses to locate the word. Then, look up the word in the dictionary, and change any answers that are not correct.

interminable (9)  
confounded (17)

ostentation (32)  
ascetic (9)

insolence (25)  
culminating (12)

futile (25)  
sepulcher (14)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ having no purpose
2. \_\_\_\_\_ reaching a highest or a decisive point
3. \_\_\_\_\_ confused; filled with uncertainty
4. \_\_\_\_\_ endless
5. \_\_\_\_\_ prideful scorn
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a tomb or vault for sacred relics
7. \_\_\_\_\_ showiness
8. \_\_\_\_\_ morally severe, strict

skulking (11)  
prevaricator (27)

imperturbably (16)  
askew (30)

assegais (26)  
ominous (15)

prodigy (27)

9. \_\_\_\_\_ calmly, steadily
10. \_\_\_\_\_ a spear
11. \_\_\_\_\_ a liar
12. \_\_\_\_\_ grimly foreboding
13. \_\_\_\_\_ in a turned or twisted position
14. \_\_\_\_\_ lurking or remaining hidden
15. \_\_\_\_\_ a highly talented or extraordinary person

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**Activity I**  
**Matching Definitions**  
**Chapter 2**

**Directions:** Match each of the words below with its definition based on the context in which the word appears in the book. Use the page numbers in parentheses to locate the word. Then, look up the word in the dictionary, and change any answers that are not correct.

impudence (33)

circumvent (37)

helmsman (44)

harlequin (51)

lustrous (46)

profundity (49)

disinterred (47)

reproachful (52)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ to bypass
2. \_\_\_\_\_ a jester, clown, buffoon
3. \_\_\_\_\_ removed from the grave
4. \_\_\_\_\_ expressing disapproval
5. \_\_\_\_\_ the state of being profound; an intellectual depth
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a person who steers
7. \_\_\_\_\_ boldness, rudeness
8. \_\_\_\_\_ reflecting light, bright

languid (46)

malevolently (39)

moored (47)

recondite (41)

appalled (37)

deity (49)

promptitude (50)

9. \_\_\_\_\_ the habit of being prompt
10. \_\_\_\_\_ a god or goddess
11. \_\_\_\_\_ overcome with dismay or shock
12. \_\_\_\_\_ weak, slow
13. \_\_\_\_\_ spitefully
14. \_\_\_\_\_ secured
15. \_\_\_\_\_ incomprehensible

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**Activity I**  
**Matching Definitions**  
**Chapter 3**

**Directions:** Match each of the words below with its definition based on the context in which the word appears in the book. Use the page numbers in parentheses to locate the word. Then, look up the word in the dictionary, and change any answers that are not correct.

motley (53)                      degradation (63)                      onslaught (61)                      factitious (58)  
repose (58)                      absconded (53)                      brusque (55)                      fortnight (59)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a decline; a change to a lower rank
2. \_\_\_\_\_ secretly ran away from
3. \_\_\_\_\_ a time period of 14 days
4. \_\_\_\_\_ produced by special effort
5. \_\_\_\_\_ short, abrupt
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a state of rest
7. \_\_\_\_\_ having elements of variety
8. \_\_\_\_\_ a fierce attack

partisan (59)                      precipice (65)                      souging (71)                      pauper (71)  
scathing (66)                      litany (64)                      craven (65)

9. \_\_\_\_\_ a follower of a particular cause or belief
10. \_\_\_\_\_ a prayer that is repeated by a congregation to the leader
11. \_\_\_\_\_ making a slight moaning or sighing sound
12. \_\_\_\_\_ lacking courage
13. \_\_\_\_\_ bitterly severe, sarcastic
14. \_\_\_\_\_ a very poor person
15. \_\_\_\_\_ a steep rock or cliff

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*Vocabulary From Literature*

**Activity II**  
**Writing Definitions and Sentences**  
**from Context Clues**  
**Chapter 3**

**Directions:** For each highlighted word, write a definition that fits the context of the passage. Then, check your answers by looking the words up in the dictionary. Finally, write a sentence using each word. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. “The glamour of youth enveloped his parti-colored rags, his **destitution**, his loneliness, the essential desolation of his futile wanderings.” (Pg. 53)

Example: **destitution:** a state of poverty

Since her father lost his job, her family’s **destitution** is a constant source of worry.

2. “For months—for years—his life hadn’t been worth a day’s purchase; and there he was **gallantly**, thoughtlessly alive, to all appearances indestructible solely by the virtue of his few years and of his unreflecting **audacity**. I was **seduced** into something like admiration—like envy. Glamour urged him on, glamour kept him **unscathed**.” (Pg. 53)

Definition for **gallantly**: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Definition for **audacity**: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Definition for **seduced**: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Definition for **unscathed**: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Activity III**  
**Synonyms**  
**Chapter 3**

**Directions:** Replace each highlighted word in the following passages from the text with an appropriate synonym. As a last resort, you may use a dictionary, but be careful that the word you select does not greatly alter the meaning of the passage.

1. “I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with **menaces** at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze. I saw him open his mouth wide—it gave him a weirdly **voracious** aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him.” (Pg. 57)

Synonym for **menaces**:

Synonym for **voracious**:

2. “She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the **fecund** and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own **tenebrous** and passionate soul.” (Pg. 58)

Synonym for **fecund**:

Synonym for **tenebrous**: