

READING

Joseph Conrad

Joseph Conrad was born on 3 December, 1857. His real name was Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski and his parents were Polish aristocrats. They were against Russian rule in Poland. Conrad's father was sent into exile at Vologda in northern Russia and his family went there with him. Conrad first came into contact with English at the age of eight when his father was translating Shakespeare.

When his parents died, Conrad lived with his uncle. When he was sixteen years old, Conrad left Poland and travelled to France. He went to Marseille and became a sailor. Later, he joined the British navy and became a British citizen. He visited many countries, for example India, Singapore and Australia. In 1896, Joseph Conrad married Jessie Emmeline George. They had two sons. He became friends with famous British writers such as John Galsworthy and H. G. Wells.

In 1895, Conrad published his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*. It is an adventure story that takes place in the Borneo jungles. In 1900, Conrad published a novel called *Lord Jim*. It is the story of a young sailor who has serious problems with his past.

Heart of Darkness (1902) is a novella that describes a British man's journey into the heart of Africa. The man's name is Charlie Marlow and he travels up the Congo River. He is looking for Mr Kurtz, a European trader. When he meets him, he sees that Kurtz had gone mad and became a bloody tyrant. He wants to bring him back, but Kurtz dies on the way to Europe. Kurtz's last words are "The horror! The Horror!"

Joseph Conrad's last novel, *The Rover*, was published in 1923. Conrad died on August 3, 1924, at his home in Canterbury, England.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How old was Conrad when he first came into contact with English? _____
- 2 Where did Conrad go when he left Poland? _____
- 3 How many children did Conrad have? _____
- 4 Where does Conrad's first novel take place? _____
- 5 Where does Charlie Marlow travel? _____
- 6 Who is Charlie Marlow trying to find? _____
- 7 Where did Joseph Conrad die? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Joseph Conrad's parents were Russian aristocrats. _____
- 2 After the death of his parents, Joseph Conrad lived with his grandfather. _____
- 3 John Galsworthy was Joseph Conrad's friend. _____
- 4 Joseph Conrad visited Singapore. _____
- 5 Joseph Conrad's first published novel was *Lord Jim*. _____
- 6 *Heart of Darkness* takes place mostly in Africa. _____
- 7 Joseph Conrad's last novel was published after his death. _____

SOURCES: <https://www.biography.com/people/joseph-conrad-9255343>,
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Heart-of-Darkness>, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Conrad>

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How old was Conrad when he first came into contact with English? **he was eight years old**
- 2 Where did Conrad go when he left Poland? **to France**
- 3 How many children did Conrad have? **two**
- 4 Where does Conrad's first novel take place? **in the jungles of Borneo**
- 5 Where does Charlie Marlow travel? **into the heart of Africa / up the Congo River**
- 6 Who is Charlie Marlow trying to find? **Kurtz, a European trader**
- 7 Where did Joseph Conrad die? **at his home in Canterbury, in England**

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Joseph Conrad's parents were Russian aristocrats. **F (they were Polish aristocrats)**
- 2 After the death of his parents, Joseph Conrad lived with his grandfather. **F (he lived with his uncle)**
- 3 John Galsworthy was Joseph Conrad's friend. **T**
- 4 Joseph Conrad visited Singapore. **T**
- 5 Joseph Conrad's first published novel was *Lord Jim*. **F (his first novel was *Almayer's Folly*)**
- 6 *Heart of Darkness* takes place mostly in Africa. **T**
- 7 Joseph Conrad's last novel was published after his death. **F (it was published in 1923, he died in 1924)**