

Heart of Darkness — Key Vocabulary

by Joseph Conrad

48 key English words, graded A2–C2 — each with a simple definition and an example. Learn them before you read, or review them after.

A2 words (10)

abandon /ə'bændən/

A2

the trait of lacking restraint or control

"she danced with abandon"

absolutely /,æbsə'lutli/

A2

completely and without qualification

"an absolutely magnificent painting"

accident /'æksədənt/

A2

an unfortunate mishap

"winning the lottery was a happy accident"

active /'æktiv/

A2

chemical agent capable of activity

"`The boy threw the ball' uses the active voice"

administration /æd,mɪnɪ'streɪʃən/

A2

a method of tending to or managing the affairs of a some group of people (especially the group's business affairs)

"he claims that the present administration is corrupt"

admit /əd'mɪt/

A2

declare to be true or admit the existence or reality or truth of

"He admitted his errors"

advise /əd'vaɪz/

A2

give advice to

"The teacher counsels troubled students"

affair /ə'feɪ/

A2

a vaguely specified concern

"several matters to attend to"

afraid /ə'freɪd/

A2

filled with fear or apprehension

"afraid even to turn his head"

aid /eɪd/

A2

a resource

"visual aids in teaching"

B1 words (10)

aboard /ə'bɔːrd/

B1

on a ship, train, plane or other vehicle

"Their second homer with Bob Allison aboard"

abstract /'æb,strækt/

B1

a concept or idea not associated with any specific instance

"he loved her only in the abstract--not in person"

accomplish /ə'kʌmplɪʃ/

B1

put in effect

"carry out a task"

accordance /ə'kɔːdəns/

B1

concurrence of opinion

"we are in accord with your proposal"

accordingly /ə'kɔːdɪŋli/

B1

(sentence connectors) because of the reason given

"consequently, he didn't do it"

acquisition /,ækwə'zɪʃən/

B1

the act of contracting or assuming or acquiring possession of something

"the acquisition of wealth"

adequate /'ædək,weɪt/

B1

having the requisite qualities or resources to meet a task

"she had adequate training"

adventure /əd'ventʃər/

B1

a wild and exciting undertaking (not necessarily lawful)

"When you buy these stocks you are gambling"

aggressive /ə'grɛsɪv/

B1

having or showing determination and energetic pursuit of your ends

“an aggressive businessman”

alarm /ə'lɑ:m/

B1

fear resulting from the awareness of danger

“I was horrified at the thought of being late for my interview”

B2 words (10)

abandonment /ə'bændənmənt/

B2

the act of giving something up

“his abandonment of his wife and children left them penniless”

abide /ə'baɪd/

B2

dwell

“You can stay with me while you are in town”

abject /'æbdʒɛkt/

B2

of the most contemptible kind

“abject cowardice”

abomination /ə,bəmə'neɪʃən/

B2

a person who is loathsome or disgusting

“his treatment of the children is an abomination”

abrupt /ə'brʌpt/

B2

marked by sudden changes in subject and sharp transitions

“abrupt prose”

abruptly /ə'brʌptli/

B2

quickly and without warning

“he stopped suddenly”

absent /'æbsənt/

B2

go away or leave

“He absented himself”

absorb /əb'zɔ:rb/

B2

become imbued

“The liquids, light, and gases absorb”

absurd /əb'sərd/

B2

a situation in which life seems irrational and meaningless

"The absurd is the essential concept and the first truth"

absurdity /əb'sərdəti/

B2

a message whose content is at variance with reason

"the crowd laughed at the absurdity of the clown's behavior"

C1 words (9)

ablaze /ə'bleɪz/

C1

keenly excited (especially sexually) or indicating excitement

"his face all ablaze with excitement"

abominable /ə'bəməneɪbəl/

C1

unequivocally detestable

"abominable treatment of prisoners"

abreast /ə'breɪst/

C1

being up to particular standard or level especially in being up to date in knowledge

"kept abreast of the latest developments"

abscond /æb'skənd/

C1

run away

"The thief made off with our silver"

accustom /ə'kəstəm/

C1

make psychologically or physically used (to something)

"She became habituated to the background music"

acquaint /ək'weɪnt/

C1

cause to come to know personally

"permit me to acquaint you with my son"

afresh /ə'frɛʃ/

C1

again but in a new or different way

"start afresh"

aggravate /'ægrə'veɪt/

C1

make worse

"This drug aggravates the pain"

agitate /'ædʒə,teɪt/

C1

try to stir up public opinion

"The speaker charged up the crowd with his inflammatory remarks"

C2 words (9)

abominate

C2

find repugnant

"I loathe that man"

adorer

C2

someone who admires a young woman

"she had many admirers"

appal

C2

strike with disgust or revulsion

"The scandalous behavior of this married woman shocked her friends"

appall /ə'pɔːl/

C2

strike with disgust or revulsion

"The scandalous behavior of this married woman shocked her friends"

astir

C2

out of bed

"are they astir yet?"

athwart /əθ'wɔːt/

C2

at right angles to the center line of a ship

"the sun shone aslant into his face"

becalm /bɪ'kɑːm/

C2

make steady

"steady yourself"

bedeck /bɪ'dɛk/

C2

decorate

"deck the halls with holly"

begrime

C2

make soiled, filthy, or dirty

"don't soil your clothes when you play outside!"

Read it along with audio — tap any word to hear it and see it highlighted in the sentence:

<https://readingcorner.uk/books/heart-of-darkness/vocabulary>