



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2013 Volume II: Interpreting Texts, Making Meaning: Starting Small

Moving Beyond "Huh?": Ambiguity in Heart of Darkness

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The anchor text for this unit is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In this unit, students will use Marlow's recounting of his journey up the Congo as a metaphor for their own journey into learning how to make meaning from a text that, for many of them, defies understanding. They will use Socratic seminars, dialectical journals, group reading, and in-class essays to build the close reading skills that serve as the foundation for being able to interpret texts. Hopefully, with my guidance and support from each other, their journey will end on a much more hopeful, less ominous and brooding note than that of Marlow and Kurtz.

(Developed for AP English Literature and Composition, grade 12; recommended for English, grade 12, and AP English Literature, grades 11-12)

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