*Heart of Darkness* Background Assignment

To understand *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, it is important to have background knowledge on a number of subjects, which will provide context for the novel. You will work in groups to research and teach your classmates about the following subjects:

1. Joseph Conrad
   1. Provide a brief biography to help your classmates understand who Joseph Conrad was and how his life experiences contributed to this novel
2. King Leopold II
   1. Provide a brief biography on the infamous King of Belgium to help your classmates understand his personality and maneuverings.
3. Belgian Congo
   1. Provide your classmates with an overview of the Belgian Congo historically and what happened to it over time (what current countries in Africa could point to it as their predecessor?)
4. Berlin Conference of 1884/Scramble for Africa
   1. What was this event? Who attended? And why is it important to understand?
5. Virtual Voyage on the Congo River
   1. Through google maps, explore the Congo River, and put together a powerpoint/prezi that can give your classmates a sense of some of the trials and tribulations people attempting to navigate it would face.
6. Vocabulary/Context pgs 45-64 (Nellie [a cruising yawl], Thames, estuary, Essex, etc)
   1. There is a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary in this novel. In order to help your classmates understand the first 20pages, skim for at least 8 words that would be good to define. Include definition and a photo/video for each
7. Ivory trade (1885-1908)
   1. How is this important in the Belgian Congo? Who are the main participants? What are the effects?
8. Steamboats on the Congo (1885-1908)
   1. What are some of the trials and tribulations for steamboats on the Congo? When did they first appear? Why? Help your classmates understand this important underpinning of the novel.

Requirements:

1. Must cover the assigned topic in 8+ slides
2. Each slide must contain words and images (photos or video clips)
3. Presentations due: Fri, Oct 31st
4. See rubric for more specifics.