Joseph Conrad’s life may be seen as having several distinct stages: in Poland and in Russian exile before his father’s death (1857–69); in Poland and the south of France under the care of his maternal uncle (1870–78); in the British merchant marine, mainly as junior officer sailing in the Far East (1879–early 1890s); after a transitional period (early 1890s), as writer of critical esteem (1895–1914); as acclaimed writer, though perhaps with his greatest work achieved (1914–24). After 1895 the history of his life is essentially the history of his works. Publication dates given below are those of the London editions.

1857 December 3 Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski (Nałęcz coat-of-arms) born in Berdyczów in the Ukraine to Apollo and Ewelina (or Ewa), née Bobrowska, Korzeniowski

1862 May Korzeniowski, his wife, and son forced into exile in Russia

1865 April Ewa Korzeniowska dies

1868 Korzeniowski permitted to leave Russia

1869 February / March Attempts suicide

1869 February / March Attempts suicide

1870 Conrad, under care of uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski, begins study with tutor, Adam Pulman

1873 May Visits Switzerland and northern Italy; first view of the sea

1874 October Takes position in Marseilles with Delestang et Fils, bankers and shippers

1875 Apprentice in Mont-Blanc

1876–7 In Saint-Antoine

1878 February / March Attempts suicide
April    Leaves Marseilles in British steamer *Mavis*

June      Lands at Lowestoft, Suffolk; first time in England

July–September    Sails as ordinary seaman in *Skimmer of the Sea* (North Sea coastal waters of England)

1878–80    In *Duke of Sutherland*, *Europa*

1880    Meets G. F. W. Hope, Adolf Krieger

June      Passes examination for second mate

1880–81    Third mate in *Loch Etive*

1881–4    Second mate in *Palestine, Riversdale, Narcissus*

1884 December    Passes examination for first mate

1885–6    Second mate in *Tilkhurst*

1886    Submits perhaps his first story, ‘The Black Mate’, to *Tit-Bits* competition

August      Becomes a British subject

November    Passes examination for master; receives ‘Certificate of Competency as Master’

1886–7    Second mate in *Falconhurst*

1887–8    First mate in *Highland Forest, in Vidar*

1888–9    Captain of barque *Otago*

1889 Autumn    Begins *Almayer’s Folly* in London

1890 February–April    In Poland for first time since 1874

May–December    To Congo as second-in-command, then temporarily as captain, of *Roi des Belges*

1891    Manages warehouse of Barr, Moering, London

1891–3    First mate in *Torrens*

1893    Meets John Galsworthy, Edward L. Sanderson

Autumn    Visits Bobrowski in Polish Ukraine
November Signs on as second mate in *Adowa*, which never makes voyage

1894 January Ends career as seaman

February Bobrowski dies

Meets Edward Garnett, Jessie George

1895 April *Almayer’s Folly*

1896 March *An Outcast of the Islands*. Marries Jessie George; honeymoon in Brittany

Settles in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex

1897 Begins friendship with R. B. Cunninghame Graham; meets Henry James, Stephen Crane

December *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’*

1898 Meets Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford, H. G. Wells

January Alfred Borys Conrad born

April *Tales of Unrest*

October Moves to Pent Farm, Stanford, Nr Hythe, Kent, sub-let from Ford

1900 Begins association with J. B. Pinker

1900 October *Lord Jim*

1901 June *The Inheritors* (with Ford)

1902 November *Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories*

1903 April *Typhoon and Other Stories*

October *Romance* (with Ford)

1904 October *Nostromo*

1905 June *One Day More* staged in London

1906 Meets Arthur Marwood

August John Alexander Conrad born

October *The Mirror of the Sea*
1907 September  *The Secret Agent*. Moves to Someries, Luton, Bedfordshire

1908 August  *A Set of Six*

1909  Moves to Aldington, Kent

1910  Moves to Capel House, Orlestone, Kent

1911 October  *Under Western Eyes*

1912 January  *A Personal Record (Some Reminiscences)*

October  *'Twixt Land and Sea*

1913 September  *Chance*, with ‘main’ publication date of January 1914

1914 July–November  Visits Poland with family; delayed by outbreak of First World War; returns via Austria and Italy

1915 February  *Within the Tides*

September  *Victory*

1917 March  *The Shadow-Line*

1919 March  Moves to Spring Grove, near Wye, Kent

August  *The Arrow of Gold*

October  Moves to Oswalds, Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury, Kent

1920 June  *The Rescue*

1921  Collected editions begin publication in England (Heinemann) and America (Doubleday)

February  *Notes on Life and Letters*

1922 November  *The Secret Agent* staged in London

1923 May–June  Visits America, guest of F. N. Doubleday

December  *The Rover*

1924 May  Declines knighthood

August 3  Dies at Oswalds (Roman Catholic burial, Canterbury)
September  The Nature of a Crime (with Ford)

October  The Shorter Tales

1925 January  Tales of Hearsay

September  Suspense

1926 March  Last Essays

1928 June  The Sisters