Great Books: Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams
Teacher’s Guide

Program Description
Using a unique series of dream sequence reenactments based on Freud's revolutionary book, experts and artists escort viewers down the road of the unconscious and into a deeper understanding of the inner life of humans.

Onscreen Questions and Activities
Pre-viewing questions:

• According to Freud, what is the purpose of dreaming? (According to Freud, the purpose of dreaming is to satisfy, through fantasy, the instinctive urges that society judges unacceptable.)

• What are the four components of dreamwork? (The four components of dreamwork are displacement, condensation, symbolization, and projection.)

• Discuss what our dreams can tell us about ourselves. Why did Freud believe that studying dreams was so important?

Activity: Record your dreams in a journal for a month. Then pick a dream and translate it into a modern dance, musical composition, or dramatic piece.

Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

• Freud argued that our dreams contain clues to our hopes, fears, and fantasies.

• Freud claimed that developments in our childhood affect the way we act and the kinds of dreams we have.

Materials

Great Books: Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams video
Procedures

1. As a class, talk about what they learned from the video about Freud’s theories on dreams and why he felt dreams were important. For example, Freud believed that parts of our personalities are revealed when we are dreaming, because we are technically “unconscious.” Freud argued that our dreams contain clues to our hopes, fears, and fantasies. In addition, Freud claimed that developments in our childhood affect the way we act and the kinds of dreams we have.

2. Tell students they will be conducting their own experiment on dreams. Each student will conduct an experiment on a family member who is asleep. Students should ask a parent or sibling to participate as a volunteer.

3. Explain that the experiment requires the students to be present for part of the time their volunteers are asleep. Students should create a stimulus that does not wake up the volunteer but that may nevertheless be heard or felt by each sleeper. The point of the experiment is to determine if indeed the sleeper’s dreams will include the stimulus. If they do, the experimenter can suggest that the sleeper heard or felt the stimulus while asleep—that is, while not conscious.

4. Discuss with the class the stimuli they may present to their sleeping relatives. If they need help, suggest a soft noise, a light being turned on and off, a touch. Stress that it is important that experimenters not tell their subjects what the stimulus will be.

5. To begin, the student should instruct the volunteer to make a clear record of his or her dreams immediately after waking up. It’s important that volunteers record their dreams immediately upon waking so that their recollections are not dimmed. While the volunteer is asleep, each student experimenter should present his or her stimulus to the volunteer, noting carefully the time of the presentation.

6. Ask students to repeat the experiments on two other nights. Students may vary the times at which they present the stimulus, recording the times, or they may use a different stimulus each night and keep a record of the different stimuli.

7. When students have collected their volunteers’ dream records, they should examine them carefully for evidence of the stimulus. Does a dream directly or indirectly refer to the stimulus? Is the stimulus somehow hidden in the dream?

8. If any of the volunteers have incorporated one or more stimuli into their dreams, ask students to comment about the nature of dreams. If none of the volunteers has incorporated one of the stimuli into a dream, ask students to comment on the success or failure of the experiment.

9. Lead a class discussion about the results of their experiments and their implications for Freud’s dream theories.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points**: Student provides evidence of having carried out the experiment on three nights (a relative’s signature or detailed records can serve as evidence); student participates fully in the discussion by both reporting his or her findings and questioning other students’ findings;
student thoughtfully contributes to the discussion about the meaning of the results and the evaluation of the experiment.

- **2 points:** Student provides evidence of having carried out the experiment on three nights (a relative’s signature or detailed records can serve as evidence); student participates moderately in the discussion by either reporting his or her findings or by questioning other students’ findings; student contributes in a minor way to the discussion about the meaning of the results and the evaluation of the experiment.

- **1 point:** Student provides no evidence of having carried out the experiment on three nights; student participates in a minor way in the discussion by questioning other students’ findings; student contributes in a minor way to the discussion about the meaning of the results and the evaluation of the experiment.

**Vocabulary**

**consciousness**

*Definition:* The upper level of mental life of which the person is aware, as contrasted with unconscious processes

*Context:* By the end of the 19th century, consciousness began to be seen as a rational process.

**ego**

*Definition:* One of the three divisions of the psyche in psychoanalytic theory; it serves as the organized, conscious mediator between the person and reality, especially by functioning in both the perception of and adaptation to reality.

*Context:* The ego is the rational self.

**id**

*Definition:* One of the three divisions of the psyche in psychoanalytic theory; it is completely unconscious and is the source of psychic energy derived from instinctual needs and drives

*Context:* The id is the emotional part of the mind.

**latent**

*Definition:* Present and capable of becoming visible, obvious, or active

*Context:* The real, hidden meaning of the dream is called the latent dream.

**psychoanalysis**

*Definition:* A method of analyzing psychic phenomena and treating emotional disorders that involves treatment sessions during which the patient is encouraged to talk freely about personal experiences and especially about early childhood and dreams

*Context:* In Freud’s hands, psychoanalysis allowed his patients to attempt to make sense of their pasts.
REM

Definition: A state of sleep that recurs cyclically several times during a normal period of sleep and that is characterized by increased neuronal activity of the forebrain and midbrain, by depressed muscle tone, and, especially in humans, by dreaming and rapid eye movements.

Context: Our most vivid dreams come during REM, rapid-eye-movement sleep.

superego

Definition: One of the three divisions of the psyche in psychoanalytic theory; it is only partly conscious, represents internalization of parental conscience and the rules of society, and functions to reward and punish through a system of moral attitudes, conscience, and a sense of guilt.

Context: The superego represents societal pressures and tells us what is right and wrong.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- World History—A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement: Understands the search for peace and stability throughout the world in the 1920s and 1930s.
- Science—Life Science: Understands the principles of heredity and related concepts.
- Science—Life Science: Understands biological evolution and the diversity of life.
- Technology: Understands the relationships among science, technology, society, and the individual.

Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html.

DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.
**How To Use the DVD**

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

*Play Video* — This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

*Video Index* — Here the video is divided into sections, indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

*Curriculum Units* — These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher’s Guide. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

*Standards Link* — Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

*Teacher Resources* — This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

**Video Index**

I. *Introduction (14 min.)*  
Sigmund Freud opened our eyes to the world of the unconscious and offered a whole new approach to exploring the psyche.

II. *A Revolutionary Thinker (14 min.)*  
Learn about Freud's early life and his revolutionary theories, including his theories on dreamwork and the competing aspects of the psyche, the id, the ego, and the superego.

III. *Freud and Sexuality (13 min.)*  
As a psychoanalyst, Freud was greatly concerned with human sexuality. Explore the Freudian seduction theory and take a look at the connections between Freud and modern REM sleep experimentation.

IV. *Freud's Legacy (11 min.)*  
Freud and his family emigrated from Austria following the Nazi ban on his books. Learn about Freud’s later years and Carl Jung, who expanded on Freud's dreamwork theories.
Curriculum Units

Segment 1. Uncovering the Unconscious
Pre-viewing question
Q: Have you ever solved a problem through a dream?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: How did Freud describe dreams?
A: He called them the "royal road to the unconscious."

Segment 2. A New Science: Interpretation of Dreams
Pre-viewing question
Q: What are some common dreams?
A: Many people dream about taking exams, flying, falling, or being nude in a public environment.

Post-viewing question
Q: What did Freud’s father have to do with Interpretation of Dreams?
A: Freud was mourning the loss of his father when he wrote the book. He realized that writing Interpretation of Dreams was part of his own psychoanalysis, a record of how he coped with his father’s death.

Segment 3. Freudian Theories
Pre-viewing question
Q: Why are revolutionary thinkers like Freud both condemned and praised?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: What are the id, the ego, and the superego?
A: According to Freud, the id is the animal self and contains the core of the psyche, the ego is the rational self, and the superego represents societal pressures. The superego tells us what is right and what is wrong and is in near constant conflict with the id.

Segment 4. Sigmund Freud’s Life
Pre-viewing question
Q: Do you believe in premonition?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: Would Freud’s theories be scandalous if they were introduced today?
A: Answers will vary.
Segment 5. Freud's Later Life
Pre-viewing question
Q: Do you think people have been injured in any way by Freudian concepts?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: Why did the Nazis blacklist Freud?
A: Freud was blacklisted because he was Jewish and also because his ideas were considered subversive and rebellious.

Segment 6. Modern Studies
Pre-viewing question
Q: Have you ever had a dream that was as intense as a real-life experience?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: What is the connection between REM theory and Freud's theory?
A: Freud said that dream function helps keep us asleep. REM theory supports this idea because it theorizes that most REM sleep happens during the latter half of the night, when we would be more likely to wake up. We dream more during REM, which might help us to stay asleep; this fits with Freud's theory.