Introduction to Research Paper Writing

The purpose of research writing is to collect, present, and interact with what is known about a topic. Primary research is “firsthand”—original research that generates new knowledge, such as scientific studies, social science surveys or case studies, and so on. Most college papers do not involve this kind of research. Secondary research is much more common. This is done by reading and organizing materials generated by others’ studies. (Most lower division college research papers are secondary research; primary research writing always begins with a survey of already-published research, often called a “review of related literature” or "lit review.") Since this kind of writing is using materials that others have developed and published, it is very important to document and cite the sources of material used in writing. If sources are not documented and given proper credit, the result is plagiarism. Plagiarism may not be intentional, but it is still a serious problem. Passing off ideas, concepts, and data as one’s own is a violation of intellectual integrity. It amounts to theft of intellectual property. For many reasons, then, it is critically important to learn how to properly use material collected in research.

The appropriate presentation of research content uses proper format. The format, or style, of a paper refers to the systematic way in which research materials are documented and cited. The documentation of sources used in a paper is commonly known as a bibliography. This term traditionally refers to books, but it has come to include all kinds of information resources, including books, periodicals, newspapers, electronic databases, Internet sources, printed materials of all types, electronic media (CDs, DVDs, broadcast radio and television, and so on). When a writer uses any source to gain information or ideas, the source must be acknowledged. This is, of course, intellectually honest, but in addition it provides necessary information about sources to the reader of a paper, who may desire to look up additional information. The format and title of the bibliography will be discussed shortly. In addition to a list of sources, the writer needs to acknowledge sources as the materials are used in the paper’s presentation. Citations of sources in a paper are commonly called footnotes or in-text citations. It is not enough to list sources in the bibliography. The paper must provide information about the source of ideas and information as it progresses, whether they are directly quoted or paraphrased. Improper documentation and citation in writing is plagiarism. It is not dishonest to use others’ ideas and knowledge; it is dishonest to misrepresent others’ ideas as one’s own, whether this is done accidentally or intentionally. Ultimately, the writer’s intent is beside the point: plagiarism is plagiarism.

In order to present and discuss research appropriately, then, it is critically important to learn research paper formats and styles. There are several style guides or research paper formats. Each system has its purposes and limitations, and many people feel very strongly that a particular one is "best." Just as there are many guidelines and regulations to learn in various professions, it is important to learn how to present research in the most suitable way in various academic disciplines. Familiarity with style guides is important, but it is unwise to become unduly worried; rather, it is better to learn to access and apply the requirements of each style guide as needed. With experience, it is possible to become quite proficient in writing research papers. The two most common styles are APA and MLA. (Note: CBE and Chicago styles are often used as well, and there are "hybrid" styles that combine elements of different systems. Also, some aspects of APA or MLA may not always be emphasized. So it is important to learn the expectations of an instructor, department, or class.) APA refers to the format developed by the American Psychological Association for presentation of research findings. APA guidelines are commonly used in the social sciences. MLA refers to the format developed by the Modern Language Association. MLA guidelines are commonly used in various areas of the humanities. This packet is an introduction to APA and MLA formats, providing a sample paper formatted in each style. In the center column between the two formats, there are comments and explanations. In such a brief introduction, it is impossible to go over every aspect of APA and MLA formats, since there are so many ways of documenting so many types of sources. This introduction is intended to provide an overview and examples so that students can get the general idea of what is involved in a research paper. It will still be necessary to consult style guides to provide answers to many “But what if...?” questions about how to handle specific issues not covered in this introduction.
Introduction  

It is difficult to imagine thought in the modern world without the impact of Sigmund Freud. With Freud, as with all significant thinkers, even people who have never directly encountered his work hold ideas that derive directly or indirectly from his thought. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, art, literary criticism, and education have all been influenced by Freud’s ideas. Few thinkers seem to polarize readers to the degree he does. Encountering his ideas, many people have been enthusiastic and held to his teaching with almost religious fervor; many others are dismissive and hostile with intensity far beyond the merely intellectual. It is important, however, to have a fundamental understanding of his ideas in order to see with greater clarity both the valuable contributions and real shortcomings of his ideas.

It is clear that Freud viewed himself as a scientist (Bonaparte, Freud, & Kris, 1954). It is, however, important to understand the time in which he did his work before evaluating it by today’s scientific standards. Psychology was a new science, and it operated with a positivism and confidence that the previous century had made common. Along with others of his time, Freud operated with the expectation that everything might be understood in terms of natural law and rational speculation. What might be viewed today as arrogance—attempts to explain the universe and everything in it—were then confident observation and speculation, leading to theories and advancement of knowledge. Freud’s investigative strategies were, by today’s standards, primitive and not rigorously scientific, but they built on efforts of his predecessors, and—when analyzed and critiqued—provided ways for subsequent researchers to propose new ways of exploring human behavior.

Biographical Sketch

A complete understanding of Sigmund Freud is impossible without some understanding of his life. He himself made it clear that his life, his work, and his practice were interrelated (Jolibert, 1993). It is difficult (and probably unwise) to speculate on these interrelationships on the basis of a brief biographical sketch, but a survey of his life is useful background to the progression of his thought. It is true that he did extensive self-analysis through the course of his life and frequently cited such observations in his letters (Freud, S. 1938).
Sigmund Freud was born in 1856 in Freiburg, Moravia (in what is today the Czech Republic), the first son of Jakob and Amalie Freud. Jakob was a traveling wool merchant. When Austria abolished legal restrictions on Jews in 1861, the family settled in Vienna. Freud lived there until the Nazi occupation in 1938. He graduated from the Sperl Gymnasium in 1873, having demonstrated at fierce dedication to his studies. Jolibert (1993) observes that he had acquired from his Jewish origins three qualities that greatly helped him in his struggles: veneration for knowledge in general, and above all scientific knowledge; an extremely free and critical mind; and great resistance to hostility (p. 461).

Inspired by a Goethe essay on nature, Freud found himself drawn to a career in medicine. At the University of Vienna, he worked with a leading physiologist, Ernst von Brucke, with the psychiatrist Theodor Meynert, and the professor of internal medicine, Hermann Nothnagel. After receiving recognition for brain research, Freud was appointed to a lectureship in neuropathology in 1885. He pursued an interest in the pharmaceutical effects of cocaine, but saw dangers and tragedies associated with this study. (Sigmund Freud, n.d.). By this time, he was committed to the science of psychology, seeking a physiological and materialist basis for the theories of the psyche (Sigmund Freud, n.d.). This intention is evident in his manuscript for Project for a Scientific Psychology:

The intention of this project is to furnish us with a psychology which shall be a natural science: its aim, that is, is to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determined sates of specifiable material particles and so to make them plain and void of contradictions (Freud, S., 1954, p. 355).

In 1885, Freud went to Paris to further his study of neuropathology under Jean-Martin Charcot (Sigmund Freud, n.d.). This led to firsthand observation of patients suffering from hysteria. After his months in Paris, Freud returned to Vienna. In 1886 He married Martha Mernays, a daughter of a prominent Jewish family (Sigmund Freud, n.d.). They had six children, the youngest of whom, Anna, became a well-known psychoanalyst herself.

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Format of Citations

When any research materials are used in the writing of the paper, they must be cited, whether they are quoted or paraphrased.

APA uses primarily the author's name and the date, although title information is sometimes necessary when the source doesn't provide the author's name. When date information is not available, use the initials n.d. to signify "no date." The author (or title) and date information are arranged in a few basic ways as the paper is written. The four most common citation formats are explained below. For illustration purposes in this sample paper, these are labeled APA-1, -2, -3, and -4 in the center column.

APA-1 When the author is mentioned as the source, the date is given after the title in parentheses. (When there is no author's name available, the title is used.)

APA-2 When the material is paraphrased, the citation is given in parentheses using the author (or title) with the date. This information is before the period ending the sentence.

APA-3 When the author and date are used before a quote, the page number is placed in parentheses after the quote and before the period at the end of the sentence.

APA-4 When a quote is used in the paper without the author and date preceding it, the parenthetical citation includes author/title information, date, and page number.

NOTE: There are variations on the basic format above, since the sources may include more than one work by the same author, multiple authors of a single work, corporate authors, etc. Consult a style guide to make certain that format is appropriate to the references used.

MLA uses three basic forms, with small variations that are indicated by the nature of the source materials. For illustration purposes in this sample paper, these are labeled MLA-1, -2, and -3 in the center column.

MLA-1 When the author is mentioned in the sentence and the bibliography mentions only one source by that author, the parenthetical citation includes only the page number.

MLA-2 When the material is used, whether quoted or paraphrased, the author and page number are given in parentheses.

MLA-3 When the Works Cited includes more than one work by an author, the parenthetical citation must include more than author and page number; it must also include the title (often in abbreviated form).

NOTE: As with APA (or any other) format, there are variations on the basic format above, since the sources may include more than one work by the same author, multiple authors of a single work, corporate authors, etc. It will be necessary to consult a style guide to make certain that format is appropriate to the works cited.

Sigmund Freud died in 1939.

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Freud’s experience in Paris later led to an association in Vienna with Josef Breuer. The beginnings of what would become psychoanalysis were established when Freud watched patients undergo hypnosis, during which hysterical symptoms (what today would be called conversion disorders) could be induced or treated. This suggested to him that psychological disorders might be related more to the mind than strictly to the brain. Although Freud later rejected hypnosis, the practice that he and Breuer worked on, “the cathartic method,” convinced him that significant aspects of hysterical symptoms were linked to forgotten earlier experiences (Pa 462). It was possible to trace symptoms of hysteria to emotional traumas (Sigmund Freud par. 9). Jolibert notes that he dealt with “patients unfairly branded ‘maligners’ or ‘neurotics’” (p. 462), and that he “very rapidly came to the conclusion that hysterical symptoms were linked to forgotten earlier experiences” (p.462). It was possible to trace symptoms of hysteria to emotional traumas (Sigmund, n.d.). The cathartic method could then help patients recall and relive the traumas, with the ultimate aim of working through the associated feelings, relieving the hysteria. The medical profession did not accept this form of treatment. Breuer and Freud eventually parted over disagreement about the nature of the undefined energy that caused the hysterical disorders; Freud was growing in his conviction that it was sexual.

Rejecting the practice of hypnosis, Freud developed the technique called “free association,” which would allow repressed emotional memories to surface into consciousness. The cathartic method and free association ultimately developed into psychoanalysis. The evidence of unconscious influences—traumas, memories, emotions—led Freud to believe that repression is central to an understanding of human psychology:

The theory of repression is the pillar upon which the edifice of psychoanalysis rests. It is really the most essential part of it, and yet, it is nothing but the theoretical expression of an experience which can be repeatedly observed whenever one analyses a neurotic without the aid of hypnosis. One is then confronted with a resistance which opposes and blocks the analytic work by causing failures of memory (Freud, 1938, p. 939).
In pursuing an understanding of the patient’s repressed memories, Freud’s practice of free association was part of his effort to examine internal, unconscious patterns of feeling and thought. Analysis of dreams became a tool in this effort as well. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud maintained that “every dream will reveal itself as a psychological structure, full of significance, and one which may be assigned to a specific place in the psychic activities of the waking state” (Freud, 1938, p. 183). Free association and dream interpretation came to form important parts of the structure of psychoanalysis. In a paper of this scope, it is not realistic to explore all the complexities of psychoanalysis, but it is important to develop an understanding of the central concepts in Freud’s theory.

**Psychoanalytic Theory**

Stated simply, psychoanalysis is a theory that provides a framework to analyze and understand emotions and behavior in light of repressed memories, which contribute to psychic turmoil. Psychoanalysis aims to demonstrate how such unconscious factors affect current relationships and behavior patterns by tracing them back to their origins. All this is done to help the individual deal more effectively with adult realities (*About Psychoanalysis*, par. 6). The terminology of psychoanalysis is important, as it emerged over time in an effort to describe and account for observed behavior.

Freud’s concept of the mind includes, of course, the conscious mind. In addition, he also described the “pre-conscious,” what might be termed “available memory,” memory that is not in a person’s immediate awareness, but which can be recalled. (Boeree, n.d.) He viewed the unconscious as the largest source of human motivations. These may be the simple desires for food or sex, but other motives include the creative motives toward art or science.

Freud wanted to account for the dynamic of human behavior, not merely describe a static structure. In an effort to explain both normal and abnormal tensions and conflicts, he described the principal components of human personality: the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. According to Freud, the interaction of these three parts can help us explain the complexities of human behavior (Boeree, n.d.).

Freud viewed the human being as a physical organism with a developed consciousness. Within this understanding, the *id* is the source of the body’s drives and instincts. The *id* works in accordance with the pleasure principle, much like an infant demanding immediate satisfaction. The *ego* is the consciousness that assigned to a specific place in the psychic activities of the waking state” (183). Free association and dream interpretation came to form important parts of the structure of psychoanalysis. In a paper of this scope, it is not realistic to explore all the complexities of psychoanalysis, but it is important to develop an understanding of the central concepts in Freud’s theory.

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gradually develop into the superego, formed (but not always completed) by about age seven. The superego has both negative and positive aspects: The conscience is an internalized record of warnings and punishments; the ego ideal is derived from rewards and positive models. Together, the conscience and ego ideal communicate to the ego with feelings such as pride, shame, and guilt. Since it is acquired from without, the superego represents society (Boeree par. 40). The interactions among id, ego, and superego account for the conflicts experienced by the person; neuroses and psychoses develop out of these conflicts (Freud, The Basic Writings 23).

Within this understanding, the ego must mediate very powerful forces to function in reality: the demands of society (superego) and biology (id). The conflicting demands can make the individual feel overwhelmed. This feeling is termed anxiety. This conceptual structure allows analysis of a person’s suffering and may suggest ways to address it (Boeree, n.d.).

An important understanding that Freud’s theory provides is his description of certain patterns of behavior that grow out of internal conflicts. Awareness of these patterns is useful in discerning when internal conflicts are present. When conflicts are present, the ego will often cope with them by unconsciously blocking impulses or distorting them into a less threatening form. These ways of coping are called ego defense mechanisms. Freud listed up to 15 defense mechanisms, but the most frequently used terms encountered today are denial, repression, displacement, reaction formation, regression, rationalization, projection, and sublimation (Boeree, n.d.).

Freud’s theory of the formation and development of personality leads to perhaps the greatest controversy. He describes the growth of each person in terms of psychosexual development. While the scope of this paper does not allow for a thorough exploration of this concept, it can be summarized in general terms. Freud theorized that the stages of growth take a child through transitions from one kind of pleasure to another: the oral stage (birth to 18 months); the anal stage (18 months to 3-4 years); the phallic stage (3-4 years to 5-7 years); the latent stage (5-7 years to puberty); the genital stage (puberty to maturity). This stage theory describes a certain focus and certain developmental tasks associated with each stage. The challenges presented to the development of the personality in each stage (and in transitions from one stage to another) may, according to Freud, result in personal crises of various kinds, leading to fixations, complexes, and character traits (Boeree par. 44). While his descriptions of some aspects of human development can be useful, the conclusions
he draws are often (and easily) attacked. The value of his theory is perhaps best understood as providing a framework for tracing adult problems to developmental issues, then offering ways to address them.

*The Significance of Freud’s Thought*

Today, much of Freud’s theory and ideas strike our ears as either common sense or outrageous speculation. Both reactions are testimony to the impact of his thought.

His systematic recognition of motives and feelings that we suppress is difficult to refute. Freud did much original thought based on his work with his patients, working to address the origins and causes of their suffering. The fact that he was dealing primarily with abnormal subjects does, of course, hinder the credibility of his generalizations. Freud (1938) himself acknowledged this, while comparing his findings with other studies he could find. His genius lies in his determination to discover a systematic understanding of human behavior in order to carry out his mission as a physician: to cure suffering. (His daughter, Anna, pursued the significance of his theories as they relate to child development and education (Freud, A., 1947).) Insofar as Freud’s theories help us to explain, predict, and control such suffering and effectively provide meaningful social service, they are worthy of surpassing respect.

Still, Freud worked at a time in the history of science that permitted developing insights to be posed as generalizations without what we now see to be adequate scientific verification. In the period of pioneering study in which Freud worked, systematic inquiry was neither as well understood nor as systematically possible as it is today, so his findings are based on flawed social science. The range of possible theoretical explanations for human behavior leads to intense conflicts and disagreements in conflicting theories, even among theorists who started on common ground with Freud, such as Bleuer, Jung, and Adler (Freud, Sigmund, n.d.).
Much of the anger with Freud’s theories derives from his attribution of so much of human behavior to sexual forces. This is due in part to the offensiveness of explicit sexual discussion and the manner in which Freud reduced human status to organism or animal. Some aspects of human development and behavior have more logical (and perhaps less offensive) explanations than Freud’s use of sexual metaphor. What we might find today to be questionable metaphorical explanation, Freud held as literally true. Much of Freud’s credibility as a scientist has been undermined.

Even so, Freud’s ideas are drawing new attention in contemporary neurological studies. While his theory of unconscious drives has received less emphasis in recent years, Guterl (2002) observes that researchers at several universities are making discoveries in brain research that suggest that “Freud’s drives really do exist, and they have their roots in the limbic system, a primitive part of the brain that operates mostly below the horizon of consciousness” (p. 50). What Freud termed the libido is now being called “the seeking drive” (Guterl, 2002). It is even possible that dreaming originates in an area of the brain associated with the seeking drive. Guterl (2002) concludes:

Freud’s psychological map may have been flawed in many ways, but it also happens to be the most coherent and, from the standpoint of individual experience, meaningful theory of the mind there is. “Freud should be placed in the same category as Darwin, who lived before the discovery of genes,” says Paksepp [a researcher at Bowling Green State University]. “Freud gave us a vision of a mental apparatus. We need to talk about it, develop it, test it.” Perhaps it’s not a matter of proving Freud wrong or right, but of finishing the job (p.51).

Conclusion

“If, as the American sociologist Philip Rieff once contended, ‘psychological man’ replaced such earlier notions of political, religious, or economic man as the 20th century’s dominant self-image, it is in no small measure due to the power of Freud’s vision…” (Sigmund Freud, n.d., Introduction).

Clearly, Sigmund Freud’s impact has been as powerful as any thinker in the history of western civilization. His ideas are everywhere, and his influence extends into fields far beyond psychology. The vehemence of his detractors and the passion of his proponents make it obvious that his thought carries influence and power. Within limits, however, it is evident that Freud’s taxonomy can provide significant insight. It is necessary to understand Sigmund Freud’s thought, if only to argue coherently against it.

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