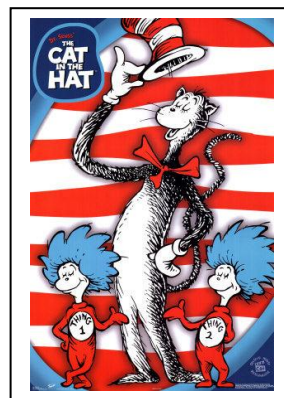

Freud on Seuss

Unit: Personality

Topics: Freud's theory of personality

Type of Lesson: In-class Activity

Time Frame: One 50 min. class period



Materials: A copy of *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss

Copies of the Introduction to Psychoanalytic Criticism taken from www.readwritethink.org (handouts below)

Copies of the book review written by Josh LeBeau, reprinted from the *Koala*, UC San Diego's humor newspaper (handouts below)

You can also show the attached YouTube video as you have students follow along the first handout.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Udok2ZvJNQE>

Copies of the extension activity-Freudian Fairy Tales

Description: I use this activity to help students understand Freud's concepts of id, ego and superego. I read the *Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss to the students. As they listen, they record in the chart what part of personality each character represents at different times in the story. Afterwards, we have a discussion about their analysis. As an extension activity, I have students fill out the Freudian Fairy Tales worksheet using other characters and scenes from well-known stories to connect various Freudian concepts.

Freud on Seuss

Source: Introduction, Analysis chart from Read. Write. Think.
Reprinted from the NCTE/IRA Book review by Josh
LeBeau reprinted from *the Koala*, UC San Diego
Freudian Fairy tales assignment- modified by Sejal Schullo
from an unknown original source

Domain: Individual Variations

Standard Area: Personality

Content Standard: Perspectives on Personality

Performance Indicator: Evaluate psychodynamic theories

Freud on Seuss

An Introduction to Psychoanalytic Criticism

Sigmund Freud is the author of the structural model of personality. In this theory, Freud explains that each person's personality is formed of three parts: the **Ego**, the **Superego** and the **Id**. Psychoanalysis is the process of using what we know about these three parts of someone's personality to analyze the ways that person behaves.

Literary critics sometimes analyze the actions of literary characters using the three personality structures that Freud identified. As critics explore the ego, superego, and id of characters in a work, they focus on the ways that these parts of the characters' personalities influence the work as a whole. This process is called psychoanalytic criticism.

In the next activity, you will use Freud's theory to analyze the characters in *The Cat In The Hat* by Dr. Seuss. To help prepare you for this activity, read the following explanations for id, ego, and superego.

Id

The id is the part of the personality that contains our primitive impulses—such as thirst, anger, hunger—and the desire for instant gratification or release. According to Freud, we are born with our id. The id is an important part of our personality because as newborns, it allows us to get our basic needs met. Freud believed that the id is based on our pleasure principle. The id wants whatever feels good at the time, with no consideration for the other circumstances of the situation. The id is sometimes represented by a devil sitting on someone's shoulder. As this devil sits there, he tells the ego to base behavior on how the action will influence the self, specifically how it will bring the self pleasure.

Superego

The superego is the part of the personality that represents the conscience, the moral part of us. The superego develops due to the moral and ethical restraints placed on us by our caregivers. It dictates our belief of right and wrong. The superego is sometimes represented by an angel sitting on someone's shoulder, telling the ego to base behavior on how the action will influence society.

Ego

The ego is the part of the personality that maintains a balance between our impulses (our id) and our conscience (our superego). The ego is based on the reality principle. The ego understands that other people have needs and desires and that sometimes being impulsive or selfish can hurt us in the end. It is the ego's job to meet the needs of the id, while taking into consideration the reality of the situation. The ego works, in other words, to balance the id and superego. The ego is represented by a person, with a devil (the id) on one shoulder and an angel (the superego) on the other.

Freud on Seuss

Psychoanalysis of Characters in The Cat In The Hat

- ⌚ Circle the part of the psychological self that best describes the character's actions in each area of the plot (beginning, middle, and end).
- ⌚ Write an argument in the last column that explains the psychological personality of the character, based on your observations.

	Beginning	Middle	End	Conclusion
The Narrator and Sally	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	
The Cat in the Hat	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	
The Fish	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	
The Mother	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	Id Ego Superego	

Freud on Seuss

Freudian Fairy Tales

In your group, you need to choose fairy tales or children's stories with which you are familiar. Your group needs to view the story through a psychodynamic lens. Look for examples of the following:

1. Characters who illustrate the id, ego, superego constructs
2. Characters that may be fixated at various stages of psychosexual development
3. Characters displaying the Oedipus or Electra Complex
4. Various (at least TWO) defense mechanisms being used

Record your information in the chart below.

Freud on Seuss

Title of Fairy Tale	Story Information	Psychodynamic Interpretation