

KEY FREUDIAN CONCEPTS

Anal stage The psychosexual stage corresponding roughly to the period of toilet training (ages 1 to 3).

Anal-expulsive personality A disorderly, destructive, cruel, or messy person.

Anal-retentive personality A person who is obstinate, stingy, or compulsive, and who generally has difficulty “letting go”.

Conscience The part of the superego that causes guilt when its standards are not met.

Conscious Region of the mind that includes all mental contents a person is aware of at any given moment.

Defense mechanism An unconscious process used to protect the ego from anxiety.



Ego The psychological component of personality that directs rational behavior.

Ego-ideal The part of the superego representing ideal behavior; a source of pride when its standards are met.

Electra conflict A girl's sexual attraction to her father and feeling of rivalry with her mother.

Erogenous zone Any body area that produces pleasurable sensations.

Eros Freud's name for the “life instincts.”

Fixation A lasting conflict developed as a result of frustration or over-indulgence.

Genital stage Period of full psychosexual development, marked by the attainment of mature adult sexuality.

Id The biological component of personality that remains unconscious, supplies psychic energy, and demands pleasure.

Latency According to Freud, a period in childhood when psychosexual development is more or less interrupted.

Libido In Freudian theory, the force, primarily pleasure oriented, that energizes personality.

Moral anxiety Apprehension felt when thoughts, impulses, or actions conflict with the superego's standards.

Neurotic anxiety Apprehension felt when the ego struggles to control id impulses.

Oedipus conflict A boy's sexual attraction to his mother, and feelings of rivalry with his father.

Oral stage The period when infants are preoccupied with the mouth as a source of pleasure and means of expression.

Oral-aggressive personality A person who uses the mouth to express hostility by shouting, cursing, biting, and so forth.

Also, one who actively exploits others.

Oral-dependent personality A person who wants to passively receive attention, gifts, love, and so forth.

Phallic personality A person who is vain, exhibitionistic, sensitive, narcissistic.

Phallic stage The psychosexual stage (roughly 3 to 6) when a child is preoccupied with the genitals.

Pleasure principle A desire for immediate gratification of wishes, desires, or needs. What the **Id** operates under.

Preconscious An area of the mind containing information that can be voluntarily brought into awareness.

Psychosexual stages The oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital stages during which various personality traits are formed.

Reality principle Delaying action (or pleasure) until it is appropriate.

Reality testing An activity of the **Ego** whereby it “tests” objects or actions in the real world to determine if they can satisfy needs.

Superego The “social component” of personality monitoring thoughts and actions.

Thanatos The death instinct that purportedly is responsible for aggressive behavior.

Unconscious Region of the mind that is beyond awareness, especially impulses and desires not directly known to the person. It is where the **Id** resides and where “repressed” memories are permanently stored.