

## Dream Research Proposal

### 1. Introduction of Research Topic, projected value, and documentation style.

A). The topic that I have chosen to research this term is dreams. I have always been very interested in dreams, both my own and those of others, especially in connection with the psychological meaning they represent for the dreamer. A little over two years ago I suffered a tremendous loss when my best friend and two close friends were killed in a car accident. Less than eight months later a fourth very dear friend was similarly killed. In dealing with my loss I found one incredible distraction from the pain- dreaming. Immediately after the accidents I began to notice that my dreams had become more emotional and played a large role in my thoughts and mood for the next day. The night I had my first dream about my late best friend we talked about how the accident impacted me, and how he was always by my side, even when I couldn't see him. When I woke up I felt like a different person, like the dream had washed away all of my depression. For the first time in months I was able to smile just by thinking about that dream. But when I went to look up the meaning of the dream in one of my dream analysis books I was shocked to find the supposed "inner meaning." According to the first book I looked in, a dream of visiting a deceased friend meant that I would live a long life. Baffled, I looked in a second dream analysis book. This one said that it meant things were going to change for

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the better for me and good fortune was in store. It was at that exact moment that I realized that dream analysis wasn't quite as accurate as I had once thought. In fact, many dream analysis books I've since encountered have different ideas about what dreams even are. With all the different theories and studies there are out there on sleep and dreaming, I decided that I would just go find the most accurate theory myself. I have a lot to learn about dreaming, and have the desire to learn it. Using this topic as my research subject, I will be able to engulf myself in the incredible amount of information available to me. I believe that every individual can benefit from understanding their dreams, but knowing how to understand them is the first step. I intend for my project to be the stepping stone towards accurate understanding.

B). The research topic of dreams and dream analysis is appropriate for Writing 123 because it requires a college level understanding of theories, studies and research. Readers must be able to figure out the semi complex concepts of brain activity and psychology. Also, very importantly, there are numerous sources to be found on the topic. Virtually every source I've come across (journals, books, online references) have something related to the topic. However, it is mainly my desire to research dreams and theories of dream analysis that make the topic an appropriate choice. I have more than enough interest in the topic to take the project from start to finish.

C). The documentation style I have chosen for my topic is the style commonly used by the American Psychological Association, or simply put, the APA form. I feel that this documentation style is appropriate for my topic choice because the main root behind the study of dreams is psychology. Dreaming is a psychological science, and the studies

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done on the subject of dream analysis and interpretation would be best presented in the APA form.

## 2. Leading Research Question and Working Hypothesis

A). My leading research questions that I propose to pursue are: What are dreams? What are the main functions of dreams? Is dream analysis accurate? And what factors can interfere with accurate dream interpretation?

B). My working hypothesis so far is that dreams are mental images that our brains produce while we sleep to help us better understand ourselves and our feelings. Unfortunately, most forms of dream analysis are not accurate due to numerous factors that can be very influential on dream content, and are usually not taken into account while the dream is being interpreted. These factors can include, but aren't restricted to physical stimuli (such as noise, light, temperature), hunger, thirst, the culture you live in, and day to day experiences.

## 3. Research Strategy

A). Through my research I intend to find:

- \* What are the many theories of the function of dreams?
- \* Do all people dream?
- \* How often do people dream?
- \* What are the different types of dreams?
- \* Why don't we always remember our dreams?
- \* How do different cultures interpret dreams?
- \* Where did dream analysis originate?

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- \* Is dream analysis accurate?
- \* What common factors interfere with the accurate interpretation of dreams?

So far I know that various critical thinkers and psychologists have conflicting theories of dream functions. Some consider them random thoughts of the sleeping brain, others consider them a result of the digestion process, and still others believe that dreams are our soul's unrestricted out of body travels that occur while we sleep. It is fairly widely agreed by sleep researchers that all people dream every night, with the rare exception of some substance abusers. I have reviewed a few different theories of dream types, such as lucid dreams, telepathic dreams, and nightmares. I have also uncovered some theories of why we don't always remember dreaming. Most theories have to do with the long and short term memory storage function of our brains, and conditions which limit our abilities. I have collected many sources on dream analysis already, and am confident that I have many more to go.

B). I will look for the answers to my questions in many places. The COCC library so far has produced ten sources that I have deemed appropriate after my exploratory research. The internet site [www.psychology.about.com](http://www.psychology.about.com) had proven very useful, containing an entire link in the home page for dreams and dream analysis. That website, in fact, has led me to a source I was unable to locate at the COCC library or Interlibrary loan. The search commands that I have used thus far have consisted of: psychology, dreams, dream analysis, and dream interpretation under the keyword search. Under the author search I have used: Freud, Jung, Koulack and Van Eeden (all leaders in the dream analysis field). I haven't come up empty handed yet. I have already collected enough

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material to support 75% of my paper, all mainly secondary sources. The bulk of my paper will be written based on the my finding in the book *To Catch a Dream*, and the *Sleep and Dream* sourcebook. I am still planning to design and implement a survey for my fellow college students that will ask them to: anonymously describe a recent dream, give a few possible reasons for the dreams (why they think that they dreamed it), and suggest a few interpretations of the psychological meaning. This survey is to be my main primary source. I will take the data that I receive and analyze it according to my two dream analysis books to see how closely the given interpretation resembles the students' analysis. [Psychology.about.com](http://www.psychology.about.com) will continue to play a major role in the direction my paper goes, seeing as how it is continually updated and I can continually check up on it. I am also trying to locate 10 different issues of the *Brain and Behavioral Science Journal*, and four issues of the *British Journal of Psychology*.

#### 4. Sources Consulted in Exploratory Research

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