

# A revolutionary approach to personality

Sigmund Freud opened a window on the mind with his idea that behaviour is unconsciously motivated and that people struggle to keep their underlying motivations – lust and rage – out of their consciousness



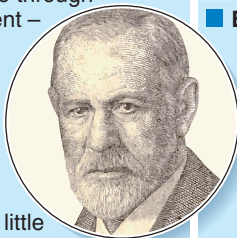
■ **Psychoanalysis:** Freud used the analytic couch to pioneer his concept of **free association** – encouraging patients to express seemingly irrelevant thoughts to bring repressed traumatic events into the open

■ **Unconscious:** Freud proposed that people often act in ways that have little or nothing to do with conscious thought

## ■ Psychosexual development:

From birth, people go through stages of development – including oral, anal and phallic stages – and children at one point see their mothers as a sexual object, the so-called **Oedipus complex**.

The phenomenon of little girls fixating on their fathers was dubbed the **Electra complex**



## ■ Id, ego and superego:

Psyche is divided into three parts: **id**, which contains primitive desires such as hunger, rage and sex; **superego**, which deals with morals, taboos and societal norms; and **ego**, which shifts between the two and plays a key role in a person's sense of **Self**

■ **Ego defence mechanisms:** Freud believed ego resolves conflicts between id and superego using **defence mechanisms** – denial, displacement, repression, projection, intellectualization and rationalization. By distorting, transforming or falsifying reality people spare themselves from emotional pain caused by stress, neurotic anxiety, guilt or shame