

Psych Symposium Research Option: Profile of a Serial Killer

What Makes Serial Killers Tick?

"It was an urge. ... A strong urge, and the longer I let it go the stronger it got, to where I was taking risks to go out and kill people risks that normally, according to my little rules of operation, I wouldn't take because they could lead to arrest."
—Edmund Kemper.

Where does this urge come from, and why is so powerful? We all experience rage and, yet we have some sort of internal cage that keeps our inner monsters locked up. Is it genetic, hormonal, biological, or cultural conditioning? Do serial killers have any control over their desires? Do they suffer from antisocial personality disorder? Are they insane?

This project is designed for you to step into the role of a psychologist to study the mind of a serial killer. You have the option of working by yourself or working with partners. Psychologists often collaborate so if you choose to work with a partner then you only need to turn in one project, either a paper or a presentation. You will be responsible for completing the following:

STEP 1: Choose three of the serial killers listed below or choose one on your own (with teacher's approval). The choice of killers is on a first come, first served basis; no repeats are allowed.

Edmund Kemper	Andrei Chikatilo (Citizen X)
Carl Panzram	Albert DeSalvo (Boston Strangler)
Jeffrey Dahmer	Randy Kraft
Ted Bundy	Westley Allen Dodd
Ed Gein	Juan Corona
Charles Manson	John Wayne Gacy (The Killer Clown)
Henry Lee Lucas	Dennis Rader (BTK Killer)
David Berkowitz (Son of Sam)	Gerard John Schaefer (The Killer Cop)
Richard Trenton Chase (Vampire of Sacramento)	Aileen Wuornos

STEP 2: Research your case study. Describe the person's childhood. Where were they from? Education? What were the crimes committed by the person you chose to investigate? **NOTE: do not get bogged down by the heinous acts committed by these individuals. The project is not designed to disturb you or cause discomfort; rather to work as a psychologist to understand the behavior of a serial killer and what drives such behavior. Keep the descriptions of the crimes to a minimum.**

STEP 3: Research Anti-Social Personality disorder (use the DSM-V and other resources). Explain it. Who suffers from it? Do you believe these serial killers suffer from Anti-Social Personality disorder? (Not all serial killers do). If not Anti-social, is there another psychological disorder you feel this killer suffered from? **You would need to indicate what the disorder is, and base it on research that you've found.** Did this person have any medical and/or psychological treatment, and were there any psychosocial and biological factors that may have contributed to the behavior

STEP 4: Review and summarize the profile of a serial murder. In what ways do the people you chose fit the FBI pattern? How would you profile a serial killer? Explain. <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/serial-murder>

STEP 5: What is the legal definition of insanity in California? What about in the state where the crime was committed (if not in California?) Was the person legally insane? How do you know? What were the legal ramifications for this individual?

STEP 6: Develop a treatment plan for this individual based on your knowledge of psychological treatments. Do not just list: talk therapy. Explain the type of treatment you have chosen and why you feel this is the best approach—**based on the research.**

STEP 7: You'll present your findings based on the overall symposium guidelines.

STEP 8: References: minimum of 5 different sources. APA format. NO Wiki!

A REMINDER for when you are conducting your research:

Examples of academic dishonesty:

1. Using another author's words without proper citation.
2. Using an author's ideas without proper citation.
3. Reproducing the exact wording - WORD-FOR-WORD, VERBATIM - of another source without using quotation marks, even if the source is cited.
4. Borrowing the structure of another author's words or phrases without proper credit or citation.
5. Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or assignment, including borrowing the structure of another student's words, phrases, or ideas.
6. Using a paper writing service, or an online source of written assignments, or having another student complete an assignment

This includes obtaining information, either in full or in part, from Internet websites (popularly known as "paper mills"), in which students can obtain papers either free or for cost). This also includes the cutting and pasting or by hand reproducing content which can be found online, such as a site like Wikipedia.